

PERSONAL WORSHIP

Intimacy With God

Volume One

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Matthew 1:1-12:8

Mark 1:1-2:28

Luke 1:1-6:5

John 1:1-5:47

Don DeWalt

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HOW TO ESTABLISH & MAINTAIN YOUR PERSONAL WORSHIP

Seven Things That Must Happen BEFORE You Begin

It has now been more than ten years since I began and only when I was too sick to get out of bed have I missed in my personal worship. I say this to confess I would be utterly lost, lost without this blessed time. I do NOT enter the closet of personal worship because I am so “holy” — but because I am so weak and such a sinner I could not live without it. I *must* renew each of these seven priorities *every day* — Here they are:

1. *Believe our Lord set the example and asked us to meet him in personal worship.* Why did Jesus get up a great deal before day to go to a solitary place to pray! He was in the same kind of body as ourselves and was so sorely tempted with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. He could not be the triumphant overcomer he was without personal worship — he had to have a time and a place where he met his father in intimate fellowship.

Jesus did not ask men to pray — he assumed we would. He did not say IF you pray but WHEN you pray enter your closet — close the door and pray to your father in secret — and then he made a blessed promise “he who hears you in secret will reward you (in public).” If Jesus needed personal worship who are we to do without it.

2. *Believe Paul had such personal worship in his daily life.* Paul told the Romans, the Thessalonians, Timothy, the Philippians and Philemon that he had “prayers” — not that he prayed but that he had a time and place where he interceded for them and followed our Lord’s example. (I am not giving the book, chapter and verse on purpose — it’s there, look it up.) Paul asked us to mimic him. He was only following our Lord’s example. (Do we really believe this or are we just reading pious words?)

3. If you do not either pray out loud (like our Lord did — how else could his biographers record what he said if they didn’t hear his prayers?) or write out your prayers like Paul did you will really never have any consistency in your efforts. Why? Why? — Because our mind wanders if we do not. Silent personal worship is fine in a crisis when our mind is focused but of no value for a regular practice. Jesus prayed out loud — Paul wrote his prayers — so should you! So *must* you.

4. *If you are not prepared to make a “no exception” commitment you will not have personal worship.* Just how important is this time to you? It was such a deci-

sion our Lord made. It was an unvarying habit of Paul. Such has been true of all who led in spiritual conquest. History is a very good teacher here. To say this is *the* most important activity of *every day*. I mean *every day* it is make it a habit. Life is not life without the closet of prayer. I have had some impossible times — at least what *seemed* to be impossible circumstances for keeping that commitment. *But if you have to have it* you will find a way to get it!

5. *Review often the blessed, wonderful benefits of this commitment.* Here are just three of a dozen:

(1) It is here you establish intimacy with your Lord. It is here all you read, sing and teach comes into focus — Reality in religion is found in the closet of prayer. How excited beyond words I have become in such an encounter.

(2) Cleansing — renewing — refreshing are all found regularly in this time and place every day. I mean every day — it happened this morning for me — it can — it should happen for you.

(3) Your character is shaped here — you either give up your sinning or you will give up your praying. The highest good — the most powerful change is found in keeping your appointment with King Jesus.

6. *Twenty-one times will make this a habit.* This is simply a psychological fact. A habit is an involuntary action — when it is easier to do it than not to do it you have a habit.

When will you keep this blessed tryst? Jesus chose the morning. Perhaps to offer the first fruits of the day to His Father. You only have three times from which to choose: morning, afternoon or night — which shall it be? Decide NOW — commit yourself without reservation or exception to this time. When it arrives do it — do it. Make provision to fulfill your deep desire to keep this appointment. Do not disappoint your Lord — He awaits for you in the closet — one day you will awake to the fact that you have this blessed habit so much a part of you that you would not miss it for the world!

7. *Believe that one hour is minimal time for your personal worship.* When Jesus said to his sleepy prayerless disciples “Could you not watch with me one hour?” He thought “one hour” was surely minimal time for watching and praying. If we do not give our father quality time how can he make any quality change in us? Surely, surely out of the twenty-four hours he gives us each day there is one we can give exclusively to him in the communion he so lov-

ingly wants and we need. Did Jesus spend an hour each day in prayer — if Paul interceded for 28 people by name and need in the church at Rome did he spend an hour doing it?

We will spell out the steps in keeping our time of prayer.

The Five Elements Of Worship And How To Incorporate Them Into Your Personal Worship

There are but five elements or expressions of worship — either public or private. They are:

1. Praise
2. Confession
3. Thanksgiving
4. Petition
5. Intercession

I have many books on devotions — or the quiet time or time with God, etc. They are so very helpful in one or all the five areas mentioned above. BUT — until we settle on a method satisfactory to our own heart we will just start and stop — change and wonder why we can't get locked into a satisfactory method. You MUST HAVE A METHOD or utter frustration will be the only result.

If you do not already have a satisfactory method try this one. It truly works for me.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Begin with praise. PRAISE FOR GOD for all that he is. This is objective praise. Open up the book of praise i.e. the book of Psalms and find a quality of God in the Psalms for which you can praise him — such as Psalm 16:11 — This was the first verse I used on the twenty-sixth week — Tuesday of a year of personal worship. At that time (1982) I wrote these words in the closet of prayer:

“ ‘Thou wilt shew me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore.’ (Psa. 16:11). I realize this is a Messianic Psalm fulfilled in the resurrection of my Lord.

However, the beautiful promises made in it have such a general application for all men. Oh, will you not gladly show all men the path of life? Indeed you have in the life of your dear Son. But in another sense you have spoken to the fathers in the prophets. You have spoken to all men today through your apostles and prophets as they told of your Son. It is such an encouragement to know there is indeed ‘a path of life.’ Living and thinking and talking ‘in your presence’ is indeed ‘the fulness of joy.’ These tremendous promises all fulfilled in Jesus are open to all men.”

In the above expression God is ever before me — who He is and what He has done — for everyone, not just for me.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

In the second expression of worship we continue in Praise — only this time we use the attribute of God found in Psalm 16:11 and relate it to ourself — to *me personally*. Here is what I wrote on that day in 1982: “Just for me — open for myself — right now! For

my own life — today, I claim these promises:

“(1) You will show me the way to walk and talk — indeed you have in your word and in your Son. Am I going to memorize more of your word? Am I going to look again at the life of my Lord?

“(2) Only in your way is there life at all — death is the alternate! The life you give is like yourself — eternal, strong, constant!

“(3) Is your presence in the fulness of joy? This will be eternally true in heaven, but for today, just for today, I need and I want this fulness of joy. I hear my Savior say: ‘Hitherto have you asked nothing in my name: ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full’ (John 16:24). I want to embrace to my heart the words of fisherman Peter: ‘Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory’ (I Pet. 1:8). By your authority are there pleasures for evermore. Amen!”

I need to say right here that I freely use whatever help I can find to expand my expression. I have found Charles Spurgeon’s THE TREASURY OF DAVID a gold mine of devotional help. I *never never* look to Spurgeon or any other author until I have run dry in my own attempts at expression.

CONFESSION OF SIN

The third step is CONFESSION OF SIN. First as related to the quality or attribute found in Psalm 16:11 and then my up-to-date sins. What you are about to read was *not* written for publication. It was only after a year or more of consideration that I edited the following for public consumption.

“Dear Lord, how is it that I am not always filled with joy? It is for the simple reason that I do not always live in your presence. I am not personally identified with the Source of the joy. It is when I meditate upon what you have said that I understand and emotionally respond. But there is a deeper satisfaction. There is a far more fundamental eternal pleasure. It is in the ‘living hope.’ Dear God, I purpose today to make myself more keenly aware of the meaning of what you have said. Forgive me, forgive me for my sad, sick, sinful neglect of practicing your presence.

“ ‘Loving to have the preeminence.’ Dear God, you have a prior claim on all preeminence — my Lord has such a position in all things. Take it Lord, I do not want it.”

I have edited out my personal sins, except the one treated above. I must confess, label, name my sins or there is no forgiveness. *But* once I am forgiven it is removed — forgotten — cleansed. I need to claim every day such a fresh blessed new beginning.

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

The fourth step is a transition from the use of the Old Testament to the use of the New Testament. It is in the form of a song of praise. I open and sing a song every day. Here is a blessed familiar prayer in song:

“Consecrate me now to Thy Service, Lord,
By the pow’r of grace divine;
Let my soul look up with a steadfast hope,
And my will be lost in Thine.

“Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To the cross where Thou hast died;
Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To Thy precious, bleeding side.”

If you cannot carry a tune, try it anyway. No one is there but you and God and He has angels singing to Him. He only wants to hear from your heart. Read the words out loud — i.e. if you cannot sing at all. I have used the Psalms, Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Jeremiah for discovering the attributes of God for which I can praise Him. The minor prophets speak so often of the qualities of our great God. Use their words to lift up your voice or written words in praise.

We now move to the New Testament as we continue in personal worship.

HIS WORD

“ ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men.’
—John 1:1-4, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Read the word to Him! Is there anything we would rather hear than our own words read back to us with comments as to how much they mean to the reader? This is just what we do here before God. All five elements are used as they relate to the text. We use two, three or four verses from the New Testament. Begin with Luke or John. Keep your expression of praise, confession, thanksgiving or whatever the text suggests as *objective* as possible. Think of others here — *Not* yourself. Read these words from God’s perspective! Here is what I wrote about John 1:1-4.

“Dear Lord, I feel like Moses before the burning bush. I know not what to say! I want to tell you all your dear Son means to me. At the same time, I know he hears all I say and shares these words of praise! It is almost beyond human understanding to say, ‘In the beginning was the Word.’ This is saying there really never was a time when our Lord did not exist. The very expression of yourself, so near to you as our words are near to us. This One was always with you. Today I shall take a new look at the created world: it is the creation of your Son! Not one single thing I can see, and much I cannot see, was not fashioned by his mind and brought into existence. ‘In Him is life.’ Eternal life is in him and of him. Man has no light or hope without him!”

What a joyous beautiful time this step is. I rejoice in it every day. You can too!

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Read the Word for yourself. Our God has said His

word is like a hammer used to break up whatever needs breaking. A sword to divide the thoughts and intents of our heart — a light for the path of the future and a lamp for our feet for today. Here is where such expressions become a reality. Here is how I read John 1:1-4 for my own heart in personal worship.

“Dear, dear Lord, I need so much to prostrate myself before you and just stay there for awhile. I am overcome by your majesty! It is delightful to contemplate the fact that there never has been a time when you did not exist and there never will be such a time. What assurance this gives me! I see two distinct Beings sharing the same nature. My dear Lord was with you and at the same time shared your essential being. He was your creative agent. This truth stimulates me like a bolt of electricity! To step outside and find all I see — the result of what he made! I can look through a telescope and see the immensity and indescribable greatness in reference to size of what Jesus as the Word did! I can peer through a microscope and marvel over and again of his infinite care with the smallest of his work.

Once again let me say that you should attempt *first* to express your worship here in your own words — but please feel free to use what others have said to help your expression. Paul Butler has written so well on both the gospel of John and Luke (College Press, Joplin, Mo., Publisher). All five elements are before you in this step. You will identify confession, praise, petition in the above expression of myself.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

In this step we put on the spectacles of gratitude. We look through the one aperture of *thanksgiving*. If you number your expressions of thanksgiving as I have it will give more meaning and form to your efforts.

“How gloriously good it is to approach this facet of worship.

“(1) Thank you for your self existence — there never has been a time when you were not.

“(2) Thank you for the penetrating meaning of the term ‘word’ — the exact expression of yourself in living form.

“(3) Thank you for the little word ‘was’ because even when I do not know what beginning is referred to, you *are*.

“(4) Thank you for the beautiful cooperative effort in all creation.

“(5) Thank you for the life — the eternal life that was in and of and through our Lord.

“(6) Thank you for my claim and part in the gift of eternal life he came to give to all men.

“(7) Thank you for the light I find in every area of thought and life because he came.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

In this time of worship you are looking through a microscope — place these twelve words under the magnifying magic of the five elements of worship — examine minutely each word and lift up your response

in praise or confession or thanksgiving or petition or intercession. It need not be a mechanical expression — the elements of worship can be implicit. They need not be implicit i.e. they are a very part of the meditation — actually hidden in it. Here is my attempt: “ ‘In him was life, and that life was the light of men.’ Physical life is in all men as a result of creation. Is the life here described simply the image of God? Is this text saying that man’s intellectual ‘enlightenment’, in contrast to animals who lack intelligence, came from our Lord? When our Lord came he often said he came to bring ‘eternal life’ to all men. We would prefer this thought. Man’s real life and light in this world comes from our Lord. In him is life here and life hereafter; this life is the light for all men’s lives. It is indeed my own experience to find that life abundant in him and in him alone.” Perhaps you will want to be more specific in the use of the five elements. The important thing is that we meditate day and night on what He has said. We should have said much earlier that each step is estimated to take five minutes thus in the twelve steps we have the Sweet Hour of Prayer. (I have never found five minutes adequate time so I have extended it to two hours — and still the time is over before I am ready to stop. This is not true *every day* but very many days it is so.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What a joyous time this step always is! When we attempt to offer requests to God we get bogged down in monotony! NOT here — never, never is this true of these expressions. We *KNOW* these petitions will be answered because they are but an extension and application of God’s own words. Here is how I petitioned God from John 1:1-4.

“There never will be an end to the requests these verses suggest:

- “(1) Wisdom, give me wisdom to be able to worship you as I should.
- “(2) Humble my heart in the presence of the great Self-existent One.
- “(3) Deepen my adoration of the One who perfectly expresses your Self.
- “(4) Fill me with wonder as I bow before my Lord who created all things.
- “(5) Open my eyes to see the meaning of the word ‘life’ as here used.
- “(6) What light have you given to all men?
- “(7) I expect an answer to the above questions as I meditate before you. Help me.”

From here you can lift up your personal daily needs and those of your loved ones.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Do you believe that God speaks to me every day? Yes — he does. *There are four ways or means God uses to speak to each of us:*

- (1) The most obvious and the most often: *He speaks through His word.* Open your heart — expose your conscience. Let His word make personal

appreciation. Write out the application in the personal way my example shows you.

(2) *God speaks to us through His teachers.* — why else does He put teachers in His assembly? Of course they say nothing more or less than what He has already said in His word but they do have a way of probing our conscience.

(3) *Through answers to prayer.* — at this juncture when you have been in His presence for 50 minutes or an hour and 50 minutes you will think of just how he has answered your prayers as related to the text through which you are worshipping.

(4) God speaks through providence — i.e. in our understanding of how all the ways he has led us form a pattern we can read as his direction in our lives. No lesson of providence is learned at the time — only in retrospect can we say with Joseph — “God meant it for good.” Here is my response to John 1:1-4.

“In the stillness of this moment speak to me through these words:

- “(1) ‘There never has been a time when I was not.’
- “(2) ‘You will never know what condescension it was for Jesus to come to earth.’
- “(3) ‘I am the light of life.’ ”

READ HIS WORD IN INTERCESSION

There are two ways to go into this step:

(1) You can relate John 1:1-4 to the needs of others and intercede for them through John 1:1-4 such as:

“Open the eyes of the elders of our church to see Jesus first last and always.

“Grant the wisdom necessary to understand how best to communicate — this I pray for every teacher in our Bible School.

“Grant special grace to those in our public schools who must face the teaching of evolution and humanism. Give them the courage of their convictions to speak out for the one through whom all things were made.

There are almost an endless number of intercessory prayers we could make via the text before us.

(2) We could pray for the lost world country by country through the whole calendar year. There is a wonderful little book full of helpful material. It is called *OPERATION WORLD*, a day-by-day intercession for every country in the world. It is written by Johnstone and published by Send the Light Press. Order direct for \$7.95 from:

“Send the Light”/O.M.
P.O. Box 20
Waynesboro, GA 30830

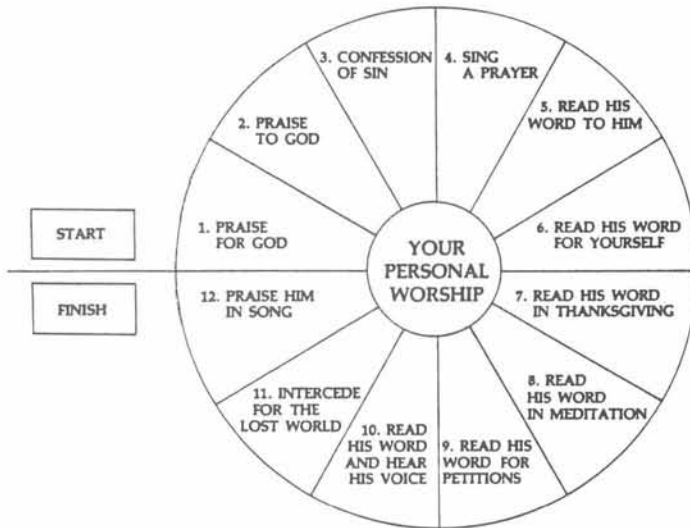
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

You close out your Sweet Hour of Prayer with a song of praise to our Lord. Here is a familiar hymn:

“Face to face with Christ, my Saviour,
Face to face what will it be?
When with rapture I behold Him,

Jesus Christ who died for me.
 "Face to Face I shall behold Him,
 Far beyond the starry sky:
 Face to face in all His glory,
 I shall see Him by and by."

Just to help you see the whole picture once more, here is a chart with the twelve steps spelled out. The key that opens the closet of prayer is to divide the time into twelve segments. Each segment could be five minutes and your time would be an hour of worship. You could spend 2½ minutes per segment and have 30 minutes of worship. Simply read what we have written for 15 minutes of worship.



Praise for God. You just adore God for Himself.

Praise to God for all He has done and is doing for you. We give you 91 qualities of God to help you here. We show you by example what to say. We leave an area open for your own expression of praise.

Confession of Sin, first, as it relates to the quality of God you have just considered — and then for your personal sins. We again help you by example.

Sing a Prayer. We suggest a prayer song you can sing as your prayer.

Read His word to Him. This is a form of praise — thanksgiving or confession as you tell God what His word means to you.

Read His word for yourself to find personal manna for strength for the day. We offer an example to help you.

Read His word in thanksgiving. Find as many reasons in the text for thanking Him as you can. Once again we show you by example.

Read His word in meditation. In our book we will show you how.

Read the word for daily petitions. Each passage of scripture opens up areas for your requests. We leave a space for your own personal petitions and answers.

Listen to His voice from the five previous uses of His word. It is totally remarkable what direction you can get for your life in this period. We demonstrate by example.

Intercession. Intercession is a ministry of prayer by itself. The larger area of personal intercession is left open for your development. We offer you help in intercession for the lost world. We make extensive use of *Operation World, A Handbook for Intercession*. This is a 272 page book listing the 220 countries of the world with prayer points for each country.

Sing a prayer of praise. We offer praise songs you can use or you can sing from your own hymn book.

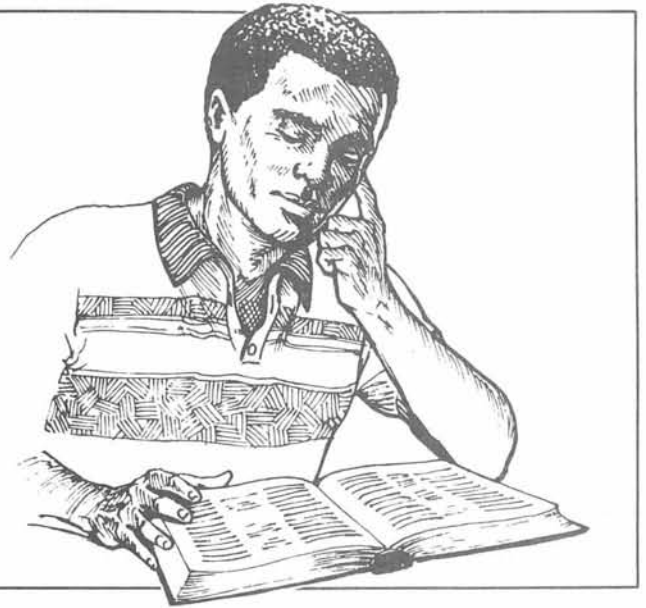
I feel so strongly about the value of this method of personal worship. If you have any questions at all write me. I will answer. There is nothing more important.

Write to:
 Don DeWelt
 Box 1132
 Joplin, MO 64801

WEEK ONE

—Sunday—

“What joy it is to worship the King and Creator of the world!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The King shall joy in thy strength, O Lord; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice” (Psa. 21:1). Since I am king — as are all Christians — I can make direct application of this text. I know of its original context and have written on it earlier. I know you want all men of every tongue and race to be able to express for themselves these beautiful words. The joy of your children is in your strength. Our joy is not in what we have, or even in who we are, but in yourself! How full of wonder and deep happiness we are as we contemplate your strength! Endless, unlimited power! To add to such unexcelled joy at your strength is the expression of such strength — our salvation. How rich and full is the life and heart of those who know you!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me! To be a king is enough for me! A king has so much: (1) Dominion over Satan. I need not be ruled over — I can rule! He has made me a king! (2) Riches of grace — all unearned, but all *very real!* Forgiveness, eternal purpose in living — hope of the life and world to come — the presence of the blessed Holy Spirit. (3) Gifts to give to others. How wonderfully generous I can be in all you have given me! Mercy, kindness, peace, cheer, all these from your strength or power — all these a result of my salvation, how greatly do I rejoice in you! Dear Lord, I have found through much experience (at least in my short life) my joy is so fleeting and shallow until and unless it is in *you* and *for you!*

How do you personally relate to the salvation of God, and God who is Savior? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is wonderfully good to worship you, and praise you, especially to praise you for your very self — to take delight in your essential being. At the same time, I am here to confess my miserable shortcoming in the very matter. I have been attracted to this object or this project and they have totally absorbed my mind and heart — only to find how incomplete and transitory all such matters are! How long will it be before I learn that only in you and of you can I find fulfillment! Forgive my wanderings — I come back home! *“Uncleanness.”* This is primarily a sin of the mind. Anything unclean is such because of a foreign matter upon it or in it. Wash my mind with the deep cleansing agent of the blood of your Son and make me clean from the inside!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

O worship the King, all glorious above,
And gratefully sing His wonderful love;
Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of days,
Pavilioned in splendor, and girded with praise.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2**He was with God in the beginning.

3Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. **4**In him was life, and that life was the light of men. —John 1:1-4, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, I feel like Moses before the burning bush. I know not what to say! I want to tell you all your

dear Son means to me. At the same time, I know he hears all I say and shares these words of praise! It is almost beyond human understanding to say, "In the beginning was the Word." This is saying there really never was a time when our Lord did not exist. The very expression of yourself, so near to you as our words are near to us. This One was always with you. Today I shall take a new look at the created world: it is the creation of your Son! Not one single thing I can see, and much I cannot see, was not fashioned by his mind and brought into existence. "In him is life." Eternal life is in him and of him. Man has no light or hope without him!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear, dear Lord, I *need so much* to prostrate myself before you and just stay there for awhile. I am overcome by your majesty! It is delightful to contemplate the fact that there has never been a time when you did not exist and there never will be such a time. What assurance this gives to me! I see two distinct divine Beings sharing the same nature. My dear Lord was with you and at the same time shared your essential being. He was your creative agent. This truth stimulates me like a bolt of electricity! To step outside and find all I see the result of what he made! I can look through a telescope and see the immensity and indescribable greatness in reference to size of what Jesus as the Word did! I can peer through a microscope and marvel over and again of his infinite care with the smallest of his work.

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

How gloriously good it is to approach this facet of worship. (1) Thank you for your self existence — there never has been a time when you were not. (2) Thank you for the penetrating meaning of the term "word" — the exact expression of yourself in living form. (3) Thank you for the little word "was" because even when I do not know what beginning referred to, you *are*. (4) Thank you for the beautiful cooperative effort in all creation. (5) Thank you for *the life* — the eternal life that was in and of and through our Lord. (6) Thank you for my claim and part in the gift of eternal life he came to give to all men. (7) Thank you for the light I find in every area of thought and life because he came.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"In him was life, and that life was the light of men." Physical life is in all men as a result of creation. Is the "life" here described simply the image of God? Is this text saying that man's intellectual "enlightenment," in contrast to the animals who lack in-

telligence, came from God? When our Lord came he often said he came to bring "eternal life" to all men. We would prefer this thought. Man's real life and light in this world comes from our Lord. In him is life here and life hereafter; this life is the light for all men's lives. It is indeed my own experience to find that life abundant in him and in him alone.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

There never will be an end to the requests these verses suggest: (1) Wisdom, give me wisdom to be able to worship you as I should. (2) Humble my heart in the presence of the great Self-existent One. (3) Deepen my adoration of the One who perfectly expresses your Self. (4) Fill me with wonder as I bow before my Lord who created all things. (5) Open my eyes to see the meaning of the word "life" as here used. (6) What light have you given to all men? (7) I expect an answer to the above questions as I meditate before you. Help me.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In the stillness of this moment speak to me through these words: (1) "There never has been a time when I was not." (2) "You will never know what condescension it was for Jesus to come to earth." (3) "I am the light of life."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

India — Point for prayer: (1) *The missionary force* in India has declined by 40% in the last 15 years. Entry and re-entry visas for missionaries are hard to obtain. Few new missionaries are entering the country. The entry and use of mission funds from abroad are strictly scrutinized. There are about 2,000-2,500 missionaries in India. Pray for the issuing of visas to expatriates needed for the Lord's work, and also for the most effective use of the present missionary force. Pray that these limitations may stimulate outreach by Indian Christians.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Face to face with Christ, my Savior,
Face to face — what will it be?
When with rapture I behold Him,
Jesus Christ who died for me.
Face to face I shall behold Him,
Far beyond the starry sky;
Face to face in all His glory,
I shall see Him by and by!

WEEK ONE

—Monday—

*“The Lord is our Shepherd and Light
— let’s worship him!”*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want” (Psa. 23:1). How very familiar are these words, and yet they never lose their meaning nor have we explored their depths. What David has said here of himself can be, or should be, said for all men. What does this mean in the practical application to life? It means: (1) That all men are as limited in their understanding of life as sheep are to the circumstances of their pasture. Sheep are quite reluctant to go where the shepherd wants to lead them, but they can be led. (2) Sheep are not driven like hogs, but led by the shepherd. (3) Sheep become very much dependent upon the shepherd; they await his decision and seldom make one of their own. (4) The shepherd becomes very much attached to the sheep. He knows them as individuals, and gives every one a name. How well all the above relates to all men of the world can easily be appreciated.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. How I long to identify with you as my shepherd — if ever I was given a full length portrait on the inside, it is here. (1) How I *need, need, need* a shepherd! I *want* you to lead me. At the same time, I do not want to be led. Somehow my stupid reluctance must be, and can be overcome. If only I would wait long enough to hear your voice. (2) You have wonderful ways of leading me. You do not force me against my will; you only make me willing to go. Dear Lord, your ways are pleasant and lead by green pastures and still waters. When I love you enough — deeply, personally — I will follow. When I get a good look over the edge of a precipice or two; when I pause long to look at the dead carcass of what was once a sheep like me — I will follow you. (3) My decisions have been like the sheep — made with a lack of perspective — and therefore contribute only to wandering.

How do you personally relate to the leadership of God, and God who is a shepherd? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

There is much of confession in the above. I listen even now to hear your voice. I open up your word, and lo, you speak to me! You are doing so even now — dear good shepherd, great shepherd, my shepherd I hear you. Forgive my stupidity, my willful wandering! I feel so comfortable and secure when I pause and wait before you! How are sheep cleansed and refreshed for a new day in your pasture? However that is done, I claim it and bow before you. I know you will give your life for me — indeed you have! Why, why, then should I ever want another shepherd? All other shepherds are hirelings; they do not know me or care for me — I am “used” by them. They are Satan’s servants called demons! I am afraid of them. I hasten to your side. May this day be the best ever!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Abide with me: fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide:
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me!

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

⁵The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

⁶There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe.

⁸He himself was not the light; he came only as a

witness to the light. ⁹The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. —John 1:5-9, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What “darkness” is here described? In the context of the verse before and the verse after I must say it refers to the darkness of the sinful indifference of this world. Am I right? Your dear Self in the Person of your Son came to walk among men and those that saw him did not at all understand who he was. How I would like to take the place of John to testify today in the dark world where I live of the light, and do it in such a manner that all men (or at least some men) might believe. Dear Lord, I want your mind in these comments. Help me. John put his whole life into his witness. Dear Father, I want to do the same! My dear Lord is the only light for any and all men. Have I represented your thoughts as they should be?

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I am sorry for the overbalance of subjective element in the above comments. Here I do want to read these words all over again until they are read into my inmost being! There is darkness in my world — into that world he shines! I do understand — I want all others to understand. How I praise you for every man you have sent my way who has, like John, testified concerning that light. Oh dear Lord, is it possible that *all men* might believe through the men you have sent into this dark world? I believe it is! Bless your name! If men only see John (or Don) they will never see him! When he is seen and recognized let this witness move on. He must (and will) increase as I decrease. Do I really believe that or is it just a pious platitude? Break my heart! I break it before you!

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the divine energy found only in yourself! (2) Thank you for the darkness, for without it there would be no appreciation of the light. (3) Thank you for the understanding or comprehension you can give to all of life through your Son. (4) Thank you for the one hundred lessons I can learn from your man named John. (5) Thank you for the term “witness” which really means “martyr.” I want to give my life in witnessing. (6) Thank you that you alone can save the world, but alone you cannot (or choose to not) save the world. We must do our part! (7) Thank you that I can be reminded often that I am not at all *the* light or “the true light.” My light is a reflection of his.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.” What a glorious purpose: to give light to every man. Our dear Lord has so much light to give but as he said, “I am the light of the world.” The light is his own blessed self! Men need a philosophy of life so he said, “I am the Way.” Men need a propositional revelation so he said, “I am the truth.” Men need the hope of purpose and energy in this world and a world to come so he said, “I am the life.” Men need constant nourishment and support so he said, “I am the vine” — abide in me. Man is stupid and erring like sheep so he said, “I am the good shepherd.” In all these ways and many more he came as a light to all men.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Surely these verses are the holy ground before Bethlehem’s manger. (1) May your light shine in the darkness — all my life. (2) Send me, not as John, but as myself to prepare the way for your Son. (3) Give me a special testimony to someone special today. (4) How I do want men to believe and have life. How can I help? (5) When I imagine I am some kind of light — put it out! (6) How do you “enlighten every man”? (7) Give me wisdom for answering the above question.

Please, remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak through this beautiful light: (1) “My light is still shining — put it on a stand.” (2) “I need a witness today.” (3) “All light is not the true light.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

India — Point for prayer: (1) *Missions* have done an immense amount of work since 1706, and many large and independent Churches are the fruit of this labor. Some missionaries are still in pioneer work and evangelism, but most work within the national churches is church planting, lay and preacher training, Christian education, rural uplift and technical ministries. Pray for missions. Pray for individual missionaries — those in sensitive areas where every action and every soul won for Jesus can be a pretext to end their ministry in the land. Pray for those who may be discouraged by lack of visible results, carnality among the Christians and the frustrating restrictions under which they work.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Fairest Lord Jesus!
Ruler of all nature!
O Thou of God and man the Son!
Thee will I cherish,
Thee will I honor,
Thou, my soul’s glory, joy, and crown!

WEEK ONE

—Tuesday—

“We have green pastures and still waters plus eternal life — lift your heart in praise!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters” (Psa. 23:2). It would appear in this verse that the sheep really do not have much choice. The shepherd takes whatever measures are necessary to cause the sheep to lie down. Is the emphasis upon the “green pastures” or on the rest? Perhaps one must come before man can recognize the other. Man *must* rest. When our Lord is our shepherd he will arrange the circumstances of life so from time to time we will have rest. Because of our busyness most of our rests are forced. But when we look around we find it in “green pastures” and “beside still waters.” It does not become apparent to us right away. It takes some long time to open our eyes to where we are and what has happened.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. It is really only a matter of time until you will cause me to lie down. It makes much more sense to leave the crowd — to walk away from the pressing duties and seek out “a solitary place.” My blessed Lord heard your voice and left the poor, the sick, the blind — the untaught and withdrew to find the green pastures of prayer and the still waters of meditation. Paul wanted to walk several miles in meditation. If these divinely led examples took time out why should I wait until I am forced to do so? The green pastures are no place of idleness. This is a place of nourishment. I find food — heaven’s food — for my soul, my whole life! Thank you, gentle shepherd, for knowing this sheep better than he knows himself.

How do you personally relate to the leadership of God, and God who is Shepherd? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, how stubborn I am! How taken up with a thousand pressing tasks that all seem important — all are “God-related,” but there *are* limitations to this body, to these nerves. Perhaps it takes some of us much longer than others to discover this. Dear Father, personal shepherd, I am afraid of inactivity! I do not want to be bored. How could I ever, ever think *you* would lead me into a boring situation? You are the very source of *excitement!* My fear and misunderstanding is always my biggest sin. Please forgive me. Since you are the shepherd and I am the sheep — since you are love and I am the object of your love — the pastures will be *green*.

“Forgetting our cleansing.” How easy it is for sheep to get dirty! It is even easier to forget what it feels like to be clean. Dear Lord, give me a vivid rerun!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Lead on, O King Eternal,
The day of march has come;
Henceforth in fields of conquest
Thy tents shall be our home.
Thro’ days of preparation
Thy grace has made us strong,
And now, O King Eternal,
We lift our battle song.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹⁰He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹²Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God — ¹³children born not of

natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. *John 1:10-13, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I tremble before you in the presence of such a truth! How silently and quietly, how subtly and without pomp you came. "You were in the world." In the little world of Israel, but only representatively. I believe you are saying you could have come to any part of the world. What you did in this country and this land you could have done in any country and any land. Indeed all men in all the world need to believe you have that much interest in their little "Bethlehems" and in their "Jeruselems." But if you came all over again you would not be recognized today any more readily than before. Could it be that you are as misunderstood today by those who are your own — even the religious establishment?

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me! Am I so busy with my own affairs that I cannot recognize him? Is my Lord speaking while I am speaking and I can hear no voice but my own? Am I too involved in being religious that I will not accept his authority? I do, I do want to accept, embrace, welcome your authority in my life. Even as I do so I think of areas where you are knocking for admission. Do I really and truly hear you say "I was hungry and you gave me to eat"? There are millions of hungry people in our world — *my* world. They are hungry twice over. In prison, naked, twice over are they! They are all your potential children — fed, freed, clothed! Born of God! But do I care — do I obey beyond this worship time? Oh, blessed Lord, I do!

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

How shall I adequately do this? I can only try: (1) Thank you that my dear Lord was once as a man "in the world." (2) Thank you for his marvelous creative ability. (3) Thank you for this dear One who was the One not appreciated (shall I ever feel slighted again?). (4) Thank you that even when the Jewish nation did not want you you did not give up on them. (6) Thank you for the authority contained in "his name"! (7) Thank you for the right to become and remain a child of God!

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... children born not of national descent nor of human decision, or, of a husband's will, but born of God." There are four types of children described here. We are proud of our heritage when we can trace our lineage back to some illustrious person. What

would one say if we could actually date the time when the Almighty God of all things became our Father? It was by both a human and divine decision that we were born from above. When we were born of God our blessed Lord became our bridegroom. It was with his decision and agreement and sacrifice that our new birth was a reality. Most of all, we are indeed regenerated by direct heavenly input. We respond emotionally to the facts stated in his wonderful word. Our appreciation of the new birth proceeds from: (1) The facts stated in his word; (2) my faith in these facts; (3) my emotional response.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How can I avoid the same tragic mistake of those who did not know him? (1) Keep me always aware of who made the world I see all around me. (2) May I see him today in his world. (3) Impress upon me once again how important a knowledge of your word is to all men. (4) He has come to his own people in the form of the Holy Spirit — do we know him? (5) Dear Lord, I receive you — welcome! Keep me sensitive. (6) Show me the difference between religion and yourself. (7) Thank you for everyone who does receive you — lead me to them.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these two verses speak to me: (1) "I am still in my world — look for me." (2) "I am still creating in the lives of men." (3) "You are my home."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

India — Point for prayer: (1) *Many of the larger and older denominations* are the fruit of mass movements to Christianity in the last century that were inadequately disciplined. There is now much nominalism. Yet there is a growing Bible believing voice with some outstanding Christian leaders in them. The churches are generally in decline in Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat, growing by natural increase in most states, and growing through conversions in the north east. Revival is needed to rid the churches of introspection, petty squabbles, social climbing and sin, and to get the believers out to evangelize. The people are now more receptive to the Gospel, but there are too few Christians in a position to witness to them. There are too many Christians who are still bound by Hindu caste loyalties, prejudice and superstitions; court cases are common among Christians. Pray that the Church in India may soon shine brightly for the Lord.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.

WEEK ONE

—Wednesday—

“Our life is restored — ‘grace upon grace’ is given — bow in wonder before Him!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake” (Psa. 23:3). You are seeming to say that in being led in the paths of righteousness my soul will be restored. Is this the correct understanding? The soul is the whole man — “soul” means “life.” We are a spirit and we have a body, but we are a soul. The uniting of the spirit with the body produced my soul or myself. And so it happened to all men of all time. Man’s separate identity is his soul. How easily and surely will his soul be discouraged and depressed! How fragile is the human spirit-soul! How very, very much we need to be revived, refreshed, restored! Dear Lord, it is down the path of righteousness I find refreshment!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me! How earnestly I want to probe the depths of the word “righteousness” that I might be restored, refreshed, revived! The little phrase “his name’s sake” intrigues me! It is because of my Great Shepherd’s authority and power (position) that all this can happen! I see a cross lifted up on this path of righteousness. I see the scroll of the book in which are written the blessed words of life, but they can never be more than a “law of sin and death” without the cross. Again and again I am refreshed and restored because I love your law and need your cross and open tomb!

How do you personally relate to the refreshment from God, and God who is All Authority? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

“So I find this law that is at work; when I want to do what is good, what is evil is the only choice I have. My inner being delights in the law of God. But I see a

different law at work in my body — a law that fights against the law that my mind approves of. It makes me a prisoner to the law of sin which is at work in my body. What an unhappy man I am! Who will rescue from this body that is taking me to death? Thanks be to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ!” (He will!) (Rom. 7:21-25, TEV). I could paraphrase Paul’s confession but it says exactly what I want to say, what I want to confess. What I can testify by personal experience is altogether true! Dear Lord, I accept your Son’s deliverance!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Break Thou the bread of life,
Dear Lord, to me,
As Thou didst break the loaves
Beside the sea;
Beyond the sacred page
I seek Thee, Lord;
My spirit pants for Thee,
O living Word.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹⁴The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen his glory, of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

¹⁵John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’”

¹⁶From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God, but God the only Son, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known. —John 1:14-18, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It seems almost redundant to read this word with you as the recipient, but this is but another form of praise and appreciation for all you are and have done and are doing. How could it be that flesh became your limitation and this world became for a little while your house? Surely I will never, never be able to appreciate this immense condescension. I love those two words you came to express: “*grace*” is interest, love, favor, goodness to us, and for us. Oh dear Lord, how we need it. You came to show us reality — “*truth*”: i.e. that which equals things as they really are. Dear Father, help me to read these wonderful words with their real meaning. John said your Son was born both after and before himself. What John said of your Son I say of both yourself, your Son and the Holy Spirit.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. From the fulness of his unearned approval and love I have indeed received one blessing after another! If I received what I deserved I would be dead and in torment. My physical health is a gift I have not earned. I have often abused it and ignored it, but I have never deserved it. The length of my life is in your hands, but every day I have received of this present hour is mine out of your love and goodness. That someone came to me and told me of yourself and your salvation — what a gift that was. How beautiful were their feet! Whatever abilities I have in any area of life are all your unmerited gifts.

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the living, speaking representative of yourself in Jesus. (2) Thank you that you in the Person of the Other Comforter might live among us — and “in us” forever. (3) Thank you that I have seen, I am seeing, I will see his glory — the one and only Son. (4) Thank you that Jesus was “full” of grace and truth — just how full we will never fully appreciate. (5) Thank you that John was so willing to let Jesus surpass him. (6) Thank you that we do not just receive grace, we receive “*fulness of grace*.” (7) Dear Lord, thank you that I shall never cease knowing you through your Son!

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“...the only Son, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.” There will never be adequate words to express the meaning of this momentous event! How did Jesus give us a knowledge of God? In several ways he did it. (1) He has made known the infinite interest of God in every man and woman by his constant involvement with so many different situa-

tions. There are twenty-eight persons to whom he spoke personally to win them to himself. God our Father is just that concerned with each and all of us. (2) He made God known by his life style. God came down in the Person of his Son to show us how to do it by doing it. It took very little to satisfy the physical needs of Jesus — so it does take but little to meet the essential needs of anyone of us.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

John wrote his gospel *after* Luke wrote *Acts* — help me to read this gospel with that fact in mind. (1) “They then that received” Peter’s word on Pentecost received your Son and became your children — repeat it again today. (2) Thank you for the authority or power behind my sonship. (3) Teach me more fully what it means to be born of yourself! (4) How shall I ever know just what it meant for Jesus (the Word) to “become flesh”? (5) May I look again and see yet again another facet of his glory. (6) Thank you for the abundant grace received from your Son.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What incredible riches are in these verses: (1) “To be born of myself is the ultimate human experience.” (2) “I want to give you more grace for the needs of your life.” (3) “Please look at my Son again; there is much you have not seen.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

India — Points for prayer: (1) *Outreach by the Christians has been very poor*, but much is being done to rectify this and impart a vision to the churches. Visitation is being made to every home in India in order to leave a portion of Christian literature. Pray for conversions. Pray for the large number of Christian young people involved, and their aggressive evangelistic coverage of many of India’s most poorly evangelized areas. (2) *The Bible believing witness needs prayer*: a) *In giving the Bible its rightful place* both in the theologically liberal denominations and in the Bible believing churches. In the former, dialogue and universalism have replaced evangelism and conversion. In the latter there is little solid teaching or expository preaching or application of Bible answers to real and pressing needs of India today.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

All praise to Him who reigns above
 In majesty supreme,
 Who gave His Son for man to die,
 That He might man redeem.
 Blessed be the name, blessed be the name,
 Blessed be the name of the Lord;
 Blessed be the name, blessed be the name,
 Blessed be the name of the Lord.

WEEK ONE

—Thursday—

“Death is a door not a dead-end. We have the inspired record of the One who gives eternal life. Praise him!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me” (Psa. 23:4). I am attempting to see in every verse some quality of yourself for which all men may praise you — and for which I can personally praise you. This verse has been associated for centuries by millions to close encounters with death — or with death for someone else. Whether we are sick or hurt or we seek to comfort others this verse speaks to our heart. Blessed be your powerful, loving presence! How all men need this assurance. How glad I am to affirm that all men can and should have this grace from you. What shall we say of those millions who have been (and are) tortured by the inhumanity of man? We say: You are there! The body and mind of man are variable, but you are present even when there is no sense of communication. You see, you know, you will receive us into eternal joy.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. If I believe this life is but a vapor — “a tale told in the night,” “like the grass of the field and the flower of the grass” — if I believe I am an eternal being that lives in a limited, temporary house called the human body — if I believe I walk “through the valley of death,” then I can say “I fear no evil”! I can be made to suffer — I *do* hurt! I *am* unhappy with pain — but I *do not* fear it. I know if I but wait (which I surely will) it will all be over and I will awake in eternal fulfillment! You have been, you are and you shall be *with* me. Your *rod* comforts me? This seems a strange instrument for comfort. It all depends on what kind of comfort I seek. Comfort in this instance is encouragement. Your rod can be and is used by you on your enemies! There will be a day of balance. There will be a final and full equity. This is a true source of encouragement to me! Bless your name!

How do you personally relate to the presence of God, and God who is always present? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, I have tried to be wholly honest with you — and myself! I am *not* brave or full of courage in the face of unknown pain or suffering — or even known pain and suffering. But dear God, I do not fear it — I cast myself upon you. I need so much forgiveness for complaining! How well the sheep motif fits me. I need your staff to stop me, direct me, or even bruise me. Forgive me for crying out in pity — self pity is but another form of pride, produced by the deceitful one. I do not suffer as much or as long as others. I can see much more reason for my suffering than I can for those I see about me.

“Seeking to be justified by the law.” This is by *any* law, by *any* form of doing. I am just by faith or I am not just at all.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Some day the silver cord will break,
And I no more as now shall sing;
But oh, the joy when I shall wake
Within the palace of the King!
And I shall see Him face to face,
And tell the story — Saved by grace;
And I shall see Him face to face,
And tell the story — saved by grace.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

1 Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from

the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word.

—Luke 1:1,2, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I am so glad that whereas these four men thought they were compiling the narrative of your Son it was really yourself though them. It was your own direction that prompted them to record what had happened. If this record had been neglected, or others than the ones you chose to do it, we would know nothing of yourself in the Person of your Son. I cannot thank you enough! How I do want to meet Dr. Luke (and Matthew, Mark and John). To pause here before you and see these men talking with those who were eyewitnesses to all here recorded moves me deeply! Did Luke have a list of questions he asked each one? Did he have a framework or outline he wanted to fill in from the information these “ministers of the word” told him? It does seem reasonable. Thou knowest.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Gladly, gladly do I do it! How I need it, want it! I too am compiling a narrative (treatise) of the life of my Lord as lived out in my own experience. Am I going to be as careful and accurate as this beloved doctor? Will I pause long enough before each word that tells of his life (*The Life*) and absorb it into my understanding and make it a part of my willingness? Dear God, I want to. I will earnestly try to. What was accomplished in the days of Luke (by way of those who responded to the incarnation) *must, will* be accomplished today — at least in one life. It is such a beautiful thought to know that I must — and do — minister and deliver the word (*The Word*) to others.

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

How easily this is done! (1) Thank you for the many who took an avid personal interest in recording the momentous fact of his coming. (2) Thank you for the four whose records you preserved for us. (3) Thank you for the carefulness of Luke’s account. (4) Thank you for the “finished” task of both my Lord and those who wrote of him. (5) Thank you for the early start each of these eyewitnesses had in their experience with our Lord. (6) Thank you for the selective procedure used by Luke — only those who were eyewitnesses were interviewed. (7) Thank you for the word “ministers” or “servants” of the word — all of us qualify as such today.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . ministers of the word.” What higher position could anyone have? To be servants who dispense the word of God. There is no greater work. It would

seem the primary task of the apostles was to give themselves to the ministry of the word. It was literally the increase of the word that produced the increase of the disciples. Didn’t these men tire of talking about Jesus and his love? Does one tire of talking about the day he received his sight after being blind for years? Does one tire of telling how he once was a leper and now is clean and whole? Not only who Jesus was but what Jesus did for them and meant personally to them was all part of their ministry.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In this beautiful prologue of Luke we can find petitions: (1) May the life of our Lord be lived again through his body, the church. (2) Give us the courage to be his witnesses today in our generation. (3) Make me a servant of your word. (4) Grant me the grace to investigate before I speak. (5) Thank you for the orderliness of your word — make it an example for my life. (6) I want to be Theophilus (lover of God) for my friends. (7) Give me the certainty that comes from reasonable faith.

Right here add your own personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these verses speak to me: (1) “The gospel of Luke is as much needed as when it was first written.” (2) “I need servants of my word for this generation.” (3) “There are many men whom I could call ‘Theophilus’ — find them and teach them.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

India — Points for prayer: (1) *Leadership training* is critically important. The lack of dedicated Christian workers prepared to leave for the sake of Christ is the biggest single factor limiting the growth of the Church. There is now an average of one preacher for 8 churches and 400 villages over the country, though some preachers have oversight of over 200 churches. Pray for the lay training programs. Pray also for the 40 seminaries and the students being prepared for the ministry; only a few are truly Bible believing. Pray also for the very many Bible Schools in India. (2) *The missionary vision of the Indian Church* is small, but growing. There are now about 600 Indian missionaries in cross-cultural mission work. Pray for the cultivation of missionary concern in the churches. Pray for effective missionary training programs.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

So precious is Jesus, my Savior, my King,
His praise all the day long with rapture I sing;
To Him in my weakness for strength I can cling,
For He is so precious to me.
For He is so precious to me,
For He is so precious to me;
'Tis Heaven below My Redeemer to know,
For He is so precious to me.

WEEK ONE

—Friday—

“A table — protection — anointing — certainty in the account of his life — all this and heaven too!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over” (Psa. 23:5). How I do want to enter fully into an appreciation of yourself as seen in this verse — please help me to do so! Our enemies are those things that oppose fulfillment of your promises in our lives. Any and all and everyone who is far from you and does not care can yet find this promise fulfilled in their life. Oh, that men — all men would turn and live! This is the desire you have (and I have) for all men. In the midst of our greatest difficulty there is a table spread. A table is there for refreshment and strength. Open up his book! The open Bible is the table of the Lord — we live constantly in the presence of our enemies. There is food and drink, bread and meat upon the table spread! We hurt! All men hurt — the wounds of the battle can be healed — the oil of comfort, hope, peace are all available. He is ready to anoint you! Take a long drink of the water of life. All of this and more are found in worship before the open book! The table of the Lord!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

For me — just for me — I praise you for the fulfillment of this blessed verse in my life! Dear Lord, I know I live in a hostile environment! I feel it, see it, hear it everyday. But bless your name, anytime I want to I can spread open your word and set the table of refreshment! This morning I will go to the public table. Upon it will be the remembrance of my Lord’s body and blood. I will indeed be refreshed and renewed with others as we eat and drink in remembrance of him. But there will be times of fatigue and confusion today. It is then I need the oil and water of life. There will be times of relaxing and sleep. Help me, move me, rebuke me, remind me of your table, Lord. I see this as a portable great physician’s table upon which he sets his medicine and instruments — or

my dear wife or mother running out into the middle of the fray of battle to set up a table and set upon it the unexpected cool drink or nourishing food. Stop me Lord, open up my eyes!

How do you personally relate to the provisions of God, and God who is a Provider? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

The above expressions are true and have happened, but it is also true that there have been many days with no table. There have been many battles with no pause to refresh. Dear Lord, forgive me. I purpose to stop so often that it becomes a habit. As you know the thoughts and intents of my heart you know I do seek after you! Oh, help me to eat and live! Forgive my self-inflicted thirst and hunger. I am afraid of my enemies — I know from experience they can hurt me. I hear you say, “Fear me more and all will be well” — this “fear” is holy, joyful awe! It is when I am full of this personal reverence for you that I am delivered! Bless your wonderful name! “Lose heart.” How easy it is to do this! Enthusiasm is from you — indeed it is yourself within me. I do not lose heart unless I have lost you — you have promised to be with me forever — all I need is a willingness to accept this promise!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I would be true, for there are those who trust me;
I would be pure, for there are those who care;
I would be strong, for there is much to suffer;
I would be brave, for there is much to dare;
I would be brave, for there is much to dare.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

³Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

⁵In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah. —*Luke 1:3-5a, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Here is your servant Luke. What a good man! He takes a deep personal interest in you and your dear Son. He felt totally positive about his task. Did he sense the presence of your Spirit working through him in what he was writing? I do not know — thou knowest! What an interest he had in all that happened! Did Luke take notes on what he heard and saw? Did this beloved doctor carry a diary of all he thought and prayed? For how long was this dear man an observer of all he wrote? Where did he train that he might write such an orderly account? When I attempt to view this text from your perspective I come up with many more questions than answers. I am so glad that one day (when there is no time) I will meet Luke and all will be clear.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Theophilus! He had an enviable position! To receive these two documents from Luke — 52 chapters of 65 years of history. An orderly account from Herod in Judea to Paul in Rome. Dear Lord, you have another lover of yourself — it is I! I purpose to absorb every word this penman of yourself wrote. I hope I can be as eager as the first Theophilus to read and reread every word you have written. How good to be given the *truth!* This treatise will perfectly match with the facts — therefore it will be the truth! Truth and reality are equal. Dear Lord, move me to so approach every word of this essay. Someone had gotten to this important man before Luke. Theophilus had already heard some things about our Lord.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the joy of truth — the delight of eternal values. (2) Thank you for Luke who was there when it all happened. (3) Thank you for someone who is interested in detailed accuracy. (4) Thank you for preserving Luke's life long enough to follow the whole record. (5) Thank you for the easy-to-follow account Luke has given us. (6) Thank you for this important man called "most excellent Theophilus." (7) Thank you that the only reason we know about Herod (or other so-called important men) is because they were associated with your servants.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"*In the days of Herod King of Judea.*" How fleeting is earthly glory! All we know about this man comes from the New Testament. He did live and rule in the most enviable of times for it was in God's fulness of time. Were the days of my Lord so different from today? In so many ways they were the same: (1) There is a mayor of our city or a governor of our state who compares very well with Herod the King. (2) There are devoted religious leaders in our land. Some of them very sincere, but like those of our Lord's days sadly lacking in a living relationship with God. (3) Men and women still get up before daybreak to go to work. (4) Children are still here to remind us of the kind of faith and love we should have toward God.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How I do want to make my requests known: (1) Give me the careful investigative attitude Luke had as he served you. (2) From the very beginning to the end of my service may I be careful in my attempt to communicate my Lord and not myself. (3) I want to teach through the written word — help me. (4) How I want to accomplish my service to you in an orderly fashion — direct my efforts. (5) Give me a real respect for those who hold authority from you. (6) Theophilus is such a lovely name — may it describe my desire toward you. (7) Give me certainty in the things of which I have been taught.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these brief words speak to me: (1) "There are many whose lives tell the story of my life through them." (2) "You can write a record of my life through your daily conduct." (3) "Love for me has no saturation point."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

India — Point for prayer: (1) *Young people* are, unfortunately, largely neglected by many churches due to lack of manpower and interest. Pray for those who are seeking to win and disciple India's youth.

SING PRAISES TO OUR GOD

God the Omnipotent! King who ordainest
Thunder Thy clarion, the lightning Thy sword;
Show forth Thy pity on high where Thou reignest;
Give to you peace in our time, O Lord.

WEEK ONE

—Saturday—

“His goodness and mercy are following us today. Two older people who loved you and lived for you — what good motivation they are for our worship!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (Psa. 23:6). What quality of character do I see in this beautiful verse? Goodness and mercy are two attributes that stand at the opening of the verse. Constant interest and concern are also there. A welcome home appears in the last half of the verse. I need to remember I am trying to see this verse for the benefit of all men. What you are and can be for all men. You do follow the movements of all men upon the face of the whole earth. The sun and rain and fruitful seasons are surely a part of your goodness that has followed all men since you placed the rainbow in the sky. You have a place in your bounteous house for all men. Oh, that all men would know you!

Express yourself in adoration for these qualities of God, Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me! This verse can be, and is, my lifetime testimony! Your goodness — far, far beyond anything that I could even ask or think has followed me all the many days of my life. Has your goodness always led me to repentance (Rom. 2:5)? I am grieved to say it has not. Dear Lord, in these latter days I long and yearn after your presence and turn my heart again and again to you and the example of your Son. Mercy is applied love. This too I have received until I am embarrassed. Bill Gothard said, *“Maturing is discovering that the most difficult lessons that we ever learn are the ones we thought we already knew.”* How true I find this in my experience.

How do you personally relate to the goodness and mercy of God, and God who is Goodness and Mercy? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Gothard said that *“Confession is explaining how we*

have failed so that God will not be blamed for the consequences.” I am sure this would be true of public sin, but even there are those who would see a failure on the part of God. But this is always true of personal sin — I am guilty — I am responsible and I do not now blame you for the results of my sin. I accept the consequences as mine not yours! I need to add: in the confession of sin we do not lose our worth before you — we increase it! Our estimate of self-worth is also enlarged. We *are not* what we once were. We are changed, we are new, we are forgiven! Praise your name!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

All the way my Savior leads me;
What have I to ask beside?
Can I doubt His tender mercy,
Who thro' life has been my Guide?
Heav'nly peace, divinest comfort,
Here by faith in Him to dwell!
For I know, whate'er befall me,
Jesus doeth all things well;
For I know, whate'er befall me,
Jesus doeth all things well.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

His wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. *“Both of them were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren; and they were both well along in years. —Luke 1:5b-7, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How delightful to go into the house of these two god-

ly people and share with them. I know you can review the past as if it were but the activities of today. Somehow this good man had dropped into the trap of form without power, of religion without relationship. They were disciplined and obedient. Day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year these good people “walked in all the commandments and ordinances of yourself.” I love them for it, I know you did. Dear Lord, are there men and women like Zechariah and Elizabeth alive on the earth today? No doubt you see many, many of them. Are you looking at me? Was Elizabeth barren on purpose? It was in your purpose. Can we say that all disappointments have a purpose? Dear Father, I want to say this! I do believe this is so. If your purpose is not made known in this life it will be fully known in the life to come!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. You do have surprises for those “advanced in years.” Whereas you do indeed want much more than form in our worship — without the discipline of form — without obedience to your law there will not be the preparation for appreciation. We can not thank you as we should without discipline and duty. Perhaps nothing really important will happen today — just as in the hundreds of days in the life of Zechariah and Elizabeth. Nothing will happen that will be widely known or long remembered. We have prayed, we have read and meditated upon your word. We have worshiped you. Perhaps nothing more important could happen but this, all of these acts are but a preparation as well as a fulfillment. I receive and expect great things from you!

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you that there have always been men and women you could use. (2) Thank you for all of the precious heritage that adds so much depth to daily living. (3) Thank you for your laws — especially the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. (4) Thank you for the desire to love you and obey you. (5) Thank you for barrenness, for only then can we appreciate fulness. (6) Thank you for every year — each one a year closer to your eternal house.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . and both were advanced in years.” How easily many present day older people relate to this phrase. Such persons feel there are limitations imposed upon them for a reason they cannot control. Such a conclusion is false. The limitations of age are minimal compared with the advantages. It is indeed interesting that God chose an older couple to model his power in

human life. Because they were advanced in years several lessons could be taught: (1) A willingness to accept God’s great surprises is not limited to the young. (2) Even though advanced in years God has a special work for them. (3) They could relate to the young — indeed in their case a young man would grow up as an example for all men. (4) It was in *their* worship God spoke to them.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

As Zechariah prayed in the temple so I pray before you today: (1) I want to fulfill my priesthood today. (2) Lord, give me a true identity with those for whom I should pray. (3) Praise your name that I am in your family. I want to claim my inheritance. (4) Thank you for your grace that constitutes imperfect obedience as righteousness. (5) Keep my eyes open to the truth that by the blood of Jesus I am blameless. (6) As your bride I want to bring many children into glory. (7) For each year that I have left may I put you first.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these brief verses speak to me: (1) “You are my priest today — act accordingly.” (2) “Men can live uprightly today as in the days of Zechariah.” (3) “I will not forgive an unrepentant heart.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

India — Points for prayer: (1) *University students* — over 2,500,000 in 32 universities. Most universities have a group meeting regularly — pray for their witness to the many unconverted, and also pray for their purity of life, spiritual growth, and their involvement in local churches. (2) *Literature* — Pray for the distribution of scriptures and Christian literature. Pray for conversions and church growth thereby. Christian bookstores and literature agencies face major problems with importation of literature, lack of local writing talent, high costs in a poor land. (3) *Bible correspondence courses* have proved most successful. 60-70 centers send out courses.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

When I saw the cleansing fountain
Open wide for all my sin,
I obeyed the Spirit’s wooing,
When he said, Wilt thou be clean?
I will praise Him! I will praise Him!
Praise the lamb for sinners slain;
Give Him glory, all ye people,
For His blood can wash away each stain.

WEEK TWO

—Sunday—

“He has the whole wide world in his hands! We are the chosen to worship you — can we do less?”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” (Psa. 24:1). Praise just for yourself. What is the quality I see in this verse that commends you to all men as worthy of praise? The creator is also the owner — the earth belongs to you by right of creation. Since it belongs to you, you can and will do with it what seems best to you. What is said here of the infinitely small planet called “earth” can also be said of the immense galaxies of outer space. Blessed be your wonderful creative power. All the plant and animal creation also belong to you. It is right for man to see your creative genius in the flowers of the field or the trees of the forest.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me! Dear Lord, dear Creator, how startling, how thought provoking to address the creator of all. The whole race of mankind and the areas where they live all belong to you. Will you one day ask us to give an account of our stewardship of your property? We believe you shall. How am I using the portion of the world where I live? Dear Lord, open my eyes and mind that I might see creation and mankind as you do! I just came to praise you in wonder and love, in awe and the deepest reverence. How I do want to see the 220 nations of the world as individuals — each of them, all of them — you know them, see them, love them, want them as your children. There is much poverty, hunger, suffering. None of this is ignored. You have through your Son left us a plan to change it all. When will we hear him?

How do you personally relate to the creation of God, and God who is Creator? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is most difficult to think in such immense numbers.

Such becomes far too impersonal. Yet the larger problem (sin) is to not think in this way. If my Lord should come this very day how would I relate to the fulfilling of the great commission? Did someone outside of salvation hear from me about my Lord? When? How many? Where? My sin is that my concern for the lost world never gets past a concern for the lost world. Dear Lord, I can help evangelize where I can. I can help others evangelize where they are. Forgive me dear Lord for failures — in each area. *“Callousness.”* Dear Lord, how easy it is to become hardened to your love and power, your presence and personal interest! Sensitize my heart and keep me tender.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

⁸Once when Zechariah’s division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, ⁹he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. —Luke 1:8,9, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, how many thousands of priests entered the temples — Solomon’s, Nehemiah’s, Zerubbabel’s and now Herod’s — to burn incense? Not one priest

or one fire was unseen or ignored. What were the deep feelings of Zechariah when he was chosen? How I wish I could truly approximate your viewpoint. I can only imagine he was filled with gratitude and wonder. Perhaps eager anticipation was a part of his approach to his duty. Since the incense was only representative of the prayers of the worshipers, he too was in prayer. I am sure he had a sense of true concern that he perform his duty accurately. Perhaps he remembered the two classic examples in the sons of Aaron who had not. I do want to ascend the steps with this good man and step inside your temple of worship.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I do hope I have read aright the attitudes of Zechariah, but whether I have or haven't I can know my own heart as I come to worship you! Here are some of my thoughts offered as prayer to you: (1) "That I should be chosen among the millions who have not found you to offer praise and petition to you fills me with the joy of thanksgiving." (2) "It is a never ceasing wonder that I can come into your presence and actually believe and know you hear and answer." (3) "I come before your throne of grace, before my altar, even my wonderful sin offering, full of eagerness as to just what you have for me to do today." (4) "Most of all I am so glad this is not a once in a lifetime activity, but my priceless privilege every day." Praise you!

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

A part of every sacrifice was the incense as a thank offering. So it is today — a part of all my expression is thanksgiving. (1) Thank you for the dear man Zechariah — so much like many of us. (2) Thank you for our priesthood — we are on service every day. (3) Thank you for the service we have to the people with whom we live and serve — in prayer and encouragement. (4) Thank you that our prayers are always heard and answered — sometimes "yes," sometimes "no," and sometimes "wait." (5) Thank you for your temple today, even our bodies. (6) Thank you for your divine presence in us in the person of the Holy Spirit. (7) Thank you for our day — the fulfillment for which all of the prophets and priests looked.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense." The supreme blessing: to be chosen to go into the temple and approach the Lord on behalf of the people. This must have been the thinking of the priests who served in the days of our Lord. What was then a sacred privilege for a very few has now

become the joy of every believer. Each day — and several times each day — we can come into the sacred place; we can close the door of the closet our blessed Lord built us and lift our hearts to him in praise and intercession.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

As your "chosen ones" we have many needs answered only in prayer: (1) Without your presence I cannot serve you. Please stand by me. (2) Keep me aware that my duties as a priest never change. I am always on duty. (3) Choose that area where I can intercede for men today. (4) Thank you that I am your temple now. (5) Thank you for the sweet incense of prayer. (6) Thank you for our eternal high priest at your right hand. (7) Keep me humble lest I be struck dumb.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these two verses you can say something eternally important to me: (1) "You are on duty now as my priest." (2) "You live and serve every day before me." (3) "Your prayers can come up before me as lovely fragrant incense."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

India — Points for prayer: (1) *Bible translation*. Of India's 800 languages, only 26 have the Bible, 48 the New Testament and a further 48 portions of the New Testament. Work is now in progress in 35 languages, but many more await translators. More Indian believers need to be raised up for this exacting ministry. (2) *Gospel recordings* — now with records in 187 of India's languages. This is a valuable tool together with cassettes for evangelizing and teaching the smaller or less accessible peoples of India. (3) *Christian radio*. There is no Christian broadcasting in India, but over 20 studios produce programs for transmission from other areas. There is an increasing audience, but pray for a greater impact and response among Hindus and Muslims.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I will sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ who died for me,
How he left His home in glory
For the cross of Calvary.
Yes, I'll sing . . . the wondrous story
Of the Christ . . . who died for me,
Sing it with . . . the saints in glory,
Gathered by . . . the crystal sea.

WEEK TWO

—Monday—

“The King of character — strong — mighty in battle! The ONE who sends ministering angels! Let’s worship Him!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle . . . the Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory” (Psa. 24:8,10). This is a Messianic psalm, full of wonderful meaning in reference to our Lord. The primary purpose is to praise you (both of you) for the wonder of meaning in these descriptive terms. You are “the King of character — for so the meaning of the word “glory.” It means “the essential quality or the essence.” You are *the source* (and in this sense King) of all character. you are the only one indeed THE ONE who can give meaning or character to anything. I want to set aside this one attribute and lift up my whole heart to you in praise. “Strong and mighty — mighty in battle.” Bless your wonderful self — your strength and the use of such strength in the battles of life are beyond human appreciation or expression. You have a host of those who (like myself) have gladly joined ranks behind the One who has never lost a battle!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for myself. I, like thousands before me, have seen my Lord returning in triumph through the gates of the eternal city to enter back into the glory he had with the Father before the foundations of the world. At the same time, I want to open the gates of my own heart and invite him to enter in a march of triumphant coronation. Take the throne of my heart oh King of all virtue, of all true holiness, of all abundant life. Welcome home! How gladly, gladly do I acknowledge your strength — how beyond adequate expression are your exploits of battle with my enemy! I have not really answered the question, “Who is the King of glory?” I have only tried to appreciate in such a limited way the awesome qualities of One who is the captain of the hosts of heaven.

How do you personally relate to the rule of God, and God who is King? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

I am so glad that your greatness never discourages me — for I remember that you are *Love*, as well as power, indeed power in love! How is it that when I know so well that you are the King of character, i.e., leader of all virtue, that I act and think as if I were the source? How sadly do I find out that “in me dwelleth no good thing.” To will is present, but the power, the ability to fulfill comes from the King of virtue! How easy it is to admit my lack, my poor attempts, my willful stupidity! I gladly, out of my need, cast myself at your feet. Forgive me, but at the same time live through me in the strength of your might! “*Filthiness.*” This is of the mind, the will, the emotions, the conscience, not only of sex but of humanism, materialism, and the cares of this life. Clean me up!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Breath on me, Breath of God,
Fill me with life anew,
That I may love what Thou dost love,
And do what Thou wouldst do.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹¹Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. —Luke 1:11,12, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

This is surely your text! I feel like an outsider. You look into the hearts of all those “assembled worshippers.” How many were truly praying? How many were only going through a form they performed hundreds of times before? Dear Lord, we fit this description! But no doubt there were those who bowed their heads because it represented their hearts. Here was a man and over there another whose uplifted hands indicate the true wonder and joy of their hearts. All you did in the appearance of the angel was to materialize a fact that happened any time anyone offered incense. Your angels are here now, today, in this place — we just cannot see them. It is startling even to attempt to live in the realm of the spirit world.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I do identify with Zechariah in several ways. Therefore, I can sense his amazement and surprise. I can even now see it on his face. He always knew you had angels, he believed they were your ministering spirits. He no doubt believed they were present in the temple as he performed his duties. But the visible presence of just one angel catapulted him into an entirely new dimension. So it would be for me! No doubt you thought Zechariah needed this miracle to establish or confirm his faith. Even after such an appearance he did not react as he should. Dear Lord, I want to learn from his mistake. I do want to accept without question this message of your angels.

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Surely this is an appropriate circumstance for thanksgiving. (1) Thank you for a time set aside and kept for worshipping you. If we do not do this we will never have it. (2) Thank you that you appeal to man through his senses in the fragrance of incense as well as intellectually through your word. (3) Thank you for “assembled worshippers” who have been there from the beginning. (4) Thank you that you have promised your presence every time we gather for worship. (5) Thank you for our altar of your presence, even your Son. (6) Thank you for the “right side” of all experiences in life — that you are always there. (7) Thank you for the strong hold on my heart. I do not want you ever to let go!

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . he was startled and gripped with fear.” We in America need to be startled out of our complacency and gripped with the fear of the loss of our freedoms. This is the constant message of some people in our nation. The real danger lies in our complacency in our

worship and our lack of real personal reverence. If our eyes could be opened to the real world of the spirit our response would be very much like that of Zechariah. What an awesome thought that angels are right here with me in this room! Do they influence me in any way? If they are to serve me, as I know they do, then they *must* influence me. Since angels are spirits they would have access to my spirit, or to me as a spirit. I want to be yielded to God’s will so the angels will not be hindered in their service. I am sure when I get into the spirit world after death I will be startled and gripped with holy reverence at all angels did while I was on earth.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In your appearance to this old man there is much for which to pray: (1) I want to know how I can help others to worship you. (2) Keep me aware that there *are* many who do sincerely worship you. (3) Sensitize my heart that I might appreciate the ministry of your angels. (4) As I allow prayer to burn out the dross of my heart, minister to my spirit. (5) Thank you for the assurance that even when I cannot see you you are at work on my behalf. (6) I want the capacity to be startled with your goodness. (7) Fill me with holy awe at the prospect of the end of all things.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Gabriel came to speak to this man — speak to me in these circumstances. (1) “I speak best to those who worship me in sincerity and truth.” (2) “All I have said in the New Testament is my message to you — hear it.” (3) “I am always standing on the right side of every issue.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

India — Point for prayer: (1) *Christian medical work* has had to be greatly streamlined with the run-down of missionary staff. *The Christian Medical Association* has oversight over 430 institutions with both Indian and expatriate medical workers. *The Emmanuel Hospitals Association* now has responsibility for all the hospitals, etc. that were run by Bible believing missions. Pray for the witness that goes out from these hospitals to the many patients, and that this may lead to many seeking the Savior.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Wounded for me, wounded for me,
There on the cross He was wounded for me;
Gone my transgressions, and now I am free,
All because Jesus was wounded for me.

WEEK TWO

—Tuesday—

“He leads me — he teaches me — in him is truth or reality. He is right now answering prayer.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Show me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me, for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day” (Psa. 25:4,5). I am sure I shall run out of days before I run out of the beautiful qualities of your character. There are several life changing qualities in these two verses. To show me the way I should walk several things are necessary. (And what is needed for me is needed for all men.): (1) My attention must be arrested. Man is fascinated by his own interests. But you do have ways of getting our attention — some ways are wonderfully subtle and some are very blunt! (2) You must create a desire to walk in your paths or ways, i.e., once I have seen them. Such a desire is almost automatic since (sad to say) we do not look for your way until we are in need. Dear God, say it isn't so! But too often it is. (3) I must be in a “walkable” or “teachable” frame of mind — humility and trust must be present. Dear Lord, why is man so willfully stupid?

Express yourself in adoration for these qualities of God. Speak them audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me! To praise you and bow before you is my joy and privilege! Bless your holy name that I have the strength to do so. I have your truth in your word, but I need to be led (as a little child) in my understanding of its application to my life and the lives of those about me. What are the qualities of a learning child? (1) Wide-eyed confidence in the teacher. Whatever he says is true. (2) A concentration with understanding on what is being said. (3) An eager uninhibited willingness to do whatever is taught. Oh my Lord! I do, I do throw out all other words. I open my whole self to your word. I want to fasten my whole attention on what you say. Blessed Savior, if you said it, I will do it.

How do you personally relate to the teaching of God, and God who is Teacher? Speak it out or

write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

My always present Lord, you know so well that such qualities as I have just expressed are indeed the deep desires of my heart, but they are not the daily practice of my life. Forgive the sad gap between desire and fulfillment. But I know that desire held often enough and deeply enough does become fulfillment. So since I have no other — and want no other — I wait before you for the change!

“Unforgiving.” Since forgiveness is inseparably linked with forgetfulness can I now remember anyone who sinned against me? Do I feel in my spirit a hurt, a resentment? Am I open and full of good will toward all men? Just now I ask for the memory healing blood of your Son!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

The Lord's our Rock, in Him we hide,
A shelter in the time of storm;
Secure whatever ill betide,
A shelter in the time of storm.
Oh, Jesus is the Rock in a weary land,
A weary land, a weary land;
Oh, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land,
A shelter in the time of storm.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹³But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. ¹⁴He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, ¹⁵for he

will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth. —*Luke 1:13-15, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What an awesome word! Had Zechariah actually been praying about the birth of a child? The answer is obvious, but we have difficulty believing he could pray and not accept your answer. But then, we too are there. How I do want to relate this text to yourself. How very specific and personal are all your words. (1) You call men by their names. (2) You know their wife's name and their relationship with each other. (3) You give the name of a boy baby. (4) You know our reaction to your gifts — because you know us. (5) You know all our neighbors and our relationship to them. (6) You know the future of our children. (7) You specify the life style of our children. Praise your name forever!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I do wonder how many of my prayers have been heard and I did not know it! How many times have my prayers been based on my understanding of what you could or could not do. Dear Lord, open my eyes! Forgive me! Did you know of the birth of our children (and grandchildren) before we did? I'm sure you did! Could we say that your intentions for every son and daughter born was in principle the same as your purpose for John? You sent the spirit of that son or daughter into the womb of the mother so the child would be "a joy and a delight" to us. If some other reaction was present it wasn't your intention. Praise your blessed Person. I do believe you intend for every single child born to at least Christian parents, yea *all* parents, to be great in your sight. Oh, that your purpose might be fulfilled.

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you, oh thank you that you do hear and answer prayer. (2) Thank you that your answers are not circumscribed by our lack of faith or understanding. (3) Thank you that each and everyone of us are individuals to you, known by name and need. (4) Thank you for the joy and delight that has a lasting quality. (5) Thank you for the many who can and will rejoice if I rejoice. (6) Thank you for the fact that we can be filled with the Holy Spirit from the day of our new birth. (7) Thank you for the grand example of John the Baptist.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from

birth." How wonderful it would be to be filled with the Holy Spirit from the first day of our new birth and stay filled with the Holy Spirit till we left this life. Perhaps we can learn a secret or two from John the Baptist so this can be true: (1) Have parents who are also yielded to the rule of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. We are later to read of both Zechariah and Elizabeth that they were "filled with the Holy Spirit." If we do not have Christian parents — at least your parent in the faith should be so filled. (2) Give God through his word the throne of your heart and allow him to control the demands of your body. Of John it is said, "He will never take wine or strong drink." The control of the desires of the body is directly related to the Spirit's rule in our life.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the beautiful promises to Zechariah is much material for prayer: (1) Quiet my fears of the unknown — they are all known to you. (2) Thank you that thou Lord hearest me! (3) Lord, I have been as faithless as this man — deepen my willingness to believe. (4) Thank you for the wonderful assurance that nothing is too hard for you. (5) You can use older people — use me. (6) Thank you that you know our names before we are born. (7) May the greatness of John impress itself more and more fully upon my heart.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

How easily you could speak to me through these verses: (1) "You are greater than John." (2) "Many can rejoice because of the new birth of any child of mine." (3) "It is possible to be filled with the Holy Spirit from the time of your new birth."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

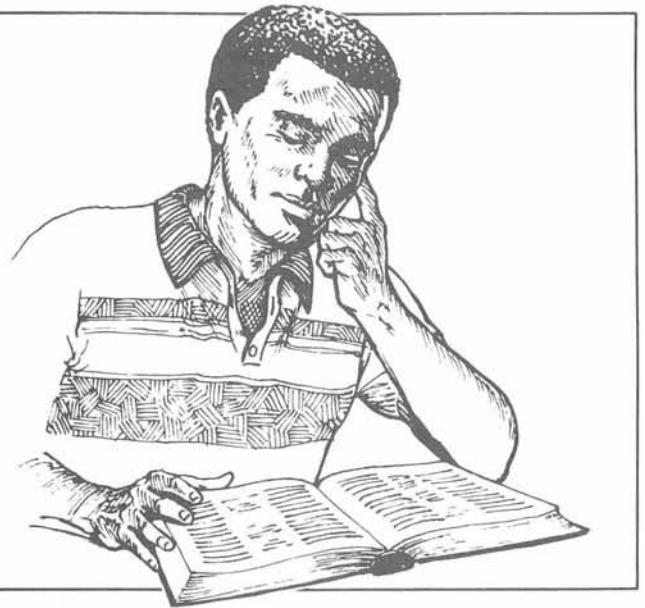
India — Point for prayer: (1) *Unreached peoples and areas: The North Indian Plains* with their teeming millions have far fewer believers than better evangelized South India. *Uttar Pradesh's* population has increased 300% in 50 years, but the number of Christians of all kinds has decreased and most of these are only nominal and rarely attend a church service. There are six small Bible Schools in the state and few Christian workers.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Jesus is all the world to me,
My life, my joy, my all;
He is my strength from day to day,
Without Him I would fall.
When I am sad, to Him I go,
No other one can cheer me so;
When I am sad He makes me glad,
He's my friend.

WEEK TWO —Wednesday—

“He has chosen to forget our sins — he does not remember them. He can give us a perfect heart.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgression; according to thy mercy remember me for thy goodness’ sake, O Lord” (Psa. 25:7). O what a joy to tell you again how I appreciate this one quality of yourself! You can and do forget — you cannot and will not remember the sins of my youth. The problem is we do! But it is possible to totally forget. When we truly and deeply do not want to remember and we stay with the purpose for twenty-one days we will not remember! Praise your name. I wonder how old David was when he wrote this Psalm? Was he past 50, or 60, or 70? It is my persuasion that all the qualities of character that we so admire in you we can also develop to a limited, but a very real extent in us. Our Lord has been grievously sinned against and yet he treats us in mercy for the sake of his goodness; can we do less with those who sin against us?

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I want to praise you for a clean, clear, fresh, new record. Each day I can and do begin with just such a record. I confess my sins. (I do wish I could remember them more adequately.) But then my forgiveness is *not* contingent upon my ability to remember. The inward effect of your forgiveness could be related to my ability to remember. My appearance before you today is to praise you for your mercy and goodness. Mercy is such a lovely, tender, personal quality. I have often said, mercy is love applied. Love forgives and forgets and mercy makes such love personal. This is just what you have done for me with the sins of my youth (and old age). It is more than a comfort to know that your essential being is *goodness*. How glad I am!

How do you personally relate to the goodness and mercy of God, and God who is Goodness and Mercy? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

It will be easy to seek your cleansing (deep within) for remembering and in a sense repeating any of my sins. It is Satan’s business to remember sins to accuse us with them. I reject and resist him! Forgive me for falling prey to his wiles. I do indeed cast myself upon your goodness. I have no perfect goodness of myself — all my value is in you. Do you keep a record for each day? What shall be written on today’s page? Bless your name, because of my confession and your merciful forgiveness only what good is done this day will remain for tomorrow’s record! How delightful to claim your forgiveness.

“Perverseness.” How easily I relate to this sin. Why is it that I am so very unreasonable in my demands upon my wife — not all the time — but at times I know I am perverse. Dear God, dear wife, forgive me! I can blame it on several things — the blame is mine! So also is the forgiveness!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

What a fellowship, what a joy divine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
What a blessedness, what a peace is mine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.
Leaning, leaning,
Safe and secure from all alarms;
Leaning, leaning,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹⁶Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. ¹⁷And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the

wisdom of the righteous — to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

¹⁸Zechariah asked the angel, “How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.”

¹⁹The angel answered, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. ²⁰And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their proper time.” —*Luke 1:16-20, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How fine it is to read of this servant — yea, a bond servant of yours! John brought many of your people back to you because he himself was with you. We cannot bring people where we ourselves will not go. Isn't it possible to have the same demeanor and attitude of Elijah today? I *know* we can have the same power, even your blessed Holy Spirit. Elijah and John the Baptist both turned the hearts of people to you by their words (which were actually your words) and so we can today! It is wise and good and satisfying to obey you. Oh, that today we were the people ready to receive your rule in all our lives. I do mean for each of these words to be in agreement with your mind. Forgive me where I have erred.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I am so very much like the priest: “How can I be sure of this?” How often have I said it? I have said it in actions and attitudes far more often than in words. Bless your name, age has nothing to do with the fulfillment of your purposes. This is a *real* comfort to me. The answer of the angel should have been, and was more than adequate: “I am Gabriel”! That could have sufficed; but he offered much more. This angel, representative of millions of angels, stood in the presence of God (yourself). He was a messenger and therefore was sent to deliver your word. What he had to say was “good news.” I want to absorb every word inasmuch as such messengers are with me here.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for numbers — “many of the people of Israel” — so today you want *all* saved. (2) Thank you for a way back — even obedient repentance. (3) Thank you for our priceless privilege of going before to preach your word in preparation for your coming into the hearts of men. (4) Thank you for the lovely expression “to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.” How we all need to be like children. (5) Thank you that the disobedient can be changed — they can see the reasonableness of righteousness. (6) Thank you that we can always be ready and be your people. (7) Thank you that when you command you furnish the means with the command.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . my words, which will come true at their proper time.” Wouldn't it be wonderful if all our words came true in just the way we planned? Truth is simply that which equals reality. When Gabriel made this promise he declared a monumental quality of God's character. Whatever God has said will find fulfillment. More dependable than the laws of this universe is the One who set the laws in motion. It is a provocative thought that refusal to accept this promise resulted in muteness. The thought seems to be that all men should gladly exclaim in wonder and praise at such an ability. The very life of fulfillment is in the words of God. The principle of acceptance or rejection is based on the integrity of the speaker. If a poor man promises us a million dollars we doubt the possibilities of fulfillment. If a billionaire promises us a million dollars we should rejoice at the good news.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

The character and mission of John move me to prayer: (1) Keep my purpose to bring men back to you. (2) Give me divine wisdom as I speak to religious people. (3) I need the discipline of John and Elijah. (4) I need the boldness of these your servants. (5) I need the spiritual awareness of these men. (6) Somehow help me to break the hearts of men as they see your love. (7) You said it — I believe it — and may this settle it without question of doubt or fear.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in this example of unbelief: (1) “You do not need explanation when you have revelation.” (2) “Good news is not good news unless someone believes it.” (3) “Not one promise I have made will ever fail of fulfillment.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

India — Point for prayer: (1) *Unreached peoples and areas: Bihar* is prone to droughts and famines and is very needy spiritually — the eight million Muslims and 65,000 schools have no Christian witness.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

When my lifework is ended,
and I cross the swelling tide,
When the bright and glorious morning I shall see;
I shall know my Redeemer when I reach the other side,
And His smile will be the first to welcome me.
I shall know Him, I shall know Him,
And redeemed by His side I shall stand,
I shall know Him, I shall know Him
By the print of the nails in His hand.

WEEK TWO

—Thursday—

“All his paths are steadfast love and faithfulness. We can develop intimacy with our Lord — let’s do it!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies” (Psa. 25:10). What marvelous qualities of yourself we find in just this one verse. Oh my Father, I want to find myself traveling your paths. “Steadfast love.” Love that does not give up. Love that remains constant and unchanging. Since love is giving, this is really saying you are always giving me what is best and most needful in my life. You have always kept your part of any agreement. You are there to fulfill what you have promised! Blessed be your name! In the keeping of our part of your agreement is the fulfillment of your promises. We know by experience your love and faithfulness. How I praise you for what I see here of yourself!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Am I walking in your paths today, if I am keeping your covenant and testimonies? What are the terms of your covenant? I believe what I read on the page of your book: *“The new covenant commonly called the New Testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”* I believe every word in these twenty-seven documents is a part (my part) of this agreement. I would be terribly discouraged and depressed beyond hope if I did not know this is a covenant of “grace through faith.” This is no “cop out.” I can and will never *know* (experientially) your steadfast love and faithfulness until I act upon the words of your agreement. Your steadfast love, your comforting faithfulness is never experienced except in my stumbling attempts to do your will. It is only in doing that I can “know.” I love you!

How do you personally relate to the love of God, and God who is Love? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

How open I am to a free confession of my sin before you. I teach and preach and live “in your sight,” and I do not sin without your presence. Why would anyone, least of all myself, *want* to sin? All sin has its motivation in the three areas of man’s deepest needs: (1) flesh, (2) eyes, and (3) pride. How should we satisfy the flesh? Have you made adequate provision for this? Evidently not (or so we must think), or we would not seek fulfillment outside your covenant. Sin must be stopped at the source for its nature is to feed on itself! Have you told me what possessions will be enough? Food and shelter and clothes — with these I can *be* content if I *want* to be. Dear God, I do! How shall we satisfy the desire to be accepted and appreciated? You have shown me in the person of your Son.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
 Forgive our foolish ways!
 Reclothe us in our rightful mind;
 In purer lives Thy service find,
 In deeper rev’rence, praise.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

²¹Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple.

²²When he came out, he could not speak to them.

They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak.

²³When his time of service was completed, he returned home. ²⁴After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. ²⁵“The

Lord has done this for me," she said. "In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people." —*Luke 1:21-25, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

The people in the temple for the public worship service were so much like people today: worried about the time or length of the public worship. Or was it their concern about how long it took the leader to fulfill his function? Only you know the hearts of those worshipers that day or today. I'm so glad this is so! Have I misread their wonder? I hope so. Bless your wonderful name, you always have a pleasant, unusual surprise ready for us! Any place where man draws aside to worship you can be a temple. Indeed, "your room" when we shut the door and look up to you becomes a temple. Have we seen a vision in our worship?

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. All over again, new and fresh and clean I want to absorb every word you have said in these verses. May I always out of my heart worship you in public. I am conscious of those present, and whatever part I have in the worship meeting, but I want to be supremely conscious of you! I do believe I communicate more eloquently by my body language, by my total attitude than I ever do by my words. Open up my inner most being to your love and power. One of these days the time for my service for you will be ended and I will go to my eternal home. What would it mean to me to not be able to speak for nine months? It would seem there was a dear good woman there who was full of humility, faith and praise — just like my dear wife. How blessed I am in her presence. Your best gift to me except salvation.

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

It is always a blessing to approach this time of worship. (1) Thank you that there has always been a place where man can worship you. (2) Thank you for forms of worship that can be filled with your power. (3) Thank you for the discipline necessary to keep the form and enjoy the power. (4) Thank you for the deep joy and desire to meet you in worship. (5) Thank you that you have made man's mouth to praise you. (6) Thank you for the wonder of the birth of a child; our part and your part. (7) Thank you for your tender concern expressed in Elizabeth's pregnancy.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Thus the Lord has done to me in the days when he

looked on me. . . ." Children are indeed "the gifts of God." The whole person is a spirit — even as God as a whole person is spirit. We share his nature, therefore what really happened at conception is the entrance of spirit from God into the genetic combination provided by the mother (in this case Elizabeth) and the father (in this case Zechariah). The expression of the human spirit grows with the body, but the whole person is present at conception. We take this to be included in Elizabeth's words: "Thus the Lord has done to me." The Lord sees us at all times, but there are special times (from our perspective) when he uses us in fulfillment of a larger plan than he has just for our own personal lives. A forerunner had been promised long ago. John was to be that forerunner.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Zechariah was in the temple while the people were waiting and wondering. (1) Teach me to wait without anxiety. (2) Keep me mute if my words are not of faith. (3) What important word do you want me to speak for you today? Lead me to just the text I should use. (4) How I do long to be able to speak into the hearts of people — help me. (5) What an awesome responsibility each of us has as your priests — keep us sensitive. (6) Thank you that there are really no impossibilities with you. (7) May I say with Elizabeth — "The Lord has done this for me."

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these words I hear your voice: (1) "I will not accept rejection of my word — I'll do it another way." (2) "You are my temple now; it is in you and through you I want to speak to my people today." (3) "Your repentance does not always change my plans."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

India — Points for prayer: (1) *The 68,000,000 Muslims* are found all over India, and are more willing than ever before to listen to the Gospel, but there are only about 20 Christian workers seeking to witness to them. Pray for a greater concern for these people among the believers. (2) *The rural population* is generally poor, backward and unevangelized. Very few of the 700,000 villages of the land have any Bible believing witness. In North India there is an average of one church for every 2,000 villages.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

O Could I speak the matchless worth,
O could I sound the glories forth
Which in my Savior shine,
I'd soar and touch the heav'nly strings,
And vie with Gabriel while he sings
In notes almost divine,
In notes almost divine.

WEEK TWO

—Friday—

“What a friend we have in God and his Son! How comforting to know he knows ALL of our relatives!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant” (Psa. 25:14). How wonderful to know the Great God of the universe wants to be my friend! Indeed, he wants to be a friend to all men. It is his essential nature to be friendly. This is almost more than I can assimilate. Friends visit about little things of personal interest, on a very local and limited scale. Could we say this of yourself? It is out of “fear” or reverence I say it is true! There are no unimportant subjects. There are subjects that do not edify — God will have little to say about our discussion of some subjects. He is interested. He does listen. But he is a true friend, and at times he will disagree with you. Most of the time there can be a warm exchange and communion in conversation, sometimes known as prayer.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. It is in friendship and reverence his covenant is made known (experientially) to me. Dear heavenly, present Father, I do want to confide in you as with the dearest and nearest friend. I have no better or nearer friend. I want to absorb every word you have written in your book the Bible. I want to be very sensitive to the application of these words to my heart. I want to pause often and long before your other book: the world you have created and as I interrelate and intermingle your messages to me I can do what your Son asked me to do: to abide in your word and let your word abide in me. In truth you can come and enter my heart and eat and drink with me as a friend. Dear God, I love you!

How do you personally relate to the friendship of God, and God who is your Friend? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

All I have said has been (as you know) out of my heart — I hide nothing from you. At the same time, it is *not* true! So often I have ignored or slighted our friendship, for this I seek forgiveness. Truly I have communion with you. How wonderfully balanced is this concept: it is in reverent friendship that your covenant or agreement with me is made a reality! I confess sadly that your covenant could be much more fully known in my daily experience.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Ere you left your room this morning,
Did you think to pray?
In the name of Christ our Savior,
Did you sue for loving favor,
As a shield today?
Oh, how praying rests the weary!
Prayer will change the night to day;
So in sorrow and in gladness,
Don't forget to pray.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son
1 of David, the son of Abraham:
2Abraham was the father of Isaac,
Isaac the father of Jacob,
Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,
3Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar,
Perez the father of Hezron,
Hezron the father of Ram,
4Ram the father of Amminadab,
Amminadab the father of Nahshon,
Nahshon the father of Salmon, —Matthew 1:1-4, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How good to think with you about the important people in the coming of your Son. Let me list each one and pause before your throne and ask for your insight of appreciation: (1) David — “he knew my heart.” (2) Abraham — “he was my friend.” (3) Isaac — “he obeyed even to death.” (4) Jacob — “he did prevail.” (5) Judah and his brothers — “he saved his brother.” (6) Perez and Zerah by Tamar — “their mother was truly humble.” (7) Hezron — “I knew good things about him — you do not.” (8) Ram — “an unknown important man.” (9) Amminadab — “he was available and usable.” (10) Nahshon — “he wanted to continue my covenant.” (11) Salmon — “married the harlot who loved me.”

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Of course the first thought is that if you can use these men and women you can use me. At the same time, I want to incorporate all the good qualities I see in their lives into my own. Dear Lord: (1) I do want to make my heart your heart. (2) How I do want to be a close constant companion of yourself. (3) How I do want to obey you from the heart — even when it hurts. (4) Change my name! I want to be your prince. (5) Joseph has won my heart, I want to keep him alive in my own heart. (6) Am I as anxious to have children in your family as Tamar was in hers? (7) Oh dear Lord, there are thousands of important people I do not know — I praise you for the larger picture. (8) What surprise do you have for me today? I know it will be good! (9) Salmon was such an unusual man — he was willing to risk ridicule and misunderstanding. I wait before you in the face of this company — what an incentive to run the race with patience!

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for David the humble shepherd who became the humble king. (2) Thank you for Abraham the idol maker's son who became your friend. (3) Thank you for Isaac the unassuming man who honored you. (4) Thank you for Jacob who had his ultimate priorities straight. (5) Thank you for Tamar — sinned against but not bitter. (6) Thank you for Rahab, the harlot — who became the forgiven, the accepted, the honored. (7) Thank you for my dear Lord who was before all and after all.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, . . .” What book can really contain the record of the life of our Lord? How very carefully Matthew traces our Lord back to David the King of

Israel! There are several fine lessons to learn here: (1) God in the person of his Son did want to identify with man — all men — all kinds of men. There is hardly a person alive who could not identify with one or more of the persons here mentioned. (2) Our Lord wanted us to know that women were a very real part of the record of his life. In each case the women were crucial to an answer, met a need, overcame a crisis. (3) He was indeed the son of man and the Son of God. He was the King of the Jews and the Lord of glory. Praise him all men and angels!

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the heritage of my Lord are requests for me: (1) My requests will be for the virtues I see in the lives of your servants. For David's humble heart. (2) For Abraham's invincible faith. (3) For Isaac's total submission. (4) For Jacob's change of character. (5) For Judah's respect for Joseph amid those who hated him. (6) For your grace in the life of Tamar. (7) For your mercy in the lives of very fallible men and women.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What do you say through these lists of names? (1) “I can use anyone who is willing to be my servant.” (2) “I will use some who are unwilling.” (3) “I will make some willing and others will never know I was at work.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

India — Points for prayer: (1) *The upper and middle class Hindus* tend to despise the Christians for their low caste or tribal origin, and there are few believers among them. (2) *States seeking to limit Christian evangelism* — Orissa and Madhya Pradesh have both passed laws making it very hard for anyone to change his religion. Pray that this may stimulate prayer and action by the believers, and also raise the quality of discipleship in the churches. (3) *Gujarat* — most of the Christians are of the lowest castes (road-sweepers, weavers and the tribal Bhil); 32 higher Hindu castes remain unreached, and the number of Christians (many nominal) is declining.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of His grace.

WEEK TWO

—Saturday—

“God is our: light — salvation — stronghold — is this cause for worship? He is at work in the lives of all those related to us — and him!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold (or refuge) of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?” (Psa. 27:1). My dear wonderful Father, ever living Savior, ever present Holy Spirit. How I do want to enter fully into the attributes of yourself as here described! (1) You are the whole and final source of light. I have no light at all on any subject unless it comes from you. Light offers illumination and warmth. (2) You save me by a great payment of ransom. (3) You dispel all anxiety, all uncertainty. If you save me and illumine my way, what is there to fear? (4) I am so glad to run into my refuge — how very often do I need such a stronghold!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

I have selfishly thought of myself in the above expressions — what is said of me can be and should be said of all men. Bless your wonderful name! Ah, there is always *much more* to say in worship and praise to yourself: (1) How beautiful to describe yourself with one word — and that word is “light.” Light holds one’s attention — most especially when there is a man in the center of that brightness. Even my blessed Lord! (2) Light blots out, removes by contrast all other interests. Dear God, how delightful to be lost to all else and just give myself wholly to yourself! But it really requires but little effort when you are brighter than the Syrian sun at noonday! (3) I am saved by light! How profoundly true this is! I walk with confidence when I have a total view of life — this you give me!

How do you personally relate to the light of God, and God who is Light? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

That I should walk in darkness or lose my way is the antithesis of all we have just offered in our worship to you. But such *does* happen. It is only when I am unwilling to confess my sin, unwilling to face and admit my stupidity and ignorance, that I walk in darkness. But, oh bless the Lord, when I confess my sin and purpose to forsake it, hate it, there is no more darkness, only light — the Light of life. Why should I hide in the dark when I can walk in the light?

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I am Thine, O Lord,
I have heard Thy voice,
And it told Thy love to me;
But I long to rise in the arms of faith,
And be closer drawn to Thee.
Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To the cross where Thou hast died;
Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To Thy precious, bleeding side.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

⁵Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab,
⁶Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth,
⁷Obed the father of Jesse,
⁸and Jesse the father of King David.
David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah’s wife,
⁹Solomon the father of Rehoboam,
Rehoboam the father of Abijah,
Abijah the father of Asa,
¹⁰Asa the father of Jehoshaphat,
Jehoshaphat the father of Joram,
Joram the father of Uzziah, —Matthew 1:5-8, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I am so glad to read about some of the men and women with whom I am acquainted. I am even happier to know you know *all* about *all* of them. There is Boaz — what a good man he was. I see him in the fields of Bethlehem. You knew him from his birth, in his childhood, as a young adult. Dear Lord, he is but representative of all the men you have chosen, as these men chose you. I really know nothing about Obed, beyond the fact that he is the father of Jesse! He was David's grandfather. Did David, as a boy, visit him, talk with him? What a large family Jesse had! All of them known so well by yourself. There are no families from whom you want to be absent. How I wish I could see David's face as a shepherd boy in Jesse's home, or as the king upon his throne in Jerusalem.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How often did Boaz discuss his mother's background? Remember, she was from the city of Jericho. What did others say concerning her? And then when Boaz married Ruth from Moab tongues really began to wag! I really do not know if this is true, but if such persons were like people today it would have happened. Praise your name, you worked with and through and in spite of such unworthy people! This is a large encouragement to me for I can identify with each one of these persons. Then there is Solomon who was really not wholly Jewish — his mother was a Hittite — her name was Bathsheba! Dear Lord, you are saying over and over and over again that you can use *anyone* who is willing to be used. How I do want to be that one! What a spoiled child was Rehoboam! But he had a wonderful grandson named Asa. I do not want to forget the point of these names: it was from these persons and for these persons your Son came.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Thank you Lord for: (1) Jehoshaphat, a wonderful king, who loved you and served you. He was not all you wanted him to be, but you loved him and taught him. (2) Thank you for Uzziah — it was in his day that you sent that wonderful prophet called Isaiah! (3) Thank you that I do not need to feel responsible for the sins of anyone but myself. (4) Thank you for my place in history — for anyone's place — all known and important to you. (5) Thank you for the thousands of unrecorded lives, each of which contributed — all of them recorded in your heavenly history. (6) Thank you again for preserving the records through all these centuries. (7) Thank you for the importance of history to give depth and perspective to present life.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . Abijah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat . . .” Here are three generations from which we can learn much: (1) Abijah — he followed the evil ways of his father Rehoboam. He only reigned three years. He led in a war in which Israel lost one million men. He had fourteen wives, twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters. (2) Asa punished his own mother for idolatry. He reformed the people from their apostasy under his father. In his old age he was diseased in his feet. He was backslidden in his old age. (3) Jehoshaphat was one of the best kings of Judah. He honored the Lord, carried forward the reform of his father. He commissioned the Levites to instruct the people in the law. We give this information to remind ourselves God can and does use a wide variety of people in spite of themselves.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Each life has many reasons for prayer: (1) For the unprejudiced love of Boaz. (2) For the courageous faith of Rahab. (3) For the selfless love of Ruth. (4) For the patience of Jesse. (5) For the early humility of Solomon. (6) For Nathan's courage with his friend David. (7) For the heavenly wisdom of Solomon.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in the lives of these men and women. (1) “There are many women like Ruth — do not be blind to their lives of service.” (2) “No one is unimportant in the family of heaven.” (3) “You are my only means of continuing my work in your generation.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

India — Point for prayer: (1) *The North East* (The old Assam), now made into six states: *Assam* — there is considerable turning to the Lord among the Santal and the Araon peoples. Most of the peoples remain unreached. Small fellowships are springing up in some centers. *Manipur* — most of the tribal people have become Christian, but the valley Meitai despise them, but are tired of Hinduism.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

There is a name I love to hear,
I love to sing its worth;
It sounds like music in mine ear,
The sweetest name on earth.
Oh, how I love Jesus,
Oh, how I love Jesus,
Oh, how I love Jesus,
Because He first loved me!

WEEK THREE

—Sunday—

“We worship before our Father, we are in his house. He knows us better than we know ourselves.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple” (Psa. 27:4). How very comforting to consider the characteristics of yourself as seen in this beautiful verse. I want to praise you that such qualities can be seen and admired by all the peoples of the world. (1) You are a Father with a large house — full of the warm welcome of love. (2) You can provide such a house or presence with us right here and right now — so that we can prepare for eternity “all the days of my life.” (3) There is a wondrous beauty in your presence — the beauty of power — of total knowledge without intimidation. (4) You want us to ask for help — in information or in personal help.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me (i.e., of myself I praise you). How harried my life becomes; how I need to feel the unqualified acceptance of your welcome! Praise your name! I do plan on seeking your presence today — I so sorely need it! I want you to express yourself through me — to live in me — I want to live in and through and of yourself. It is so good to be able to ask questions of you and not feel less for asking (as if I should already know). You make me feel like you are thanking me for asking. I am not in the temple of David or Herod, but I am in the temple of yourself — along with all other Christians, a habitation for yourself through the Holy Spirit. How reassuring is this truth!

How do you personally relate to the fatherhood of God, and God who is Father? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

I guess the reason I ask is because I do not know or because I do not have that for which I ask. But I do purpose to seek after all the qualities we have just expressed. Dear Lord, I do not like living in the house of this world. All the attraction is an empty shame. Forgive me, forgive me for accepting Satan’s invitation — it was a mistake, yea, much more — a sin! When will I learn that this world has no answers for me, or anyone else?

“Meanness.” This is what you have called elsewhere “perversity.” When I am frustrated and unhappy with myself and my relationship with you, I am mean with others.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I stand amazed in the presence
Of Jesus the Nazarene,
And wonder how He could love me,
A sinner, condemned, unclean.
How marvelous! How wonderful!
And my song shall ever be:
How marvelous! How wonderful
Is my Savior’s love for me.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

⁹Uzziah the father of Jotham,
Jotham the father of Ahaz,
Ahaz the father of Hezekiah,
¹⁰Hezekiah the father of Manasseh,
Manasseh the father of Amon,
Amon the father of Josiah,
¹¹and Josiah the father of Jeconiah
and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.
¹²After the exile to Babylon:

**Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel,
Shealtiel was the father of Zerubbabel, —Matthew
1:9-12, NIV**

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It would seem these many names offer no food for our souls. But names are people! You know what each one of them looked like. I have tried to see each of these men through the eyes of imagination. What did Jotham look like? He was 25 years old, and began to reign only after his father became a leper. What about the boy king, Josiah? Like all young people he could be and was influenced by those adults close to him. Only eight years old. Praise you that there was a priest who loved you and helped him. I am a priest and I can influence several eight-year-old kings today. What an influence for good is available everywhere if I only see it.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

There is that terrible man called Ahaz! How I want to be warned. He sacrificed his own son on the altar of his personal ambition! Maybe he wasn't so bad, several men have done that in our day! God have mercy! He lived in the time of that greatest of all Old Testament preachers: Isaiah. It was to this king Isaiah made the beautiful Messianic prophecy of the virgin birth (Isa. 7:1-16). But what is a great preacher to someone who lives for sex, food and money? Then there was the son of this godless idolater — and what was his name? *Hezekiah* — one of the very finest kings in the history of Judah. Maybe he listened to the preacher Isaiah when he was a boy, instead of his father.

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for Uzziah — it was in the year of his death Isaiah saw the Lord, high and lifted up! (2) Thank you for Jotham — he is a glaring example of what I do not want to be. (3) Thank you for Hezekiah — a good man who really lived as you wanted him to. (4) Thank you for Manasseh — began reigning at twelve and reigned the longest of all kings. (5) Thank you for Amon, the father of good King Josiah. (6) Thank you for the boy king Josiah — he did much good by working through another. (7) Thank you for Jechoniah and his brothers — I do not know them, but you do! I will one day know so much more.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . at the time of the deportation to Babylon.”
What a time never to be forgotten that was! It would be interesting to hear all the reasons why it was

nobody's fault that it happened. It happened and the Jews were at fault; but how easy it is to blame everyone else. When we are carried away captive by Satan, it is for the same reasons. A break with personal worship — all spirituality begins and ends with our own intimacy with our Lord. When we are not emotionally involved on a day-to-day basis, we are open to bondage.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What a variety you have to work with! (1) I continue to pray for the admirable qualities I see in the lives of those you have chosen. For the energy in your service Uzziah used his rule. (2) For respect and reverence of Jotham. (3) For the lesson from Ahaz that a godly father does not necessarily produce a godly son. (4) For the devotion of Hezekiah in spite of all opposition. (5) For the genuine repentance of Manasseh. (6) For Josiah's acceptance of your word when once it was found. (7) For the warning that exile and bondage are still possible for our country.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me through this history: (1) "I have always had my preachers to speak to the needs of people." (2) "Each man will decide his own fate — not circumstances." (3) "My patience does finally run out."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

India — Points for prayer: (1) *The North East: Arunachal Pradesh* on the north eastern frontier is made up of 40 different tribal peoples. The area is closed to all open Christian work. Most people are animists or Buddhists, but God is moving through children converted in mission schools in Assam and Christians from Nagaland. In spite of official persecution, there are growing churches with over 4,000 believers. (2) *Nagaland* — 16 Naga tribes now 66% Christian. For years a war of independence by the Nagas has hindered the great potential for a great missionary movement from these people to the 43 million tribal peoples of all India. Revival broke out in some areas of Nagaland in 1976.

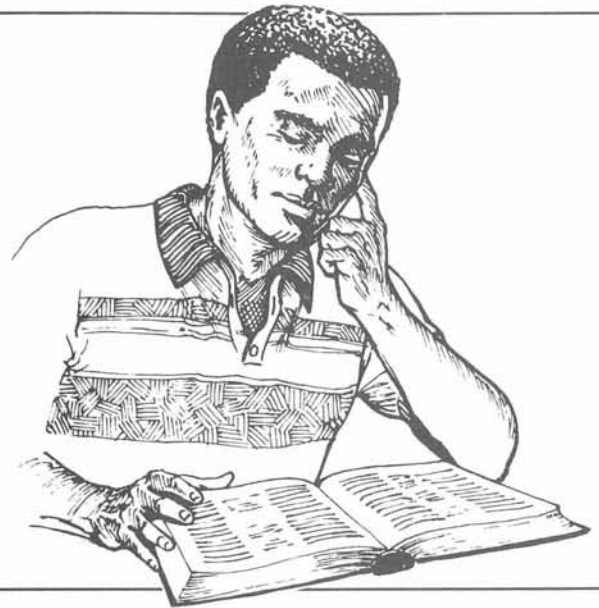
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Praise Him! praise Him!
Jesus, our blessed Redeemer!
Sing, O Earth, His wonderful love proclaim!
Hail Him! hail Him! highest archangels in glory;
Strength and honor give to His holy name!
Like a shepherd, Jesus will guard His children,
In His arms He carries them all day long:
Praise Him! praise Him! tell of His excellent
greatness;
Praise Him! praise Him! ever in joyful song!

WEEK THREE

—Monday—

“We have a God who is good — we can wait on him because no word will fail of fulfillment. We bow before ONE who knows every person in every generation!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living! Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; yea, wait for the Lord” (Psa. 27:13,14)! I want to enter into the meaning of this text and fully appreciate all you are! It does help to list your qualities as seen here: (1) *Goodness* — such a complete quality! All that pleases and satisfies, all that complements and completes life is in this powerful word. There seems to be some hesitancy on the part of the psalmist. David is saying that he believes there will be a time when he shall see a perfect balance in all of life. He also says that this harmony will happen in the area of his own observation.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Dear Lord, the next quality of yourself is, and has been the hardest for me to assimilate, “Wait for the Lord.” Wait for his time, wait for his fulfillment in me — in the world about me. It is only in time that waiting happens — there would be no waiting if there were no time. I am so glad to affirm that waiting has been better than not waiting. What you gave me after the waiting time was always better than I would have had without the wait. I have found strength and courage in this quality of yourself! Is there a process in action in the developing of my patience? Of course there is! “Let patience have its perfect work.” Isn’t that just like yourself! Why settle for less than the perfect — the mature or the fully grown?

How do you personally relate to the goodness of God, and God who is Good? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

It surely will not be difficult to confess my sin in this

area! In spite of all the terrible, terrible inequities of life, I do believe you are absolute goodness and one day there will be a great day of equity! What an amazement that will be. But I have truly, often wondered why, oh why, some projects tarry? Why some plans must be delated or laid aside. Impatience, anger, frustration, anxiety — all these are my sins. Forgive me! I do have such a constant struggle as to what is foolhardiness and what is faith.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Crown Him with many crowns,
The Lamb upon His throne;
Hark! how the heav’nly anthem drowns
All music but its own!
Awake, my soul, and sing
Of Him who died for thee;
And hail Him as thy matchless King
Thro’ all eternity.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹²After the exile to Babylon:

Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel,

Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,

¹³Zerubbabel the father of Abiud,

Abiud the father of Eliakim,

Eliakim the father of Azor,

¹⁴Azor the father of Zadok,

Zadok the father of Akim,

Akim the father of Eliud,

¹⁵Eliud the father of Eleazar,

Eleazar the father of Matthan,

Matthan the father of Jacob,

¹⁶and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of

Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

¹⁷Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile of Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.
—*Matthew 1:12-17, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, I am overwhelmed with the enormity of the task of thinking your thoughts about fourteen generations! They were all born one at a time. Each lived a life very important to him — and to you. Each of these people had relatives and friends. I want only to be able to praise you and honor your person as related to one of these fourteen: *Zerubbabel*. This man was born in Babylon. He must have loved and worshiped you with a fresh unselfishness to leave his home and go to Jerusalem to lead in rebuilding your temple.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

It is with Joseph and Mary I can relate! My father was a carpenter even as was Joseph. A dear good man he was. My father, like Joseph, lived and worked and died in obscurity. We would know utterly nothing about Joseph if it had not been for Jesus. Somehow I believe all of us will one day know all about all of us. We will have time (where there is no time) to appreciate fully “all the ways he led us to that blessed promised land.” All the interesting details will be known about each of us. No one will be bored, or in a hurry or inattentive or lack real personal interest. How old was Joseph when he died and transferred to the Spirit world? My dad was 72. How many houses did Joseph build? How many yokes did he make? We know just nothing of his personal life. Is that important? It is to him!

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD FOR THANKSGIVING

I want to try to thank you for carpenter Joseph — as he does remind me of my dear father: (1) Thank you for Joseph’s unassuming honesty. (2) Thank you for his total willingness to assume responsibility. (3) Thank you for his spiritual sensitivity. (4) Thank you for his true and constant love for Mary. (5) Thank you for his willingness to leave his job and friends to save the baby from death. (6) Thank you for his close companionship with our Lord in his early years. (7) Thank you for his home where our Lord could find shelter and love.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.” Let’s think and pray for a few minutes about the mother of our Lord: (1) She was of the royal line of the house of David, but had no personal pride in this fact. (2) She was full of faith in God’s messenger’s promise, but asked a can-

did question as to just how God was to accomplish what he had promised. (3) She was in love with the great God of the universe. (4) She lived in the midst of a wicked city, but was herself a virgin. (5) She lived in a busy demanding society, but she knew from study and meditation what God said in the scriptures. (6) She was totally immersed in the mundane routine of her household chores, but had a deep spiritual openness. (7) She did provide the seed, but God himself was the life of her womb.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In these strange names (to most readers) there are nonetheless thoughts for prayer: (1) Zerubbabel: I need his divine determination to finish a task. (2) Eliakim: I want to be as faithful in bearing your message of good news. (3) Zadok: There are at least five men with this name. Am I ready to be anonymous? (4) Eliud: No record has been kept except by God. (5) Eleazar: Is it important that your name be remembered? (6) Jacob: It is enough to be the grandfather of the Messiah, even if by marriage. (7) Joseph: How I need the patient love of this man.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Surely in these many generations there are words for me: (1) “I am yet at work through each family.” (2) “I work through my larger family the church.” (3) “I work very well through one man or one woman.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

India — Points for prayer: (1) *The North East: Kashmir* is largely Muslim. Several missions work in the Kashmir Valley, but very few Christian groups. There are probably no more than six people converted out of Islam. A number of Indian missionaries from S. India have seen a turning to the Lord in neighboring Jammu. Ladakh, once evangelized by the Moravians, has a weak Christian community that is intermarrying with Muslims. Pray for the conversion of nominal Christians and Muslims. (2) *Sikkim* in the sensitive mountainous border region between Bhutan and Nepal was taken over by India in 1975. Largely unevangelized and closed to mission work. The Nepali and Bhotia majority is virtually without a Bible believing witness, but there are about 1,500 believers among the minority ruling Lepcha people. (3) *The Laccadive Islands* west of India are Muslim and unevangelized.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

We praise Thee O God! for the Son of Thy love,
For Jesus who died, and is now gone above.
Hallelujah! Thine the glory;
Hallelujah! Amen!
Hallelujah! Thine the glory;
Revive us again.

WEEK THREE

—Tuesday—

“We are always strong in him — always protected in him. We bow like Mary full of wonder at your interest in us.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts; so I am helped, and my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him” (Psa. 28:7). How good it is to examine this text for the attributes of the ruler of all. He is the source of strength for all men. How can men rejoice in their strength, whether physical, social or intellectual and assume it is of themselves? How all men do need protection from themselves and the enemy. We are open prey without the shield of yourself. You are the real source of trust — we can place our confidence in all you are and all you say. You have naught but good in mind for man. How important it is to know whom to thank! How vital it is to know the true source of praise and exaltation! I offer up to you these brief words to say praise you, but what I really mean is that all men should so praise you.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. You are indeed and in truth my strength. How weak, helpless and vulnerable I am without you. When I fail to draw near I can know my strength of heart and hope are less and less. The closer I draw to you in praise and wonder the stronger I am. I do not want to face life without you. I refuse to look at the events of any one day without your protection. The longer I live, the less I trust men — at the same time, the more I trust you! In the “little things” of life I have been, I am being helped and my heart exults; I am profoundly happy! I know not how to express my joy. How well do many songs say what I feel! Praise your name!

How do you personally relate to the strength of God, and God who is our strength? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is not always so! Dear Lord, you know I am more than foolish to be anything but wholly honest with you. It seems to me my largest problem is taking enough time to think your thoughts. Almost before I know it, I am trusting in my own strength or hiding behind my own fig leaves. This is not altogether true — the real problem is that you have not become such an essential part of me that my response is your response. Forgive me for this very fundamental sin. *“Always right.”* There are those who “justify themselves.” There is always a way to shift blame. Dear God, I do not at all purpose to be in that number. I am guilty. I have sinned — I need and claim your forgiveness. I am not right at all — you are.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Nearer, still nearer, close to Thy heart,
Draw me, my Savior, so precious Thou art;
Fold me, O fold me close to Thy breast,
Shelter me safe in that “Haven of Rest,”
Shelter me safe in that “Haven of Rest.”

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

²⁶In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

²⁹Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. —Luke 1:26-29, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I can hardly contain the excitement I feel in the presence of your word. When I try to contemplate how much is behind these words of your servant Luke, "I scarce can take it in." Luke is always so careful with details. He tells us of the progress of pregnancy with Elizabeth as related to the announcement of Gabriel to Mary. Is it at all possible to see these words as you do? Dear Lord, I want to try. What a pleasant surprise was coming for all in this little town of Nazareth! It would seem you specialize in surprises! I am surprised, as all would be who were not acquainted with the meaning of prophecy, that you would select a virgin. Couldn't you have infused an ordinary child with your power and turned him into your Son? Does he have to be your Son *literally*? It is a thousand times more exciting, and human and real this way! Praise your name!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Speak these words into my heart! Why select an engaged couple? Why not use a couple already married? It is easy to see that much more humility is required to accept what you did than any circumstance we might invent. You get honor and praise for your power and love. I gladly give this to you! I imagine the streets were dirty — the hours were long — life was one tedious monotony in Nazareth. Into this darkness shone your light! The darkness didn't understand it, but Mary did! The pots and vessels were old and broken, but Mary was new and whole! I want to see all the favor you saw in this lovely village maid.

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

This is a really fine thanksgiving passage: (1) Thank you for the interest of God in the mundane matter of pregnancy. (2) Thank you for the angel Gabriel — I do hope I can see him one day. (3) Thank you for the dear girl who kept herself for her husband — and for you. (4) Thank you for the seriousness of the marriage pledge — oh, that it were so today. (5) Thank you for the example Mary has been to the millions of girls named in her honor. (6) Thank you for the high favor you gave to Mary — may I meditate more fully upon it. (7) Thank you for the rebirth of your Son in our bodies in the person of the Holy Spirit.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." In what sense shall we say that Mary was "highly favored"? "Full of unearned favor" would be another way of saying what the angel said about

Mary. It was not her worthiness (although she was a very fine person) — it was the priceless privilege of being the mother of the Messiah that was prominent in this expression. She had willingness and yieldedness coupled with humility.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me through what was said to Mary: (1) "I am still sending angels on missions to help for those who will inherit salvation." (2) "If there were no domestic problems, my help would not be needed." (3) "Embarrassment can be another form of humility."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Indonesia — Population: 134,700,000. Growth rate — 2.1%. People per sq. km. — varies from Java's 644, to Irian Jaya's 2.

Points for prayer: (1) *One of the most significant movements* to Christianity in history is occurring in this great and diverse land with a great ingathering of souls. This is the only country in the world where significant numbers of Muslims have turned to Christ. Pray for a continued open door in the face of Communist threat and rising Muslim opposition. (2) *The great people movements* seen in Sumatra, Java and Kalimantan over the last 15 years were accelerated by the events surrounding the 1965 coup. The cruelty of the Communists and bloodthirsty Muslim reprisals caused revulsion among many, and the virtual outlawing of animism further helped to bring thousands of Muslims, ex-Communists and animists into the churches or open to the vigorous evangelistic work of many churches and missions.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

The great Physician now is near,
The sympathizing Jesus;
He speaks the drooping heart to cheer,
Oh, hear the voice of Jesus.
Sweetest note in seraph song,
Sweetest name on mortal tongue;
Sweetest carol ever sung,
Jesus, blessed Jesus.

WEEK THREE

—Wednesday—

“We join with the hosts of heaven to praise. We want the wonder — the amazement of you that Mary had — we can have it as we worship.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings, (sons of God) ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name; worship the Lord in holy array” (Psa. 29:1,2). If the hosts of heaven praise you, what is man that he is hesitant or unwilling to do so? The multiplied millions of angelic beings surround your throne and express their worship in adoration and praise. The particular expression of praise refers to your essential being described in the word “glory.” There is no way we could ever imagine the overwhelming brightness or the stupendous beauty and endless variety of color the “sons of God” or the angels see in your presence. The impression of “strength” is such an interesting expression. This is the reaction of the angels when standing before you. I hear my Savior say: “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” O, may my worship of you be at least a little like theirs.

Express yourself in adoration of this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

For me! O dear Lord, I do, I do want to ascribe to you your “glory and strength.” I do want to express just as fully as I can the true “glory” or essential quality of your very self! I do feel like John of old — I want to face prostrate before you. My mouth is closed, I am speechless. I have no words. But a deep sense of wonder, of inexpressible joy wells up within me. How could it be that sinful man could be ushered into the presence of a holy God, and sinful beings to be allowed to join in the array of billions of heavenly beings? Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!

How do you personally relate to the strength of God, and God who is our strength? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

That I do not feel this way much more often is in itself a sin! You have not changed — the angels have not left since David first sang this Psalm of praise to you. Is it a sin not to worship you? Surely this must be the capital crime! I do want to play the game of minutes today. That is I want to think of you each minute of this day. Considering the reality of the spirit world this is a reasonable response. Forgive me, forgive me! There is a wondrous beauty in your holiness. I feel as dead as the moon, but I can reflect your light. I am not dead, but alive forever more! I have a divine life and light. Dear, dear God help me to share it!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing pow’r?
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
Are you fully trusting in His grace this hour?
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
Are you washed in the blood,
In the soul-cleansing blood of the Lamb?
Are your garments spotless?
Are they white as snow?
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

³⁰But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. ³¹You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.”

³⁴“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” — Luke 1:30-34, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How can I read these wonderful words back to you and tell you what they mean to me? More adequately I want to try to appreciate these words from your perspective. I know how woefully short I fall, but I do want to try. To give birth to a son called “the Son of the Most High.” What an awesome thought! How little did *anyone* realize what was happening. Even those to whom you appeared and spoke did not know. How much did Mary understand? She seems to grasp the promise of a supernatural birth. Or did she? I feel totally inadequate to approximate a heavenly viewpoint. I do want to say I appreciate more each day the depth of these words. But I shall never know all their fulness.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. “Do not be afraid” — “do not panic” would be the thought. It wasn’t as if the name “Jesus” had never been used before — it was a very common name. The Greek form of the Hebrew, Joshua. Many women named their sons Jesus, but none of them for Mary’s reason. Just how “great” would be Mary’s son! Did Mary ever wonder about the throne of David? How very deeply did this village maid ponder these things in her heart? As Mary stood at the foot of the cross and read the sign “This is the King of the Jews” what did she think? Did she think about Gabriel’s words? Dear Lord, I want to tarry long in the home of Mary and think deeply of all you meant when you became flesh and lived among us. There are a couple of qualities I admire in Mary: (1) She was capable of wonder and amazement. (2) She was a virgin. Both are so tragically lacking now.

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

What a joy to do. (1) Thank you for the understanding of angels — they know our limitations. (2) Thank you that angels also know our names. (3) Thank you that angels know our favor with God is in what we can be — not what we are. (4) Thank you for the precise detailed interest of angels such as: (a) You will become pregnant. (b) You will give birth to a child. (c) It will be a boy. (d) His name shall be “Jesus.” (5) Thank you for *your* definition of greatness. (6) Thank you that my Lord is on your throne in heaven. (7) Thank you that the rule of my Lord will never end.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . he will reign over the house of Jacob forever.” Will there be a “house of Jacob” in heaven? As

Jacob’s name was changed to “Israel,” so the tribes of Jacob have been changed to the new “Israel of God,” even the body of his dear Son. The church is “the house of Jacob” now. Right now our Lord rules and reigns over each one who will receive his Lordship. One day *every* knee will bow to him. How blessed and beautiful is the thought that he rules with love and humility today to show us just how we can reign over our own house; whether it is our family, our employees or our own body. It was with a towel as he washed dirty feet that he ruled the hearts of his followers.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In these precious familiar words there is much to lead us to prayer: (1) May I never lose the ability to be amazed at your goodness. (2) Mary’s faith and love are such an example for all of us. (3) Our Lord has been formed in each of us as Christians at the new birth — how can I relate to this? (4) How glad I am to claim the meaning of the name of Jesus — or Savior for my life. (5) I want to exalt you indeed as “the Most High God” in my experience. (6) How can I relate to the present reign of my Lord? (7) Thank you for the promise of eternal rule on the part of my Lord.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

(1) “When I call a servant I also provide for the fulfillment of my purpose.” (2) “This record of the birth of my Son will ever be fresh and new to those who have eyes to see.” (3) “My Son now shares the glory that he had with me before he became flesh.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Indonesia — Point for prayer: (1) *There are acute dangers* in this rapid growth. Although God also gave revival to the churches in some areas, much of the Indonesian Church is nominal, and most do not yet understand about the new birth because earlier people movements were not well disciplined due to lack of Bible teachers. The same danger is there in the present movement. Pray for the raising up of many leaders and teachers who are able to bring these hungry souls into a living relationship with the Lord.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I have found a friend in Jesus, He’s everything to me,
He’s the fairest of ten thousands to my soul;
The Lily of the Valley, in Him alone I see
All I need to cleanse and make me fully whole.
In sorrow He’s my comfort, in trouble He’s my stay,
He tells me every care on Him to roll:
He’s the Lily of the Valley, the Bright and Morning
Star,
He’s the fairest of ten thousand to my soul.

WEEK THREE

—Thursday—

“We cannot hear your voice in an audible manner — but we can stand in awe of your majesty. I want to appreciate Mary — help me.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord, upon many waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful, the voice of the Lord is full of majesty” (Psa. 29:3,4). In these verses the one quality of your character is that you communicate through words — “you speak.” Three times over it is said: (1) Your voice is upon the waters. (2) Your voice is powerful. (3) Your voice is full of majesty. I am sure when I am ushered into your eternal presence I will hear you speak! Until that time I will with the psalmist simply make comparisons. Your voice has been compared to the roar or immense noise of a thundering water or waterfall (cf. Rev. 19:6). I do want to enter into this comparison and appreciate all I can about you. (a) Such a noise can be and is all-consuming — the total person is overwhelmed by it. (b) It can be exhilarating by its very strangeness. (c) Man feels so small and weak in the face of this gigantic moving body of water. (d) It never ends. There seems to be no end to the volume of water. (e) The power present and that which could be transmitted is beyond human imagination.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Each time I try to keep my perspective objective it becomes impossible. I somehow turn it inward. I do indeed want to stand before “the voice of many waters.” Is there anything, I mean *anything* more important to me than hearing your voice? Dear God, dear God, this is the type of total interest I want to give your word! I love to sit before you and let you speak to me. May I so give myself to you that I am consumed by what you say! How often have I been filled with an exaltation and joy this world could not know or describe! It is the exhilaration of your presence — “the fullness of joy.” But always as I embrace your word to my heart, I do not need to feel weak and small — I already am! I am weak, I am

small. I need and want to be lost in you — my identity is in you and in your Son. At the same time, I, and all other men, are the *only* means you have for communicating your word! How humbling, how exalting!

How do you personally relate to the communication of God, and God who communicates? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

This is such a basic sin that when I have adequately confessed it I will have included all other sins in it. To confess that I have lived my life in a dry desert where just over the hill is a gigantic waterfall of the purest of water. Or to say it another way — I have stood blind before the “Voice of Many Waters” and thought it was the beating of my own heart. Dear, dear God, forgive me! How treasured a possession is your word to me. Why is it I have not memorized all of it? But behind your words is yourself. I do not worship the Bible, but the One who wrote it! May I do my worshiping all the time. Forgive me my blind secular outlook!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Sinners Jesus will receive;
Sound this word of grace to all
Who the heav’nly pathway leave,
All who linger, all who fall.
Sing it o’er . . . and o’er again;
Christ receiveth sinful men;
Make the message clear and plain;
Christ receiveth sinful men.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

³⁵The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. ³⁷For nothing is impossible with God."

³⁸"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her. —*Luke 1:35-38, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I shall attempt to take a new look at these words, just as if I read them in your presence for the very first time. The Holy Spirit is a person. I am convinced of this by the many intelligent capacities attributed to him. And by the use of the personal pronoun in reference to him. The phrase: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you," is tantamount to saying: "You will become pregnant from the Holy Spirit." The same thought is repeated in the lovely phrase: "The power of the Most High will overshadow you." What a promise to make to this humble obscure girl. And then to go beyond the concept to the birth! What kind of child would come out of her womb when the Holy Spirit was the father? The child to be born would be like the father: *holy* — and because God was the father he would be called "the Son of God." How many times did Mary tell this story? She no doubt told it to Luke. This is why it is so poignant, so beautiful, so full of the wonder of Mary. Praise your glorious name!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Was it to give Mary encouragement that Gabriel described the pregnancy of Elizabeth? I believe it was. Since the impossible was accomplished with Elizabeth, it could also be with Mary. There was a vast difference in the impossibilities, but they were both by human standards, impossible. How I do revel in these words: "For with God nothing will be impossible." What would happen in our lives (in my life) if we found something in our experience that was in his will and stayed before his throne of grace until the impossible became a reality? We are like Mary, afraid! Dear God, push me beyond fear into faith. When you have said it, it *shall* be done! The blessed mother of my Lord said exactly what I want to say: "Behold, I am the hand maid (slave) of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

This is a most blessed passage for this purpose: (1) Thank you for the unlimited power of the Holy Spirit. (2) Thank you for the personal interest and involvement God through the Holy Spirit has in our

lives. (3) Thank you for the Son of God, born of Mary. (4) Thank you for the dear aged sister called Elizabeth. (5) Thank you for the call to live aware that really nothing is impossible when God is in it! (7) Thank you for the joy of being your slave!

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"And the angel departed from her." Gabriel left, but other unseen angels stayed to minister to her needs. Since angels minister to those who inherit salvation we can not imagine a better candidate for the celestial realm than the mother of our Lord. Upon what other mission was Gabriel sent? In this case we could reverse the words of Peter about the desire of angels to look into the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies. We would like to investigate their activities. I am glad I have the confidence that angels really never leave me or any other Christian.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

The incredible answer of a miracle birth. How I do *want* to worship you. (1) Grant that just now I may claim your promise of the Holy Spirit's presence in my body. (2) Keep me constantly aware of the power of yourself — even "the Most High." (3) Open my eyes to see your leadership in the incarnation. I believe; deepen my faith. (4) Make me more aware of your interest in people and their needs and struggles. (5) How interesting that you touch women at both ends of life — a village maid and an old woman.

Right here add your personal request — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these words speak to me: (1) "The Holy Spirit is still conceiving for the new birth." (2) "*The Power of the Most High* has not abdicated." (3) "Nothing is impossible with me."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Indonesia — Point for prayer: (1) *The Muslim backlash*, stimulated by over-enthusiastic reporting in the Christian press about the great turning of Muslims to the Lord in Java, has led to some persecution, rioting and destruction of some churches. The government has bowed to this pressure a bit. Pray that Christian leaders might know the Lord's plan for evangelizing Muslims.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;
Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and Mighty!
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!

WEEK THREE

—Friday—

“Abundant goodness! Personal interest in me. We can indeed bow in wonder before you! Teach me the meaning of Mary’s song.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“How abundant is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for those who fear thee, and wrought for those who take refuge in thee, in the sight of the sons of men” (Psa. 31:19)! Let me mark the attributes of yourself I find in this beautiful verse: (1) Abundant goodness. (2) A personal interest in those who fear thee. (3) An abundance of goodness for those who take refuge in you. (4) A demonstration of your goodness in the presence of men.

I now claim these promises — not only for myself, but as a source of praise that this promise is for all who will accept its terms. You have a wonderful way of meeting all the needs of all men. Goodness in this connection is simply satisfying the longing heart. Man reaches out to find fulfillment in three areas: (1) For his flesh in sex and food. You promise here to show all men how abundant is your provision for those who worship you and hide themselves in you. (2) For possessions of life — “the desire of the eyes” — or what the eye can see and what man can claim for his own. Is there not enough in the world you have created for all men to have and to enjoy?

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

For myself! Dear, dear Lord, I want to discover and claim — right here, right now — in the presence of all men your abundant provisions for the deepest needs of my life. (1) For my flesh I have indeed found, praise your name, abundant provision in the realm of sex — your provisions in my dear wife are indeed “abundant goodness.” That I can control the intake of food and live in a strong body for many years is always before me. Dear Lord, I claim this promise. (2) Why, oh why, should I want more than food and clothes and only enough to cover my body and keep me warm? Dear Lord, I do want to relate all I have to yourself and your purposes — help me. (3) Indeed, indeed, have you provided abundant goodness in

fulfillment of purpose — and it has been “in the sight of the sons of men.”

How do you personally relate to the goodness of God, and God who is Good? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Even as I write these words I know how woefully short I am in resting in your goodness. What a restless soul (life) I am! Why *must* I be constantly searching for a larger and fuller expression of what I consider good or valuable? When will I rest my mind and my will in your mind and your will? Your mind and your will is found in my total obedience to your word. It is when (and *only* when) I present my body as a living sacrifice — to be controlled and used as an animal was for the altar — that I will *experientially know* what your good and perfect will is for me. I like this little equation of reality: (1) presentation; (2) consecration; (3) revelation. Dear Lord, for today — forgive and help me to do it!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

From ev’ry stormy wind that blows,
From ev’ry swelling tide of woes,
There is a calm, a sure retreat:
’Tis found beneath the mercy seat.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

³⁹At that time Mary got ready and hurried to town in the hill country of Judah, ⁴⁰where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

⁴²In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!"

⁴³But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!"

⁴⁶And Mary said:

"My soul praises the Lord

⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸for he has been mindful

of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me — holy is his name.

⁵⁰His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.

⁵¹He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

⁵²He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. —*Luke 1:39-52, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I do want to walk those difficult miles from Nazareth to the hill country of Judea. I have been over these miles in an air-conditioned bus. Looking out the window of that bus I see Mary trudging along between the rocks on the rough hillside. What were her thoughts in what must have been at least a two day's walk? You went with her, you knew her every thought. She must have known the location of the house of her kinswoman. Elizabeth was in another room when Mary entered. Mary called out some greeting — when Elizabeth recognized the voice of Mary there was a strong movement in the womb of the aged woman. Just how Elizabeth knew the baby leaped for joy only you could tell me.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

This I must do! This I *want* to do! How is it that Elizabeth said: "And blessed is she (Mary) who believed that there would be (or, for there will be) a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord." How did Mary's faith relate? I take this to mean: that God's word would come to pass regardless of whether man accepted it like Mary, or rejected it like Zechariah. But Mary was so much happier and full of peace and wonder when she did accept your word.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

I will confine the expression of joy and gratitude to Mary's song of praise. (1) Thank you for the totalness of Mary's praise — her soul, her spirit was involved. She wanted to enlarge upon the beauty of your character and rejoice in your presence — I do the

same! (2) Thank you that you have regarded the low estate of all us sinners and have given us such a mighty salvation. (3) Thank you for every good, every great and every worthwhile thing in my life — all from you! (4) Thank you that every generation can enjoy the bounties that are ours in you.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away." This is not a testimony of perverseness. The underlying principle of sowing and reaping is here. If we sow in the flesh and come to the Father of spirits to be filled we will be sent away empty. Those who come with a great hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled with the good things of his righteousness. If we have "found" our life he has nothing to offer — but if we have "lost" our life he is ready to fill us with good things. It was the hungry maid of Nazareth who was filled with the good things of heaven. It was the rich in Herod's court who were sent empty away. May we repeat this law of the Spirit in our lives today.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In Mary's visit and song there is so much about which to pray: (1) I want to be like Mary: "the Lord's servant." (2) I want to say out of my heart, "May it be to me as you have said." (3) Give me the sense of awe that filled the heart of Elizabeth. (4) May the impact of these words never leave me: ". . . the mother of my Lord"! (5) I want to be among the blessed who believe what you have said. (6) May my whole self praise and rejoice in you.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these lovely words speak to me: (1) "I lift up the humble." (2) "My mercy is always available to those who fear me." (3) "I will fill the hungry with good things."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Indonesia — Point for prayer: (1) *The churches* are strong and revived in some areas, nominal in others and virtually non-existent in yet others. *Nominalism* is rife in the islands which have been Christian for centuries.

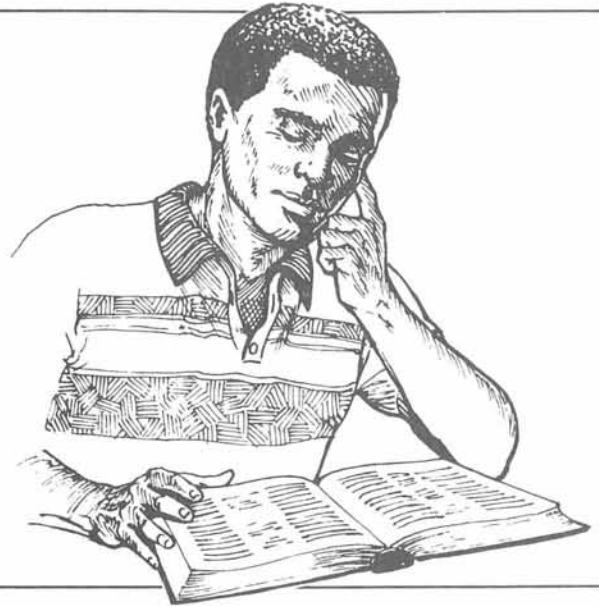
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

We would see Jesus, for the shadows lengthen
Across this little landscape of our life;
We would see Jesus, our weak faith to strengthen
For the last weariness, the final strife.

WEEK THREE

—Saturday—

“Reasons for worship: He is my rock; my fortress; my leader. You know the names and missions of all your servants.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Yea, thou art my rock and my fortress; for thy name’s sake lead me and guide me, take me out of the net which is hidden for me, for thou art my refuge” (Psa. 31:3,4). Dear Father, there are such good, precious qualities of yourself in these two verses: (1) My rock — *the* rock of all men. (2) My fortress — a place of protection for all men. (3) You have the authority and ability to lead all men, i.e., as a group — and the same authority and ability to guide the feet of each one. (4) When I find myself trapped (as so often I do) — or when any man does so find himself — you can extricate me, remove me from the net. I did not see the trap, but you did! (5) I do not want to hide from you in Satan’s trap. I want to hide in you from Satan. Such you are and want to be for all men.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. It is with strong desire I come to you this day. I do so want to personally claim all I see in these lovely verses. (1) I see a great rock, high on a hill — there is a shaded place beneath it. From this elevated position I can get a panoramic view of all the world. At the same time, I can go into the rock and it will close and Satan cannot enter; I am hidden and safe. (2) You are a great and mighty impregnable fortress. I hurry through the gates into the streets of my fortress city. There is absolutely no way Satan can reach me. It is good to know the limitations of our enemies’ powers as well as the strength of our God. (3) The terms “lead” and “guide” are not synonyms. One word points out the way, the other identifies where to put your feet. How I praise you for this promise! (4) How often have I discovered Satan’s snares — *too late!* Dear Lord, I believe you will point them out to me *before* I get there. (5) Rock and fortress and refuge of my soul — let me hide myself in you!

How do you personally relate to the protection of God, and God who is our Fortress? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

There is confession in my praise — for what you have said called it forth. I do want to think as carefully as I can upon the process of temptation: (1) *Doubt* — There must be a hesitancy, a lack of confidence or Satan would not have an approach to me. “Yea, hath God said?” is his insistent question. (2) *Desire* — This is exercised along with doubt — we separate them to think about temptation, but they come at the same time. (3) *Decision* — This, too, comes on the heels of doubt-desire — A decision is made and in that decision and by that decision, and of that decision, we *sin!* (4) *Death* follows, separation, estrangement, a deep disappointment! Dear Lord, analysis is of no value without *you* — only *you* as a divine personal presence can deliver me!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

O safe to the Rock that is higher than I,
My soul in its conflicts and sorrows would fly;
So sinful, so weary, Thine, Thine would I be;
Thou blest “Rock of Ages,” I’m hiding in Thee.
Hiding in Thee,
Hiding in Thee,
Thou blest “Rock of Ages,”
I’m hiding in Thee.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

⁵⁷When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸Her neighbors and relatives

heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy.

⁵⁹On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, ⁶⁰but his mother spoke up and said, "No! He is to be called John."

⁶¹They said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who has that name."

⁶²Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. ⁶³He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone's astonishment he wrote, "His name is John." ⁶⁴Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue was loosed, and he began to speak, praising God. ⁶⁵The neighbors were all filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about these things. ⁶⁶Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, "What then is this child going to be?" For the Lord's hand was with him. —*Luke 1:57-66, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What a remarkable birth experience! In the house of Zechariah the midwives and the aged mother wonder together in the coming forth of that one our Lord said was the greatest born of women. A man sent from God whose name was John. I know you are present at every birth, but in a special way were you there at this unusual blessed event. This little body was to be filled with the Holy Spirit from this day onward. How many of the neighbors and kinfolk knew of the vast spiritual importance of this birth? Am I right in assuming that people then are like they are today: too taken up with the mundane to see the marvelous?

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. In the hill country of Judea something wonderful was happening. For four hundred years the voice of a prophet had not been heard. The voice of God's last great prophet is now raised in the cry of an infant for food. It is important that I see the significance of your naming this little one. I like to think you have something to do with the naming of each of us. After all, you will and do record our names in your own book of life! Most all of our names have a significant meaning. I have noticed you have a wonderful capacity for enabling us to live out the meaning of our names.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for your visit to us in the prophets and most of all in your Son. (2) Thank you for the power of your redeeming salvation. (3) Thank you for the hundreds of prophecies fulfilled in your Son. (4) Thank you so much for mercy or your personal expression of love. (5) Thank you for the constant assurance that you will keep your covenant and bless

all the families of the earth. (6) Thank you for the daily forgiveness of sins through your tender mercy. (7) Thank you for "dayspring from on high." What refreshment I receive as I drink of him!

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"And the child grew and became strong in spirit . . ." John the Baptist was in the wilderness almost all his life. The reader would imagine Luke to say that John became strong in body — which was no doubt true — but Luke mentions the inward man. We would imagine that since John was filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth that a reference to his spiritual growth would not be necessary, but it was. John was responsible for the fulfillment of God's purposes in his life in the same way we are. Just what did John do to grow "strong in spirit"? There are only three sources of growth so we know he must have cultivated all three: (1) Prayer — What type of prayer life did John have? (2) The study of God's word — Did John have access to the Old Testament scriptures through Zechariah? (3) Expression in teaching or preaching — To tell others is to grow ourselves.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD IN PETITIONS

(1) May the birth of a baby never lose its wonder. (2) May I recognize your mercy in the lives of others. (3) Help me to sincerely share the joy of others. (4) May I remember the name you gave us at our new birth. (5) Teach me how important each person is.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What do you say to me here? (1) "Please accept the fact that every birth is so important I would die for any one of them." (2) "Praise is one of the greatest blessings of life." (3) "I do have teachers today — listen to them."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Indonesia — Point for prayer: (1) *The churches: Liberal theology* is having an increasing influence. The younger preachers and the theological institutions are more affected than the older and senior leaders. Pray that the Bible may have its rightful place in the affections and teaching of the leaders.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Christ has for sin atonement made,
What a wonderful Savior!

We are redeemed! the price is paid!
What a wonderful Savior!

What a wonderful Savior is Jesus, my Jesus!
What a wonderful Savior is Jesus, my Lord!

WEEK FOUR

—Sunday—

“We shall not live one day longer or die one day sooner than YOU have appointed. Teach us to trust you. My Lord was born on time, died on time, and rose again to live forever more!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“But I trust in thee, O Lord, I say, ‘Thou art my God.’ My times are in thy hand; . . . Let thy face shine on thy servant; save me in thy steadfast love” (Psa. 31:14,15a,16). It is a delight for me to express day after day another quality of yourself! (1) The use of the term “trust” here suggests Someone in whom or with whom confidence can be shared and not betrayed. How wonderful it would be if the whole world knew! David’s expression : “Thou art my God” suggests true worship and a holy regard for One altogether worthy of adoration. (2) “My times are in your hands” — Oh, how reassuring to know that every day of man’s life can be and should be ordered by yourself. The appointment for my death and the death of all men has already been made. (3) Look on me and all men with approval — “smile on me” is the thought of “Let thy face shine on thy servant.”

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. “Save me in the steadfast love.” Steadfast love is all I need! My love is so terribly fluctuating! I am circumscribed by the limitations of the flesh — not nearly as much as I would want to imagine and excuse myself — but as compared to your steadfastness my record is indeed inadequate! It is the constancy of your love that saves me: (1) Your steadfast love saves me from losing heart and quitting. You have not given up on me — why should I give up on you? There will never, never be a time or place or circumstance when you do not love me. (2) Your steadfast love saves me from giving up on others — oh, oh, how sorely tempted I have been! There are those who to all my understanding are beyond help and hope, but then if I saw some of those whom you have saved I would take heart — a careful look at your steady love and concern and constant help are all I need to react the same way.

How do you personally relate to the love of God, and God who is Love? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

The sin of feverishness! Dear Lord, I am guilty! When will I rest in my “trust” in you? It is *not* necessary that I understand everything, or even a small part of everything, to let you be God! Forgive me for assuming your role! When I think I do not have enough time or when time is all I do have and for either reason I become anxious, dear Lord, forgive! When will I learn and accept the fact that “my times are in your hands”? I am so very glad that you can and do smile upon me. I claim the cleansing blood and with it your approval. There is approval in your eyes! Dear Lord, in thy steadfast love save me from myself. It is so good to begin anew, fresh and clean and saved!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Praise Him! praise Him!
 Jesus, our blessed Redeemer!
 Sing, O Earth, His wonderful love proclaim!
 Hail Him! hail Him! highest archangels in glory;
 Strength and honor give to His holy name!
 Like a shepherd, Jesus will guard His children,
 In His arms He carries them all day long:
 Praise Him! praise Him! tell of His excellent greatness;
 Praise Him! praise Him! ever in joyful song!

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹⁸This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about.

His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.

¹⁹Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

²⁰But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" — which means, "God with us."

²⁴When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus. —Matthew 1:18-25, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It surely seems redundant in the extreme to read these lovely verses to you. But in the reading I will be able to praise you and wonder once again before the record of your incarnation. Speak to me, just as if these words were heard first by me: "This is how the birth of Jesus came about." I can see Mary standing with head down and eyes averted from her beloved Joseph. Mary's mother has brought her to Joseph to tell him the incredible news that she is pregnant with a child from the Holy Spirit. What a shock! Joseph could have made a public disgrace of Mary. Because he loved her, but most of all because he loved God, he chose a quiet way to solve this problem.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I hope the above thoughts were acceptable to my dear Lord. They spoke so poignantly to my heart. Angels surely did have a large place in the birth of my Lord. This is as it would be expected. He came from the spirit world. The dream of Joseph must have been very vivid. It must have been so impressive as to leave no room for doubt. I thank you for the righteous, kind man called Joseph. I do wonder what he thought about the statement that Mary's son would "save his people from their sins." Did Joseph know enough to equate this with the promise of "the Christ"?

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

We should lift one continual song of praise as we read these exquisite words: (1) Thank you for the candidness of the account — nothing hidden or ignored. (2) Thank you for Mary's humility in confronting Joseph with her problem. (3) Thank you for Joseph's desire to protect his beloved. (4) Thank you for your

answer to our problem — always a surprise and always better. (5) Thank you for your constant interest in all of life — but your larger purpose that is also at work. (6) Thank you for this clear uncompromising statement of a miracle.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son." We are full of praise for both of these dear people. It would seem from Luke's narrative that Mary left very shortly after her wedding and visited for three months with Elizabeth. This was a most thoughtful thing to do. It could also have stopped some of the gossip of Nazareth. When she returned being three months pregnant she would have less to explain.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How good it is to pray through these charming verses: (1) I want to read again just like I never read before just how your Son was born. (2) Help me to retain your estimate of the sanctity of promise for marriage. (3) May I be as honest and humble as Joseph. (4) Open my heart to the present work of the Holy Spirit in and through me. (5) Thank you for your beautiful concern over Joseph's dilemma. (6) Fulfill the meaning of the name of your Son in my life. (7) It is possible to exercise self-control in sex relations — help me.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You can and do communicate to me through these verses: (1) "Marriage is just as important today as in the day of Mary and Joseph." (2) "Fornication is still just as wrong now." (3) "Jesus is still the only Savior of the world."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Indonesia — Point for prayer: (1) *The churches: The training of leaders* — there is a desperate shortage of Christian workers, due to the explosive growth of the Church recently. Many preachers are ill-taught but the number and quality of the Bible seminaries and schools has grown. The great need is for the conversion of many who come for theological training, and then for the development of their walk with God and vision of the need of the lost.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

When morning gilds the skies,
My heart awakening cries:
May Jesus Christ be praised;
Alike at work and prayer
To Jesus I repair:
May Jesus Christ be praised.

WEEK FOUR

—Monday—

“You want us happy! You grant full forgiveness which includes your forgetfulness. You specialize in the impossible. It is therefore natural to praise you!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit” Psa. 32:1,2). Oh, to list the qualities of yourself from this blessed text! (1) You want to make man happy. (2) You extend forgiveness, not condemnation. (3) You want to cover or remove man’s sin. (4) You keep no record of sin, you rather offer “no condemnation.” (5) You want total honesty and openness from us. Peace and confidence puts a smile on our face. When we know everything is right with you, we know all is right with everyone else. How delighted we are when we see a glad willingness to accept and overlook our willfulness. What a beautiful word is “forgiveness.” When you cannot see our sin we can’t either. Praise the Lord! Not only are we forgiven, but there is no record of wrong! Truly you have made provisions for the blessed or happy man.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

I do want to have that tranquility of spirit, that calmness of outlook, that inward joy from hope that you alone can give! Dear Lord, I do want to need to constantly come to you for forgiveness of the same transgressions — and I am delighted, more than delighted, to say I have actually found it unnecessary; you *have* strengthened by your Spirit in my inward man. Bless your name. When I do sin I know of your love and patience, but these qualities of yourself have won me to obey you. Dear Lord, my Lord, my boss, I *want* to be totally honest and open and free from all deceit! Praise your wonderful name! I love you. I yield. I obey you!

How do you personally relate to the forgiveness of God, and God who offers forgiveness? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

This is David’s psalm, repeated by Paul, applied to us. David no doubt thought of his sin with Uriah’s wife, i.e., since it was common knowledge in the kingdom. How is it we are more ashamed before men than we are before you? Dear Lord, I do freely and openly confess my sin, my sins to you! I come to you because I have sinned against you. I come to you to claim the forgiveness, the covering, the clear record you have promised. You have imputed something to me — it is absolute righteousness. I am more than happy to enter this place and position of “no condemnation”! Bless the Lord, O my soul! Happy is this man.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God, Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free?
No; there’s a cross for ev’ry one,
And there’s a cross for me.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

⁵⁷When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy.

⁵⁹On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, ⁶⁰but his mother spoke up and said, “No! He is to be called John.”

⁶¹They said to her, “There is no one among your relatives who has that name.”

⁶²Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. —Luke 1:57-62, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How delighted I am to share with you in the joy of Elizabeth and Zechariah! It is one thing for a grandmother to rejoice in her grandchildren; it is surely something else for her to have a child in her old age. This was unheard of then, and so it has been since. What were the phrases repeated over and over in the home of Zechariah on that glad day? Were they: "It's amazing." or "How can it be?" Or perhaps: "This baby will indeed be some one great." All of these circumstances were true. All were to be surprised at his circumcision. What a strange seal or sign for the covenant! And yet it is not strange if we think more deeply. "His name shall be John." So was his name before his conception. How often must his mother have told him of the choice of his name?

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Dear Lord, what great mercy have you shown to me. Yea, mercy upon mercy. It is a natural response to want to share our joy. I do want to tell to all my relatives and friends of the supernatural birth that has occurred in my house! Yea, the "new birth" of a child of the heavenly Father. It is not at all as easy to share this joy. My neighbors rejoice easily at physical blessings, or respond quickly to physical needs. But for spiritual blessings or hurting — they just do not know how to react. What a sad commentary on our immaturity. If we raise a prayer need it is almost always physical — if we tell of a blessing it is more money. Dear Lord, open my eyes!

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the love and respect shown by neighbors and relatives. (2) Thank you for the willingness of all to acknowledge the true source of praise and mercy. (3) Thank you for seven happy days of praise and rest Elizabeth had at home. (4) Thank you for the loyalty to your law seen in the lives of Elizabeth and Zechariah. (5) Thank you for the new name you gave to the child, and to all your children. (6) Thank you for the deference paid to the father. (7) Thank you for the circumcision of the heart we presently enjoy.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

" . . . then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child." This was the one thing this dear priest wanted to say above everything else. Why wasn't his tongue loosed at the birth? Why wasn't his tongue freed after the pregnancy? Why wait until the circumcision? It is easy to see when we remember Zechariah knew the full meaning

of the covenant. Circumcision was the seal of God's agreement with his people. It was during the sealing of the national covenant that God chose to fulfill his private covenant with Zechariah.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What a happy and surprising occasion was the birth of John: (1) In the long annals of the birth of sons was there ever a happier mother than this dear lady? May I appreciate your kindness. (2) Keep my heart tender toward birth and death. (3) For all the "great mercy" shown me I thank thee. (4) In the humbling mark of circumcision teach me of your intimate involvement in all of life. (5) There has never been born the son of a mother whose name you have not known — praise you for such knowledge. (6) Give me the determination of Elizabeth to do just what you have said. (7) Zechariah was clear as to your will for him and his son — may I have such plain knowledge and full commitment.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these words speak to me: (1) "As I have said before, nothing is impossible with me." (2) "No one is born that I do not rejoice." (3) "I want everyone to be born twice."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Indonesia — Points for prayer: (1) *The churches:* Bible believing missions have some first-class Bible schools. From these a stream of evangelistic teams have gone out all over the country and to other lands and these teams have been the cause of people movements in Irian Jaya, Kalimantan, S. Sumatra and Java, and the dramatic revival in Timor. (2) *Outreach* — the dramatic growth rate is now falling. Pray that the churches may all have a vision for outreach locally and to other unreached areas and islands. Much of Sumatra, parts of Java, Bali, Sumba, Sumbawa, Flores and E. Timor remain unreached.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

There is never a day so dreary,
There is never a night so long,
But the soul that is trusting Jesus
Will somewhere find a song.
Wonderful, wonderful Jesus,
In the heart He implanteth a song;
A song of deliv'rance, of courage, of strength,
In the heart He implanteth a song.

WEEK FOUR

—Tuesday—

“You are instructing us — you are giving us your philosophy of life (your way of viewing everything). We are your redeemed ones. How glad I am.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you” (Psa. 32:8). Dear Lord, you are speaking to me. I hear you! I claim the promises of this verse from David. I know you want to instruct and teach me in the way I should go. There are three verbs here that tell me of your character. These are qualities of your essential being: (1) “I will instruct you.” This seems to be personal teaching. There are various ways of teaching men. You use them all. Such as: *example, chastening, goodness, information.* (2) “I will teach you.” This could refer to collective instruction — you do indeed have a large class to teach. Some good and some very poor students. (3) “I will counsel you.” This is the promise of intimate direction for each and every man on earth.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I believe your word is the sum source of personal instruction I will receive. I want, therefore, to digest every word you have given me. If you give me life and strength I shall worship you and listen to you from each of the sixty-six documents of instruction. I shall, with many disciples, sit at your feet as you teach me through the men and women you have helped write books. I am at present very profitably so engaged. Dear Lord, I know you have your eye upon me! Your intimate counsel is just for me with a purpose of love and personal concern. Dear Lord, I do not want to be stubborn or insensitive to your chastening or blessing.

How do you personally relate to the instruction and counsel of God, and God who is Instructor/Counselor? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

David’s words in Psalm 32:5 are so deeply meaningful: “I acknowledge my sin to thee, and do not hide my iniquity: I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.’ Then thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin.”

It is honestly monotonous to confess the same basic sin. Sins of pride, flesh, selfishness — these are specific individual acts and attitudes, but only basic sins, only fundamental transgressions. The monotony is in the failure to have any permanent deliverance. Am I expecting too much? I really and truly do not want to continue in sin! It seems to me you are saying, “You will always need my forgiveness — if not I would lose you to independence and I do not want that kind of liberty.”

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

“Man of Sorrows,” what a name
For the Son of God who came
Ruined sinners to reclaim!
Hallelujah! what a Savior!

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even another prayer song.

HIS WORD

⁶³He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone’s astonishment he wrote, “His name is John.” ⁶⁴Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue was loosed, and he began to speak, praising God. ⁶⁵The neighbors were all filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. ⁶⁶Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, “What then is this child going to be?” For the Lord’s hand was with him. ⁶⁷His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

⁶⁸“Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,
because he has come and has redeemed his people.
⁶⁹He has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David
⁷⁰(as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),
⁷¹salvation from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us —
⁷²to show mercy to our fathers
and to remember his holy covenant,
⁷³the oath he swore to our father Abraham:
⁷⁴to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,
and to enable us to serve him without fear
⁷⁵in holiness and righteousness before him all our
days. —*Luke 1:63-75, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How good it is to worship through this word from you! Most of the words are a praise to you. It was no astonishment to you that Zechariah wrote: “His name is John.” But it was good to see the astonishment on the faces of the onlookers. It would seem you specialize in acts and words of astonishment. Our first response after a time of testing and trial should be praise. “Whom the Lord *loveth* he chastens.” Dear Lord, isn’t it your will today that throughout our city and country that all shall be filled with wonder? Perhaps you are saying to me, “Get it done in your town and let me take care of the country.” How little do we know the depth of the words of prophecy — help us!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I can take the prophecy of Zechariah and learn and praise from it: (1) You have redeemed me! The price has been paid and I belong to you. (2) The power of my salvation is the good news. He was of the royal house of David — “King of the Jews.” (3) What a deliverer he is! From every enemy of my life. There is not a sin that cannot be overcome through my Lord! (4) He indeed remembered his covenant with Abraham to bless every man in the seed of Abraham — the blessing through Abraham is my Lord! (5) I can serve him with fear — I am “justified by faith” — “there is therefore *now* no condemnation.” I affirm all this prophecy first fulfilled in John but gladly related to my needs!

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

This is a blessed text for this purpose: (1) Thank you for an open mouth of praise — may it be mine. (2) Thank you for my Lord who is here referred to as “horn of salvation.” (3) Thank you that our salvation does deliver us from all the enemies of our soul. (4) Thank you for your personal interest in my personal hurts. (5) Thank you for the power and beauty of holiness. (6) Thank you that men can be filled with

awe and wonder — even today. (7) Thank you I have found the One of whom Moses and the prophets spoke!

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.” How I do need the promises of this verse! It is so easy to fear the face of man. It is such a temptation to please man instead of yourself. What does it mean to serve you “in holiness”? The root meaning of the word is *separation*, or *apartness*. Perhaps this refers to our basic attitude: i.e., we are focusing our whole attention on you. The word is describing an absorption in worship that nothing around us can distract. Our holiness is in yourself — our total identity with you. What is said of the location of holiness is also true of our righteousness. John the Baptist is a good example of that kind of a man.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

“His name is John.” Open my heart to ask of you according to your word: (1) Loose my tongue to speak your name to those who should hear it. (2) Move me to much more praise for your goodness. (3) Dear Lord, somehow help in publishing your name to my neighbors. (4) As I see children help me to see in them what you do. (5) Grant me grace to so yield myself to your Spirit’s word that he might fill me. (6) What a price was paid for our redemption! Open my heart to appreciate it. (7) I do want to serve you in every way I can. Direct my opportunities.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What do you say in these verses: (1) “The fulness of all time is upon us.” (2) “How can I plan so well and men serve so poorly?” (3) “John is yet an example for all.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Indonesia — Point for prayer: (1) *Missionary vision* has resulted in the formation of Gospel teams that have spread the Gospel to other language groups. Pray for the development of this vision — Indonesia could mean much for world evangelism, especially the great unreached Muslim world.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I love Thy Church, O God:
Her walls before Thee stand,
Dear as the apple of Thine eye,
And graven on Thy hand.

WEEK FOUR

—Wednesday—

“All your words stand inspection. No promise has failed. You are totally righteous, steadfast in love. Those who prepared the way for your Son — to them we owe a great debt.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“For the word of the Lord is upright; and all his work is done in faithfulness. He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord” (Psa. 33:4,5). Bless the Lord, O my soul, all that is in me, praise his holy name! What are the characteristics of yourself I see in these verses? They are: (1) Truthfulness so all your words stand inspection. (2) Faithfulness — you never promised to do and failed to fulfill. (3) Righteousness. (4) Justice. (5) Steadfast love. Oh that all men would praise you! How comforting it would be to be able to pray to one who was the very essence of all these qualities. All men can examine all your words as given in your book and find every one of them totally dependable. How many hundreds of promises have you made and kept? I have listed one thousand myself! I take “righteousness” to be in any given circumstance that which is appropriate and helpful. How well does this describe your actions! A beautiful balance is set for you in all of life — no question about any one of your decisions — perfect justice!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I am so very much comforted in doing what I recommend for all men. I do love your words, each of them and all of them. The more I examine them the more “upright” I find them. Total agreement with reality! What a long record I have of your promises fulfilled in my life! Whereas I have not kept or completed what was right I find no fault in the fact that your word is the norm and my infractions were (and are) a lens out of focus, static on the frequency of reality. I cannot and do not complain about justice in my experience. I see the regular invariable response of a perfect balance in every relationship of living — “justice” is always present. Praise your wonderful Person! Love, love, love is what I am given — the

whole world of my experience with you is full of countless expressions of your love!

How do you personally relate to the uprightness of God, and God who is Upright? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is easy to praise you in the five areas indicated in these two verses: (1) Your word is “upright” and stands inspection, but my words are not. I want them to be — I try — but I am a sinner here. (2) My works are started and not completed. My works turn out to be something other than I promised. (3) All my righteousness is imputed — given as a gift. I have none of myself! (4) Dear Lord, I try to be just and fair — mercy is my need! (5) How my life needs more and more expression of love!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

In the secret of His presence
 how my soul delights to hide!
 Oh, how precious are the lessons
 which I learn at Jesus’ side!
 Earthly cares can never vex me,
 neither trials lay me low;
 For when Satan comes to tempt me,
 to the secret place I go, to the secret place I go.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

⁷⁶**And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High;
 for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,
⁷⁷to give his people the knowledge of salvation**

through the forgiveness of their sins,
⁷⁸because of the tender mercy of our God,
 by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven
⁷⁹to shine on those living in darkness
 and in the shadow of death,
 to guide our feet into the path of peace.”
⁸⁰And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and
 he lived in the desert until he appeared publicly to
 Israel. —*Luke 1:76-80, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

As I read this powerful text I think of your man Elijah as fulfilled in John the Baptist. Indeed both of them were “prophets of the Most High” — even of yourself. Elijah prepared the way in the long ago. John’s preparation is much nearer your coming, but both were preparing the hearts of men to receive yourself. How I like the expression: “The knowledge of salvation.” Such an experiential knowledge comes with the forgiveness of sins. Indeed real salvation is tantamount to the forgiveness of sin. We know we are saved when we know our sins are forgiven. The beautiful imagery of comparing the sun with your Son is lovely!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

This I shall gladly take up: (1) Out of your tender mercy, or your intimate interest in my daily needs, you cast a light upon my path and furnish a lamp for my feet. (2) I have been in the darkness of death — it was your tender mercy that reached me there — such was expressed in the sun of righteousness shining into my heart through the preaching of the good news. (3) You have led me into the way of “peace.” Praise your name! It is so easy to be constantly embroiled in some area of controversy. I am full of joy and praise that my path has been one of peace.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

This text is full of possibilities: (1) Thank you for every one of your prophets — especially those of whom I am acquainted through their writings. (2) Thank you for the ministry of the forerunner. In a very real sense we are all forerunners of our glorious King. (3) Thank you for the sure knowledge that my sins are forgiven me for his name’s sake. (4) Thank you for your daily tender mercy. (5) Thank you for the new rising Son (sun) for every day. (6) Thank you for the beautiful phrase: “strong in spirit” — may it be said of me. (7) Thank you for all places of solitude where we could grow strong in our spirit.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . to guide our feet into the path of peace.” What welcome words are these! There is no deeper need or

more pervasive problem than peace. A calmness and tranquility of spirit is *so much* to be desired! But our Lord offers more! He is not only “our peace” in a personal sense, but he will guide our feet into the way of peace. Our whole life can be one of peacefulness. At the same time we hear Jesus say, “I came not to bring peace but a sword.” How shall we reconcile these two thoughts? In one case he is discussing God and in the other man. His peace is like a sword to those who do not know him. The submission to the rule of the Prince of peace is strongly resisted by some people. Even those of our own household could resist such rule. Thus his peace (a yielding to his rule) becomes also a sword.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In this beautiful description of John there is much about which we can pray: (1) I know you speak to us through your word and preachers — help me to listen. (2) May I prepare someone’s heart today for your coming. (3) Salvation is “the forgiveness of sins.” May I right now claim it. (4) Move me to appreciate ever more fully your tender mercy. (5) May the warmth of your son be appreciated. (6) May the light of your Son shed his rays to the ends of the world. (7) May illumination of your Son remove all darkness from my heart.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these words about John the Baptist speak to me: (1) “I still need those who will prepare hearts for my coming.” (2) “Millions are still sitting in the darkness of ignorance.” (3) “The shadow of death is fast approaching millions of those who will live forever in hell.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Indonesia — Points for prayer: (1) *The Chinese believers* are a large minority of the scattered Chinese population. There are many fine leaders and strong missionary-minded congregations in Java. There are also Chinese churches in W. Kalimantan, etc. Many Chinese believers are now being absorbed into the Indonesian churches. Over 12% of the Chinese are now Christian. (2) *Missions* — early efforts by the Dutch and German missions were highly successful in the areas where they were permitted by the Dutch authorities. There are now about 1,300 missionaries. Many more are needed to do pioneer work, church planting, church support work and Bible teaching, etc.

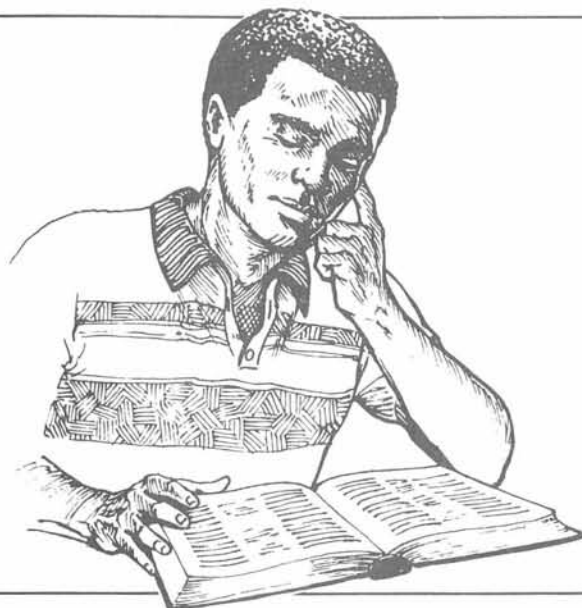
SING PRAISES TO THE LORD

All people that on earth do dwell,
 Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;
 Him serve with fear, His praise forth tell;
 Come ye before Him and rejoice.

WEEK FOUR

—Thursday—

“Ten billion — ten billion galaxies were all created by the one who became Jesus of Nazareth! I am full of wonder at this truth!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth. Let all the earth fear the Lord, let all the inhabitants of the earth stand in awe of Him! For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood forth” (Psa. 33:6,8,9). How marvelous are the qualities of yourself in these three verses: (1) You created the ten million — the ten billion galaxies by “the word” of your mouth. (2) Whereas you were the Creator, the Holy Spirit shared in such Creation — for so we understand the expression: “the breath (Spirit) of your mouth.” (3) There are no words to even begin to express the “holy awe” or “sacred fear” all men should have in the presence of such power and authority! The more we examine your handiwork the more amazed we are. Dear God, I bow in silence and wonder before you! How I do want all men to do the same.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE HIM FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

I praise you for all you mean to me as described in these verses. I live in the midst of a humanist, evolutionist society. How much less faith does it take to believe your word than the speculations and vagaries of men! I see obvious and sometimes subtle evidences of your divine intelligence in your creation. Just the check-and-balance system you have built into your world is enough to indicate planning and purpose. I do honestly believe if I were Adam you would create this world all over again just for me. I want to walk in the cool of your garden of creation and hear your voice. If I will lie down on my back some clear dark night and look into your heavens, I shall be overcome with awe and praise!

How do you personally relate to the power of God, and God who is Creator? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Surely I am confessing the parent sin of all sins. To fail to recognize and appreciate you as creator and sustainer is the essence of stupidity and selfishness. Oh, divine Father, oh Creator of all, I bow before you in wonder at my own insensitiveness — at my own blindness — forgive me! It is only in my awareness of your creative power and intelligence that I am able to proceed to an understanding of all else you have done and are doing in the history of man. Can the clay rebel against the potter? Can the wood resist the carpenter? Yet I have resisted you. Dear, dear God, forgive me. I submit, not passively but willingly, full of desire to *obey you!* Afraid and trembling within, not knowing what you might ask, but not at all afraid of you for you are Creator and Love at the same time.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I have a Savior, He's pleading in glory,
A dear, loving Savior, tho' earth friends be few;
And now He is watching in tenderness o'er me,
But oh, that my Savior were your Savior, too.
For you I am praying,
For you I am praying,
For you I am praying,
I'm praying for you.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

2 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ²(This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³And everyone went to his own town to register. ⁴So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth

in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

⁵He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

—*Luke 2:1-5, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How long ago does it seem to me — a decree from a great one in his day — how soon he is gone and his decree forgotten! But it was so very important on that day when Mary and Joseph heard it. I must remind myself again that it is happening even now in your eternal presence — there is no time with you! What demands do the governments of men make upon others and themselves! I can visualize this event and I attempt to do so, but you were there all the time. To be of the royal line of David was a high honor, but it did also mean a very long hard walk when it came time for the enrollment. Mary was in no condition to make such a trip. But make it she must. How almost incidental did all this seem which when viewed from our perspective was so very important. Mary must be in Bethlehem for the birth of your Son. So it is that in the ordinary affairs of men you worked out the eternal purposes of heaven. Blessed be your name forever.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

This will be easy and a pleasant task: In my day, even today, a decree has gone out from the King of all kings, and the Lord of all lords that all the world be enrolled in the Lamb's book of life. This was first given when our Lord was upon earth and was issued by him from the Mount of Olivet. All can be enrolled — in every city, village and hamlet someone can tell them of the good news and the recording angel can add their names to the eternal record. All that are thus enrolled become kings of the royal line of David's holy Son.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for your plan behind and above all plans of men. (2) Thank you for the historical accuracy of Luke's account. (3) Thank you for every other unnamed person who also appeared at the place of enrollment — none of them unknown to our Lord. (4) Thank you for the faith and obedience seen in Mary and Joseph in the journey to Bethlehem. (5) Thank you for the example of obedience to the laws of the land, even when Caesar was the authority. (6) Thank you for the obvious love shared by Joseph and Mary.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.”

What were the thoughts of Joseph as he walked from Nazareth to Bethlehem? Was Joseph full of resentment against the government for making this unreasonable demand upon them? Was he worried that his livelihood was thus interrupted and he would not have enough for his family? Was Joseph adding up the grievances he had against God — and now here is one more? Was he hurt that other men could marry a virgin, but he must not unite with his wife until she delivers a baby? None of these were the thoughts of this good man. Not one word of complaint against the government is recorded. Joseph and Mary had four other sons and at least two daughters. He was able to provide.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

These words have become so familiar we sometimes forget what they say: (1) We could reach the whole world with the good news today. Oh, how shall we do it! (2) You have ways of working through men's decrees — do it again! (3) Keep me ready to obey the laws of the land. (4) Thank you for the royal blood in the lineage of my Lord. (5) *A royal carpenter!* What a wonder — but then all Christians are *royal priests!* (6) Oh, the humility in the birth of my Lord — break my pride, dear Lord. (7) Are we as concerned about the expectation of new births as we are in physical births? I want to be.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

From Nazareth to Bethlehem — speak to me: (1) “Nothing in the lives of my children is unimportant.” (2) “Both Mary and Joseph were subject to the same limitations you are.” (3) “Leaders seldom know of the most important people under their rule.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Indonesia — Points for prayer: (1) *Student witness* — A largely neglected, but ripe harvest field. There are wonderful openings to teach the Bible in primary and secondary schools, and also to witness to the 250,000 university students in 24 universities, but the laborers are too few. (2) *Christian literature* — there is a colossal appetite for any evangelical literature — pray for the many printing presses working on this, and for the distribution thereof.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood;
Sealed my pardon with His blood;
Hallelujah! what a Savior!

WEEK FOUR

—Friday—

“You see us all — you fashioned our hearts — you love us all! How could it be? But it is! Glory to God in the highest — You have become man!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The Lord looks down from heaven, he sees the sons of men; . . . he who fashions the hearts of them all, and observes all their deeds” (Psa. 33:13,15). What an amazing quality of yourself is seen here. You are the silent, intelligent observer of all men. You fashioned or thoughtfully made the hearts or spirits of all men. You look on with great interest at all the deeds of all men. This is omniscience and omnipresence in action. *All* the sons of men are six billion human beings! Most of these sons of men couldn’t care less if you see them or not. How wonderfully enlightening it would be to discover that the very One who created the world and the heavens and in whose image they are formed is a very, very interested observer of all they are and do! This is mind staggering! It cannot be that what you see does not move you. Your steadfast love reaches out to every single one of those 5,000,000 refugees in Africa or the millions who starve for your word and your Son around the world.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me — what is it this means to me? It is more than easy to blame you — to call you totally insensitive. It would be easy to think that whereas you see us you are actually a gigantic all-knowing Observer of a complicated machine that you have made and are only waiting until it runs down. If we use the smaller model in the nation of Israel we can see you are anything but a disinterested onlooker. At the same time, there were centuries when man ignored you and went his own way. You have made more than adequate provisions for man. Any generation that wants to can spread your word to every person in every tribe in all the world. No generation today need spend its days without you. You have furnished the means; we have the responsibility to use them. I believe you are only waiting for man to act upon your command through

your Son. This could be, and probably is, a monstrous oversimplification. But I do not blame you!

How do you personally relate to the omniscience of God, and God who is interested? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

I do want to open up to you and get my guilt out and forgiven. If I am willing to speak to every man in the community where I live why should I blame anyone else? I and every Christian must go to everyone in his world before everyone in your great world will ever be reached. I am committed to forty days of calling upon everyone in our community. But I have been committed by you for many years to the same task. I have stumbled around in a feeble effort. Dear God, dear God, forgive me! You read my heart and see my deeds. Dear Lord, forgive! I do purpose not only to plan better, but to *do* better! How can you hold the poor unsaved man responsible for not hearing when it is my heart he has never heard? I take his place. I truly believe there will be less responsibility upon any one of the 5,000,000 refugees than upon 5,000,000 church members. Have mercy, O Lord!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Abide with me: fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide:
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me!

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

“While they were there, the time came for the baby to

be born, ⁷and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in strips of cloth and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

⁸And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.
—*Luke 2:6-9, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Shall I ever be able to read this record with the meaning there ought to be in these verses? I am sure you read them in a much different way than I do. How wonderfully subtle are all your ways — or at least some of your ways. What reads like an almost incidental event is actually the culmination of millenniums of preparation! Even the casual circumstance of not having a reservation in the inn — to be shunted out to the cattle stall was all planned — “in his humiliation his judgment was taken away” — not only at his trial before Pilate but in his birth we all would have failed to see who lay in the manger. Oh, dear Father, I am kneeling again with the shepherds before the birth of your Son! Forgive me and accept my praise.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Once again I could not stay apart from the blessed scene. Joseph helped Mary in the birth of her son. Who else would even be there but Joseph? You surely gave this dear man more than recompense for his faith and patience. Did Joseph live long enough to know what really happened when he helped his beloved in the hour of her pain and joy? I would like to believe he did. I want to go out to the shepherds' fields and share the amazement and fear of these humble men. The angel (was it Gabriel?) was clearly visible — what appearance did he have? Was he smiling? Serious? I believe he was full of the wonder and importance of his mission and it was reflected in his face. The bright beauty of the light from heaven shown around them. Praise your name forever!

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

It does seem altogether appropriate to offer our deepest gratitude just here: (1) Thank you for Mary's willingness to suffer that she and all the world might have joy. (2) Thank you for the stark simplicity of Luke's description of the birth. (3) Thank you that Joseph was there — no doubt to help Mary. (4) Thank you for your choice of those who were given the birth announcement. (5) Thank you for again reminding us that angels are always the unseen participants in all of life. (6) Thank you for the incarnation of yourself in the person of your Son. (7) Thank you for the incarnation of your Son in our poor selves.

Give yourself over to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Because there was no place for them in the inn.” What a contrast! There was plenty of room for him in the universe — he created it all. There was more than enough room for him in heaven — a tumultuous welcome awaited him. There was room for the rich when he was rich beyond comparison. There was room for the powerful when he had all power in heaven and earth. But here all men could see was a wee little baby. How differently did God look at the stable scene in Bethlehem! Perhaps God was thinking that the particular place in Bethlehem was of little consequence since his standard of status and station was not the same as those who did not even know him. Dear Lord, we know you. I want my heart to be a warm place — a pure place for your birth. Welcome Lord Jesus!

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

At the birth of our Lord surely we can find many petitions: (1) Keep me aware again of just how time began at Bethlehem. (2) What a humble birth! There was pain and poverty and little help. Why should I complain? Forgive me! (3) What did Mary see when she looked at that precious little bundle? Open my eyes. (4) I want to make room for you in my house. (5) I have the privilege of announcing his birth. May I do it. (6) Why did you choose a shepherd to whom to tell of his birth? (7) Give me a fresh understanding of all the details of his coming.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in this beautiful account: (1) “It is time for my Son to be born all over again in the hearts of men.” (2) “His birth teaches you many lessons — pause long before the manger.” (3) “Only humble men will appreciate my coming into the world.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Indonesia — Point for prayer: (1) *Bible translation* is still a pressing need for the many small languages of Irian Jaya. The rapid spread of the use of Indonesian lessens the need for many more translations of the Bible, but much primary translation and also revision is still needed.

SING PRAISES TO OUR GOD

Come, we that love the Lord,
And let our joys be known;
Join in a song with sweet accord,
And thus surround the throne.

WEEK FOUR

—Saturday—

“Waiting in faith is always rewarded. God is at work every day! Do not be afraid! We have good news of great joy!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and shield. Yea, our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name. Let thy steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in thee” (Psa. 33:20-22). It would seem to most men that most of their time is spent “waiting for the Lord.” If we have our own plans which we fondly hope are his plans then we wait and wait and wait to see them find fulfillment. This is fundamentally wrong! Move right ahead in whatever plan you have (and we assume you want to please him) and God will let you know what he thinks of your project. He will either oppose it or help it. In between are many variations of opposition or help. But God is in them all. We are glad; we do trust in him. In him we live and move and have our total being or life. God works through our actions not our anxieties.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

For me: How delighted I am to worship before you! My whole life (soul) waits each day before you. This is my constant position — not one I take only in the morning. You are indeed all my help and protection. You are going to help me today in ways I cannot even now imagine. You will and do protect me from my own ignorance and selfishness, and from Satan’s efforts to defeat me! My mind, will, emotions and conscience or “my heart” is glad in you. When I think your thoughts, will your will, I feel your emotions and I am unspeakably glad! Dear Lord, how, oh how I want to say “I trust totally in your essential Being.” In your Holy Name or your Holy Person I put my confidence. Indeed, indeed how steadfast is your love!

How do you personally relate to the help of God, and God who is our Helper? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Father, you know how often I have violated the very truth I have just expressed! Instead of holding my confidence in your interest I have ignored you and plunged into my own ways — which in so many instances were folly. Forgive me! Help me, dear Lord, to act under your all-seeing eye! I have sought help and protection from so many other sources of my own invention. How steadfast is your love that brought me back again and again to yourself! Dear, dear Father, I want to one day be able to say that the sum of my gladness is in my trust in your character. There *is* hope in you — the *only* hope for this otherwise hopeless life. Bless your holy name, it is so exciting to watch and see what you will do today!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

True-hearted, whole-hearted, faithful and loyal,
King of our lives by Thy grace we will be;
Under the standard exalted and royal,
Strong in Thy strength we will battle for Thee.
Peal out the watchword! silence it never!
Song of our spirits, rejoicing and free;
Peal out the watchword! loyal forever,
King of our lives, by Thy grace we will be.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger.”

¹³Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host ap-

peared with the angel, praising God and saying,
 14“Glory to God in the highest,
 and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”
 15When the angels had left them and gone into
 heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go
 to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened,
 which the Lord has told us about.” —*Luke 2:10-15,*
NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

The best I can do with this overwhelming text is to list all this means to all the world — and even as I write these words I know how presumptuous such a statement is. Here is all my small cup will hold: (1) I need not come groveling into your presence — there is a welcome here, a heavenly warm welcome. (2) There is amazement — indicated in the one wonderful word: “*behold!*” (3) There is the greatest, grandest good news this poor tired world has ever heard. This news carries “great joy” for the angels who announced it and sang about it. It can and does produce “great joy” for those who understand and receive it. (4) This amazing invasion from outer space has come to be told “to all the people.” (5) Finally the object or purpose of this announcement is One glorious Person who is our Savior — our Lord — his name is Jesus! How poorly I have tried to present your viewpoint.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I find myself too often in the above expression of praise. My intention was to hold up this record into your presence and read it from above. Just here I want to stand on the rocky hillside with the shepherds. Did these humble men really hear and understand what the angels said? We doubt it. The depth of meaning in just who was born escaped them; however, the second half of the angel’s words were well understood and fulfilled in their experience. He said: “And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” Just how far did these men have to walk to find the cattle stall and the manger? We cannot imagine it took much investigation in “the little town of Bethlehem.” But before they left on their amazing mission they were to be startled by a further heavenly display.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

The angels of all ranks speak the language of men. In one great gigantic chorus they said, “Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased.” Let me lift up gratitude from these words: (1) Thank you for a small revelation of your true character. (2) Thank you that even our highest praise is not enough. (3) Thank you for coming to bring peace upon the earth. (4) Thank you that you said peace comes also from men. (5) Thank you that you can be, and are, pleased with some men. (6)

Thank you that whereas heaven is the home of angels they yet serve in this earth. (7) Thank you the shepherds acted upon their faith.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened.” It is so important to identify just who is involved in this amazing occurrence: they are shepherds. This means men of very ordinary means; men who are not given to supernatural religious activity. There are several shepherds. How many? Were there four? Six? Eight? We must say that this is going to be told again and again by several men. The credibility of several ordinary men has made a lasting impression for almost two millenniums. God wanted these shepherds to confirm the words of the angel. The unusual birth, i.e., in a manger, helped convince these men that God had visited this earth!

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

We shall never be able to pray like we should until we kneel before the manger bed. (1) May the words of the angel burn upon our conscience: “good news of a great joy.” (2) Oh, that I might help to spread this news to all people. (3) The city of David became the vestibule of heaven — open my eyes! (4) I want Jesus to be the King of my life. (5) What a shocking sign it was to see the Messiah in a stable — may the wonder of it never leave.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

(1) “I still need humble men to tell the good news.” (2) “If it is not good news to you it will not be to those who hear it.” (3) “Any angel in my presence would be glad to tell the tidings I have given to you.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Indonesia — Point for prayer: (1) *Prayer needs of the main islands: Sumatra* 23,000,000 — the 2.4 million ardently Muslim *Atjeh* in extreme north are unevangelized. The 5 million *Menangkabau* in Centre are also strongly Muslim, and only a handful of Christians among them (one congregation in W. Java). There are some Christians in the area, but all are from other language groups. The *Toba Bataks* and people of *Nias* have been Christian for decades, now there is much nominalism. Pray for revival. The *Toba Batak Church* has one million members.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

O worship the King, all glorious above,
 And gratefully sing His wonderful love;
 Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of days,
 Pavilioned in splendor, and girded with praise.

WEEK FIVE

—Sunday—

“You have a wonderfully good purpose for every man and every woman — we claim this affirmation! Thank you for your interrupting our too busy schedules to tell us of heaven’s plans.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the Lord, let the afflicted hear and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together” (Psa. 34:1-3). Dear Father, I want to agree with the psalmist that you indeed deserve praise and adoration at all times. I want to credit you with all I have and all I ever hope to be. How can I make a practical application out of this little phrase: “his praise shall continually be in my mouth”? Indeed, how shall all men come to this realization? If we related all of life to you we would talk of you continually. If we know we are the recipient and you are the giver of every good and perfect gift our praise would ascend continually. I want to agree with your purposes in life. Men were created for your fellowship. Dear Lord, help me to contribute a little to the fulfillment of your purpose.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

For me — my whole life (soul) can make its boast in nothing but yourself. The term “soul” refers to the whole person. All I know, all I choose, all I feel, i.e., in the realm of what has benefitted me, comes from you. If there are those who suffer with a feeling of inferiority or lack in any area of living, let them hear this good word! Let them lift up their heads and be glad! How refreshing and restoring is praise and wonder in the presence of our Lord! The whole purpose of worship is to gather the qualities of yourself before our consciousness and express them from our heart that we might magnify the Lord and exalt his name together!

How do you personally relate to the exaltation of God, and God who is exalted? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Such a basic sin! A failure in motives! Do I honor and recognize you at all times? I am much more impressed with some man’s position and prestige than I am yourself. Dear God, forgive me. How often do I consciously express my praise to you during a twenty-four hour period? Could you rerun a day for me and see? No, do not do it! Oh, my Father, this day shall be better! How many people have heard of the greatness and beauty of yourself from my lips? Forgive me, forgive me. There are those bowed down with trouble and care of one kind or another, who would look up if I would praise you. Days have gone by and nothing like this has happened. Today shall be different! Cleanse my motives.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Nearer, still nearer, close to Thy heart,
Draw me, my Savior, so precious Thou art;
Fold me, O fold me close to Thy breast,
Shelter me safe in that “Haven of Rest,”
Shelter me safe in that “Haven of Rest.”

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹⁶So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. —Luke 2:16-20, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I can catch the urgency of these humble men as they left their fields and sheep (probably under the care of others) and walked down the streets of Bethlehem in search of a baby in a manger. How all of this scene must have pleased you! The expression of your love in the birth of your son. The wonder and worship of men before the manger. The spread of your good news to others. The thoughtfulness of Mary. The praise and open expression of amazement from the shepherds. Dear Lord, how I want to treasure every word of these verses in my heart and turn every thought around in my mind.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How eager I am to worship before the manger scene. I know so much more about what I see than the shepherds did. Or do I? I know more by way of information, but they knew more by way of confrontation. Did the shepherds ask questions of Mary and Joseph? We can't imagine they didn't. Their heads must have been swimming when they left the humble family. Did they relate the virgin birth to Isaiah the prophet? We hope so! These men could much more easily believe a virgin birth after their visit from the angels. It is more than interesting that Luke records the one thing that impressed them was that every thing happened as God said it would.

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Somehow I get much more thanksgiving into Christmas. (1) Thank you for sending your Son into the busy schedule of man — expected and unexpected. (2) Thank you that this good news is always too good to keep. (3) Thank you that the first persons who heard believed. (4) Thank you that men do always have the capacity to be amazed. (5) Thank you once again for Mary the grand example for all women. (6) Thank you that when we have pondered these things for all our life, there will be much more to ponder. (7) Thank you that you want us to see and to hear so we can believe.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her mind." What are the factors in Mary's mind? Let us try to reconstruct what she has to ponder: (1) She was engaged to Joseph. This does not relate directly to what happened, but it became a real factor in all this drama. Without Joseph many things would not have happened. (2) She was suddenly confronted with an angel who told her she would become pregnant from the Holy Spirit. She was also told of

the supernatural (but natural) pregnancy of Elizabeth. (3) She left Joseph and Nazareth and spent several months in Judea with Elizabeth. (4) She was pregnant and there was no man as the father. (5) The shocking news that in her ninth month they must make the long trip to Bethlehem. In every point there are many angles and inuendos. Could Mary discern a divine purpose in it all? How much like the ever changing circumstances of our own life

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

This is far more than just another reading of the so-called *Christmas* text: (1) I want to hurry to a position of prayer before you — to lift up praise. (2) Open my heart and my lips to tell like it was only yesterday that my Lord was born. (3) Break my hard heart that I might communicate the wonder felt by the shepherds. (4) I want the meditative capacity of Mary. (5) Open my mind that new and fresh applications might be made of this ageless truth. (6) Thank you for the simple beauty of Bethlehem. (7) Thank you for the profound depth of what I see and hear.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me once again: (1) "Men still need to hear of my first coming." (2) "I am coming again and when I do it will not be 'good news' to most of the world." (3) "Please ponder long over these verses."

INTERCESSION FOR A LOST WORLD

Indonesia — Points for prayer: (1) *Sumatra: The Karo Bataks* are turning to the Lord in large numbers — pray for this growing church and the work of missionaries assisting it. *The 16 tribes of the South* — only one now reached with the Gospel — living in rugged country and most are Muslim. One tribe is turning from Islam to the Lord. (2) *Java* 90,000,000 — *Unreached peoples* — the Banten and Sunda (15 million) in the West (with a few churches) and the resistant Madurese in the East (6 Madurese Christians on Madura Is.) are all Muslim. Pray for the difficult ministry among the latter. Pray also for the evangelization of the largely unreached Hindu Tenger in the mountains of E. Java.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;
Holy, Holy Holy! Merciful and Mighty!
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!

WEEK FIVE

—Monday—

“I want to look at you long enough to absorb your radiance! We have that privilege just now! You desire obedience before any ritual has any meaning — and no ritual is prescribed! Glory to your name!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

I sought the Lord, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears. Look to him, and be radiant; so your faces shall never be ashamed” (Psa. 34:4,5). There are so many qualities of yourself; I shall never exhaust them. How is the word “sought” used? Are you someone who can be lost and therefore must be found? Or is this a synonym for “inquiry”? i.e., “I made inquiry of the Lord and he answered me”? The term seems to be one of urgency. There is nothing casual here. Perhaps “out of focus” or “unrecognized” or “unappreciated” would be a better word than “lost”. I have sought you because the eyes of my heart were dim. I sought you because I have failed to practice your presence and you are therefore unrecognized and unappreciated. What is true of me is true of all. Is it only when man is afraid that he seeks you? So it would seem. The positive encouragement is that personal exchange can be established! We can get an answer! You can and do deliver us from all our fears. Blessed be your name!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

For me. How can I claim the radiance here promised? You can and do give radiance to men who fulfill this promise. This is an inward strength and confidence that is reflected on the face. A brightness and light begins within and manifests itself to all those who know us. What shall I see in you that will produce this effect? How shall I look in order for this to happen? How intently I must look. How totally fascinated and wholly enamored I must be — for a long time I must remain before you before this will happen! My total trust and absolute confidence must be placed in you. Out of the depths of need I refocus my whole heart on you. Only then will your light shine through me.

How do you personally relate to the radiance

of God, and God who is Radiance? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, the sad fact is that I have not sought you in the manner here described and I have been intimidated and overcome by my fears. Worry and anxiety are terrible masters. How wonderfully different is my outlook when I arise from a session of worship before you! Dear Lord, I rededicate myself to seeking and looking to you! It is so easy to be caught away by what is near — by what is clamoring for attention and interest. We are so much like the parents of my Lord who thought he was with them, but left him in Jerusalem. The painful fact was that he was not lost, they were. If you seem distant I know it is not because you have moved.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Lead on, O King Eternal,
The day of march has come;
Henceforth in fields of conquest
Thy tents shall be our home.
Thro’ days of preparation
Thy grace has made us strong,
And now, O King Eternal,
We lift our battle song.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

²¹On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived.

²²When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord

²³(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"),
²⁴and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons." —Luke 2:21-24, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, I am overwhelmed in an attempt to read these words from your perspective! On the important eighth day of the birth of your son the seal of the agreement with Abraham was performed on him! His name was "Joshua" or "Savior" or "Jesus" before the foundation of the world. His name was "Jesus" when the angel Gabriel made the announcement. His name was "Jesus" after the knife of circumcision. How indicative of your value system is the offering made by Mary and Joseph: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons." It was the desire to obey that was accepted — or made the sacrifice acceptable.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How can I take Mary's place? Or consider what is happening here from Joseph's viewpoint? Perhaps the priest's perspective would be interesting. Just where do I stand as I travel from Bethlehem to Jerusalem? There is a small baby in Mary's arms. There is an inscription in the work schedule of Joseph. There is some outlay of expense for even two young pigeons. I want to be a part of the little family on its way to the temple. Dear Lord, how unassuming are all your ways. What a lesson for me to learn in even this simple fact. How we do want men to notice what we do. How we do want people to be impressed and praise us for our accomplishments. I doubt if *anyone* — *anyone* even saw Mary and Joseph. Dear God, you did — it is enough!

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Blessed Lord, I can at least thank you: (1) Thank you for the parents' willingness to comply with the law even when both of them knew their child was heaven's exception. (2) Thank you again and again for the beautiful name "Jesus." (3) Thank you for angels' interest in the whole brief life of our Lord. (4) Thank you for the pureness of Mary — not only according to the law, but according to her heart. (5) Thank you that whereas we are always in your presence yet each day we can appear before you to present ourselves all over again. (6) Thank you that every male and female is now to be consecrated to the Lord. (7) Thank you for the one sacrifice that makes all we are and have possible.

Give yourself to your own expression of praise — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Every first-born male is to be consecrated to the

Lord." God had a right to all men of every family. The text in Leviticus and Numbers is saying every first-born son is to be given to God's service. However, to allow the first-born to serve in the home a sacrifice took his place. Perhaps some of the Israelites would remember that since Egypt every first-born male or female belonged to the Lord. There would have been no first-born if the lamb had not been slain and the blood applied. How all of the above information related to the Lord is easy to see. The doves or pigeons were the smallest, cheapest possible sacrifice. How humbling it was to offer only birds in place of the Son of God! Was this one of the deep thoughts Mary pondered? If she didn't we should!

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What a humble but meaningful service it was! (1) Jesus was a true son of Abraham — thank you that I can share this distinction. (2) I want his name to be fulfilled in my experience — "my Savior." (3) If it was necessary to present Jesus to you how much more do I need to present myself! (4) Set me aside as your servant today. (5) Thank you that my Lord is my sacrifice for acceptance with you. (6) "Life for life" has been your law from the beginning — thank you that Christ died for me.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

How poignant are these words: (1) "Write the name of my Son on your heart." (2) "If my Son needed ceremonial purification what do you imagine you need?" (3) "Every new-born child of mine is now holy because of Jesus."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Indonesia — points for prayer: (1) *Java: The Church* (2% of population) has seen hundreds of thousands of Muslims coming into the fellowships in spite of being generally weak and immature. The Christians are not fully able to take advantage of the great openness of the 50 million Muslim Javanese to the Gospel. Pray for the missionaries, the evangelistic and church planting ministries. (2) *Bali*, a 3,000,000 tourist-infested Hindu island in great spiritual darkness, demonic oppression and witchcraft. The progress of the Gospel has been slow until recently. The great volcanic eruptions over the last decade have brought about a great change because of Christian love shown to the victims, and whole communities are turning to the Lord. Pray for the work in Bali.

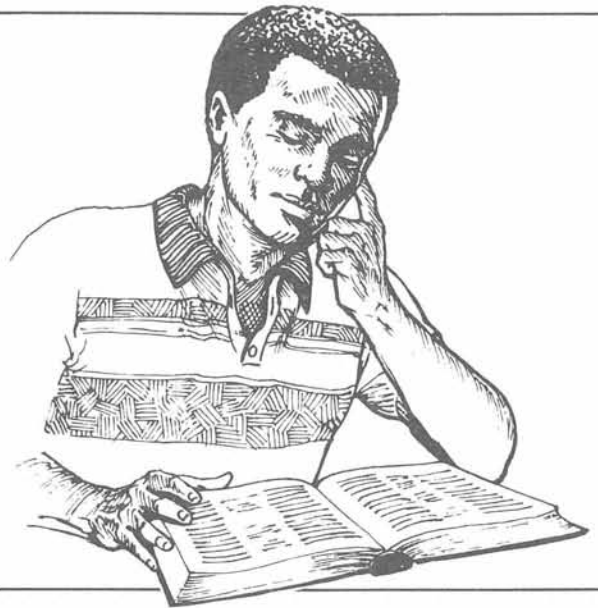
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I love Thy Kingdom, Lord.
 The house of Thine abode,
 The Church our blessed Redeemer saved
 With His own precious blood.

WEEK FIVE

—Tuesday—

“There are angels all about us — before us — behind us — above us — How comforting! Old men who have been long in the temple of the Lord can help us all. Let us worship our Lord!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them. O taste and see that the Lord is good! Happy is the man who takes refuge in him” (Psa. 34:7,8). Here are surprising qualities of yourself. How pleasant it is to believe angels are encamped around us at all times. *“The angel of the Lord”* in this psalm could have reference to our Lord before he came to this earth, or to one of the arch-angels. We are assured that the angelic host is pressed into service on behalf of children and Christians (Heb. 1:14, Matt. 18:10). Does our reverence and worship relate to this angelic ministry? Indeed it does! Our reverence and worship (even now) makes us sensitive to their presence. Can we say our “fear” activates their service? Just what deliverances have we received from our Lord or his messengers? I am glad I do not know. If I did, then all men would look for the same kind and would feel less if they didn’t have it. How wise you are!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write it out in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me! I am tasting, I am eating at your banquet table — “your banner over me is love” (Song of Solomon 2:4). The food is your word (milk and meat) and yourself (bread and water). The adjective “good” has a much, much deeper meaning in its biblical setting than it has in our English vocabulary. Dear Lord, the more I eat the stronger becomes my appetite! I shall never eat or drink enough to satiate my hunger or thirst. This opens to me the meaning of those who spend all eternity praising and adoring you! I am delighted to hide in you! I need a “refuge” — a cool, peaceful place where I can relax and find rest. You are saying to me, “That place is a Person even myself!”

How do you personally relate to the goodness of God, and God who is Love? Speak it out or write

it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

That there should be such bounties and I should be so hungry and poor is my sin. I realize the development of a sensitive spirit is a life-long process, but for me to make no (or very little) progress in this process is indicative of a serious lack. Forgive me. I find such delight when I am willing, I wonder that it is not always so! How fleeting and unsatisfying are the pursuits of this world. Why should I have any interest in them at all except as they relate to the necessities of life? The Lord is too good to leave! Dear Father, you know how far short I fall of a constant fulfillment of such goals. Help me! I do love you. Cleanse me deeply!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
Ye soldiers of the cross,
Lift high His royal banner,
It must not suffer loss;
From vict’ry unto vict’ry,
His army shall He lead,
Till ev’ry foe is vanquished
And Christ is Lord indeed.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. ²⁷Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child

Jesus to do for him what the custom of the law required, —Luke 2:25-27, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Oh, Father, I do so admire this old man. Open my mind that I might think and pray your thoughts about him: (1) He was “righteous and devout.” I take this to mean that he lived a consistent life and loved you from the heart. I do hope this is what is meant because in a long record of trying, this is all I can offer you. I am reminded once again that this is what he was, not what he did. (2) He was waiting for the “consolation of Israel.” This is tantamount to waiting for the Messiah. (3) “The Holy Spirit was upon him.” Isn’t that what was said of the prophets? He had been spoken to by the Holy spirit. He had the beautiful confidence that he would not die without your consolation: he would see your anointed One! The Holy Spirit was a very large part of his life.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

It will not be at all difficult to apply these precious points to my own life: (1) Dear Lord, I am not at all righteous — I am full of fault and weakness. At the same time, I claim your provision for my righteousness — indeed he is my consolation! (2) Am I devout? I do love you — I do enjoy worshipping you, I do love your word. But devout I am not. (3) I need not wait — he has come! Blessed be his name! (4) The Holy Spirit is in me — that he would aid me with strength in my inner man is a claim I gladly make (Ephesians 3:16). (5) I wonder just what other wondrous things I shall see before I die? You have already shown me much more than I expected or deserve!

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD FOR THANKSGIVING

The life of Simeon seems to be one of thanksgiving. (1) Thank you for the “hidden” men and women of faith — you have them everywhere. (2) Thank you that it is possible, by your definition, to be righteous and devout. (3) Thank you that all the prophets looked for has come in the person of your Son. (4) Thank you for your revealing agent — even the Holy Spirit. (5) Thank you for your purposes that can be worked out in every life. (6) Thank you for the temple of yourself — even our bodies. (7) Thank you for the babe in Mary’s arms who was the son of your love.

Give yourself to your own expression of praise — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts.” It has always been a question in my mind as to how such persons knew they were “moved by the Holy Spirit”? Did they know it at the time or did they conclude later that considering the circumstances such was the case? I guess what I am asking is: “Was

there a definable subjective direction from the Holy Spirit?” I am glad to acknowledge the moving of the Holy Spirit — I would like to know more about this phenomenon. It was in the temple courts he met our Lord. We are the temple or sanctuary of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, we can come into the presence of the Lord anywhere, any time even as I do now. The blessed Holy Spirit has moved me through his word to come here and close the door and pray. Even as Simeon of old, I have met my Lord!

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In this aged man are many lessons for prayer: (1) Give me a renewed claim on the righteousness of your Son. (2) I want a devoutness that is genuine all the time. (3) How glad I am to claim what Simeon only looked for. (4) Keep me always aware of the presence of your Holy spirit. (5) May I be prepared every day to die. (6) How I long to see what now is only by faith — keep me prepared. (7) Thank you for the lesson here that what seems casual is actually planned by yourself.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these verses speak to me: (1) “How I need more men like Simeon today.” (2) “The hope of Israel and the world has already come.” (3) “Simeon was not aware he was led by the Spirit — but he was led nonetheless. . . .”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Indonesia — Points for prayer: (1) *The lesser Sunda Islands* (Lombok, Flores and Sumbawa) are virtually without a Bible believing witness. Lack of workers hinders their evangelization. There are no Protestant workers there. (2) *The Moluccas* have been Christian for three centuries, but there is little true spiritual life on these many small islands. (3) *Timor* 2,500,000 — reunited when Indonesian troops crushed a Communist takeover after the collapse of Portuguese rule in 1976. The 700,000 people of the former Portuguese E. Timor are unevangelized but for one group on tiny Atauro Island. Pray for Timorese evangelists who pray for an entrance from W. Timor. W. Timor has been nominally Christian for 300 years, but the large church was riddled with nominalism, witchcraft and sin until revival came. Batu teams helped to consolidate the work on a Biblical basis, and hundreds of witness teams went out all over the island and beyond. Pray for greater maturity, spiritual depth and growing missionary vision.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

We gather together to ask the Lord’s blessing,
He chastens and hastens His will to make known;
The wicked oppressing cease them from distressing,
Sing praises to His name, He forgets not His own.

WEEK FIVE

—Wednesday—

“God is alive: he sees! he hears — he is involved in all that happens with his children — he is on our side in the battle! There is a light in the darkness!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and his ears toward their cry. The face of the Lord is against evildoers, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth” (Psa. 34:15,16). There are several not too obvious qualities of yourself in these verses. I am delighted to hold them up as praiseworthy before all men. (1) You see, i.e., you look upon all men with an awareness we will never know. Your observation includes a total view of all man is and has been and can be. How encouraging to know you are not only absolute knowledge, but absolute love. You look with more than fatherly interest in every action of “the righteous.” (2) You hear, i.e., men do not talk anywhere any time without a silent listener. When others do not listen, you do. When others do not understand, you do!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. How great a comfort I receive in this time of praise and wonder. You are even now at work on my behalf. You do not ignore evildoers. You see them and know of their efforts to defeat your work. If for reasons best known to you you cannot (not because you are not able) defeat them here you will indeed avenge in the life and world to come. Even in this world and upon this earth millions of evil doers have come and gone and no one alive upon this earth could tell their name or their deeds. What seems so unreasonably evil today will not be remembered in a very few years from now. I praise you that you see, hear and are personally involved in all I am and do. I do not adequately represent your divine presence — but I appreciate it.

How do you personally relate to the eyes of God, and God who sees all? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

How is it I can so often vocalize my confidence in your personal presence and live as if you were nowhere near? “Thou Lord *seest* me.” “When the righteous cry for help, the Lord *hears*.” How can I live and speak as if this were *not* true? I must affirm your conscious living presence real often. Indeed I do this very moment! You are full of loving interest; it is not your purpose to catch me in my sin, but to remind me of the larger picture — it includes you. Forgive me for not remembering this. There are other sins I confess to you, but this is so important — help me! Cleanse me. Keep me awake!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

My soul in sad exile was out on life’s sea,
So burdened with sin and distress,
Till I heard a sweet voice saying,
“Make me your choice”;
And I entered the “Haven of Rest”!
I’ve anchored my soul in the “Haven of Rest,”
I’ll sail the wide seas no more;
The tempest may sweep o’er the wild, stormy deep,
In Jesus I’m safe evermore.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

²⁷Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

²⁹Sovereign Lord, as you promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace.

³⁰For my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹which you have prepared in the sight of all the people,

³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.”

³³The child’s father and mother marveled at what was said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, ³⁵so that all the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.” —*Luke 2:27-35, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How precious is this lovely record! How full of meaning to me, but a thousand times more meaningful to you! I must try to imagine the scene — you can see it! What a meaningful expression of praise and thanksgiving came from the heart of this old man. But then, it was the Holy Spirit who moved him. I want to lift every word up to you in wonder and praise. Just the opening expression is enough! “Sovereign Lord,” — how I bow before you in acknowledgement. Dear God, I am speechless! How solid is my hope and confidence in you in the light of all you have said and done. All you have promised has happened even as you said. Like Simeon I would gladly accept dismissal in your peace!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I do not want to miss any part of these burning words. What prophetic promises are in these few sentences: (1) Salvation prepared in the sight of all the people. Was he anticipating Calvary where the inscription advertised the king in three languages? (2) Is this wonderful man anticipating the universal salvation of our Lord? How all of this shocks me! How full of praise this one Gentile is! (3) The real purpose and character of Israel can be seen in what our Savior did — and in who he was. No wonder Joseph and Mary marveled at what was said about their little son.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD FOR THANKSGIVING

I am like the parents of my Lord — full of wonder: (1) Thank you that sometimes in the very normal course of life the most amazing things happen. (2) Thank you for the tenderness and kindness in the words and actions of Simeon. (2) Thank you for the meaningful description of yourself given by Simeon: (a) Sovereign Lord; (b) A promise keeper; (c) One in control of death; (d) Source of salvation. (4) Thank you for this early anticipation of the whole purpose of our Lord’s ministry. (5) Thank you for “the sign” even my Lord — he could not be ignored. (6) Thank you that you know my thoughts — I give them to you for correction before they are revealed. (7) Thank you for the devotion of Mary to the child of her heart.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“And a sword will pierce your own soul too.” How very poignant must these words have been to Mary! Which sword did Simeon have in mind? Was it the sword of misunderstanding from those who should have known better? How often was Mary accused of fornication? But she had already felt the pain of this sword. Was it the sword of ridicule — i.e., that she, an unknown village maid, would be the mother of the Messiah? Perhaps as people observed the conduct and heard the words of her son such ridicule lessened, but perhaps it didn’t. How sharp was the sword of rejection by the people of Nazareth. Her son could be appreciated every place but at home.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How I do want to lift up the precious bundle in the infant form of my Lord: (1) Surely it is enough to be able to see him as he is indeed the Savior! (2) Open my eyes even wider to behold more and more of his beauty. (3) Dear Lord, how can the peoples of the earth be told of your Son and His love? (4) Enlighten my understanding as I bow before you. (5) I too marvel at what was said by Simeon — deepen my desire to share it. (6) I want to read again with deeper meaning the story of this child who became the Son of God and the Son of Man.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

How well can you speak to me from this text: (1) “There is more need for my Son today than when he came long ago.” (2) “He is today what he will ever be, the light of the world.”³ (3) “A sword has been given for the dividing of hearts today.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Indonesia — Point for prayer: (1) *Kalimantan* (Indonesian Borneo) 6,000,000. A vast underpopulated land of rivers and forests and very few roads. There are many nominal Christians in the south, but a great people movement is in progress among the majority Dayak tribes in the east, center and west with thousands seeking the Lord every year.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;
Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and Mighty!
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity.

WEEK FIVE

—Thursday—

“God is a very wealthy householder. He offers a deep drink from the river of delights. We have been bought by our Great Redeemer. We belong to you.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“They feast on the abundance of thy house, and thou givest them drink from the river of thy delights. For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light do we see light” (Psa. 36:8,9). The beautiful figures of speech here describe the even more beautiful reality behind them — even yourself! As if you were a wealthy householder, which indeed you are! The limitless expanse of eternity is your house. All that man has on this earth (and there is an abundance for all, distribution is the problem) is from your hand. Man’s physical needs as poorly as they are met, are but a means to a much more important end. Jesus said his food, his feast was in doing your will. There is a delight in teaching the lost, in educating the saved. What is “the river of your delights”? Sounds exciting to say the least. “If any man keeps on drinking of the water that I shall give him he shall never thirst, but always be satisfied” (John 4:14). I have expanded the translation but this is the meaning, and praise your name, this is “the river of delights.” Oh, dear Lord, I would that all men would find in yourself and your Son such a river and such a fountain!

Express yourself in adoration of this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I so much need and want to come before you with praise and gladness! With you and in you is “the fountain of life.” In your very self as opened up in your word and your Son is an experience just like jumping into a fountain of sparkling water! Every figure breaks down if we press it beyond its intended meaning. In this lovely example life comes from the fountain, but are we in the fountain or is the fountain in us? Perhaps both thoughts are intended. We think of Jesus’ reference to the artesian spring within us (John 4:15). Is it possible (I have thought of it often) to lose our identity in you? Can we become so glad and eager to know you and know more and more

about you that we lose contact with our life in your life? This is so poorly expressed. Dear Lord, help me. As I come to your light, shining out of your word and your Son, I see new light — everywhere! Praise your name!

How do you personally relate to the fountain of God, and God who is the water of life? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

If there is such an abundance in your house, if drinking of the water of life is so refreshing, if the fountain of joy is bubbling near by, how is it at times I am so unsatisfied? The answer is so clear: I just do not stay long enough, or often enough at your table; I do not drink deeply enough at your well; I do not tarry long enough or often enough at your fountain! Why? Why? How easy to forget! Dear Lord, forgive me! I have sinned against myself as well as you. I have sinned against all who could be helped by the “newness of life” found in me through you. I name my selfishness. Cleanse me. I do now forget so you can and will forget it! Praise your name!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Abide with me: fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens;
Lord with me abide:
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless,
O abide with me!

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

³⁶There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of

Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage,³⁷ and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying.³⁸ Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. — *Luke 2:36-38, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What a charming story to read in your presence! I guess all the ten tribes were not lost — here is a record of a dear woman and her heritage in the tribe of Asher is well known. What is meant by “great age”? How almost absurd it is to read this to you with whom time means nothing. I am to think of someone 80 or 90 years old — 84 to be precise. She found her new husband in you! How often did you see this dear woman in the precincts of your holy place? For many months and years she appeared before you in prayer and praise. Most of all she seems to sense her own unworthiness and expresses it in fasting. Every morning at the appointed hour she was there — every night she was found before you in prayer. What an example! I know you appreciated Anna — and so do I!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me — read this word into my heart! There was, and there is, a prophetess, Anna! I do not know how you decided who would be and who would not be a prophetess. It must have related to the need and opportunity and surely to the preparation of the heart of the one involved. So it is today for your servants — I think of myself, and of all others who want to serve you. How long shall I serve you? I have been more than 40 years preaching and teaching your word. I feel like Anna — a need for humiliation before you! I want to establish more definite times of worship — night and day — to do this is my deep desire. This is my largest, most constant need! I do wonder just what Anna said, but it serves as a good example for me. She spoke of the redemption of your people. It is enough! Can I expect or want more?

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

This seems to lend itself to thanksgiving in a special way: (1) Thank you for every unnamed, unknown prophetess that loved you and labored for you in far off days and places. (2) Thank you for all loving and patient wives who have lived with their husbands from their virginity — it was not always easy. (3) Thank you for the host of widows who love you and worship you and serve you in ways no one else can. (4) Thank you for this beautiful definition of worship: a life style attitude. (5) Thank you for the power of fasting to bring our bodies under subjection. (6) Thank you

for Luke’s desire to contribute Anna’s unassuming confirmation of our Lord’s deity.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.” This is the same thing as saying: “for all who were looking for the Messiah who would deliver the holy city from the hands of the Roman oppressors.” This is Luke’s description of the expectations of the people of his day. How I do wonder just what Anna told these people of our Lord? It would indeed be a blessed time to have lived — or would it? Isn’t it better to live on this side of “the redemption of Jerusalem”? Redemption for the whole human race occurred just outside the walls of that ancient city. Indeed this was the only redemption the Messiah came to give. How materially minded has man been!

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Anna the prophetess offers so much to all of us: (1) Keep me aware of how important prayer is to all of life. (2) Increase my desire to live always aware of your presence. (3) Teach me the real meaning of fasting. (4) Increase my life to communicate the redemptive work of your Son. (6) How I do want to learn more and more about worshiping you. (7) I do want the same sympathetic understanding of widows as found in the New Testament.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in the example of Anna: (1) “The words of my prophets yet speak through my word — hear them.” (2) “There are many old women who could teach you much — learn from them.” (3) “Men ought to continually give thanks for my mercy and love.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Indonesia — Point for prayer: (1) *Sulawesi* (Celebes) 10,000,000. *Unreached peoples* — the Muslim Bugi — a few believers now among them, also many smaller tribes in the interior. *Minahassa* in the north has over one million Protestants, mostly nominal. The *Toradja* people in central Sulawesi have emerged from much Muslim persecution for their turning to the Lord some years ago as a strong Church reaching out to the unsaved.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

We would see Jesus, for the shadows lengthen
Across the little landscape of our life;
We would see Jesus, our weak faith to strengthen
For the last weariness, the final strife.

WEEK FIVE

—Friday—

“We can trust you — we enjoy your security. Wise men came to seek him. He is our shepherd! What a privilege to worship him!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Trust in the Lord, and do good; so you will dwell in the land, and enjoy security. Take delight in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart” (Psa. 37:3,4). How wonderfully easy it is to praise you with these words before me! I do trust you — shall I say “I trust you implicitly”? I want to — yet I am reminded that someday, perhaps today, I will be called upon to exercise such trust when I cannot explain a circumstance of stress or suffering. I trust you not because I can explain your actions, but because of your essential character. I will surely enjoy more security if I trust in you than if I do not trust you and live for myself. Oh, dear Lord, I have no reason whatsoever not to trust you. I want all men to have the personal security that comes by trusting you!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. The hidden qualities of yourself are all here. Every one of more than two hundred qualities of yourself are all encompassed in the word “trust” and “delight.” This is my response to all you are. “Delight” suggests excitement and wonder — so should it be — and this *is* my reaction to yourself. What is there about you that would move me to such trust and delight? Here are a few qualities: (1) absolute love; (2) total personal interest in me; (3) intelligence and power beyond the wildest imagination; (4) a plan and program you are working out in my life right now; (5) a new world and life right on the other side of my last heart beat.

How do you personally relate to the personalness of God, and God who is personal? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

So often have I run across the root sin — the ultimate

transgression — so it is here. If I do not trust you, if I find no enjoyment in your presence then all else falls apart. Dear Lord, I do not want to wait for some emergency — some stressful moment — but just for today, just now I want to trust you and rejoice in your presence. That I have not always done so is a sad admission — a terrible sin. I have always trusted someone or something — I have found pleasure in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes or the pride of life. Dear, dear Lord, it was so terribly disappointing and the desires of my heart were not satisfied. Forgive me.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
 Forgive our foolish ways!
 Reclothe us in our rightful mind;
 In purer lives Thy service find,
 In deeper rev'rence, praise.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.”

³When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵“In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

⁶“But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.”

—Matthew 2:1-6, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I am sometimes quite hesitant to read these words as if you were listening — as if I were looking at them from heaven's perspective. How presumptuous beyond human reason is such a thought! But, as you well know it is only a means of seeing more deeply into the meaning of what you are saying to me and to all men. Only your servant Levi tells us of this amazing visit. Dear Lord, I have not come from the east, but I have indeed come to worship him! How did you prepare these "wise men" for this visit? How I do want to meet them and have a long visit with them. The arrival of these wealthy important men caused no small stir in the courts of Herod and the city of Jerusalem. How almost amused you must have been at their concern.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I await eagerly this time with you! I believe the actual historical account — we can look upon the face of "Herod the King" in the representations men have left us — but he lived and acted as described by Matthew I believe because of historical evidence. Bless your name for the dependability of your record. How amazing that you would bring the lowest and the highest to the birth of your Son. This speaks sharply to me! If you brought the lowest and the highest — you want me to accept such as worshipers of yourself and your son. I love the imagination behind the star! It is so real, so unusual, so beyond all man would do! This happened 2,000 years ago! Thank you! What an amazement! The chief priests and scribes knew the scriptures! They could turn to the right references. Did they believe your word? Not for themselves. Can I be living in their place today? Dear Lord, deliver me!

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

How awesome it is to pause before "the child with Mary his mother": (1) Thank you for Bethlehem of Judea, a real town and a real province. (2) Thank you for these unnamed and unnumbered men of wisdom. (3) Thank you that these men knew from the very beginning that he was a king. (4) Thank you for the wondrous ways you have of leading men to yourself. (5) Thank you that men cannot be neutral when they are confronted with your son. (6) Thank you Jesus is a ruler — my ruler. (7) Thank you for the "Israel of God" today, even his "called out ones." Govern us, dear Lord!

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel." How very much came from "the little town of Bethlehem"! Let's notice: (1) A ruler came — and oh, what a ruler! One who had ruled the

heaven of the heavens before he emptied himself and took the form of flesh. A ruler of his own body while upon this earth. Tempted in all points like us and yet without sin. A ruler of the world about him — he walked on water, cursed a fig tree, created food. A ruler of the men with whom he associated. He needed not for man to teach him — for he himself knew what was in man. (2) A governor came from Bethlehem. Whereas we know this term is almost a synonym for "ruler" we yet want to make a fresh application of it. He was governor of the new Jerusalem that only awaited his return. He was governor of ten million angels who eagerly anticipated his return and followed his every word and action.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I indeed, like the wise men of old, have come to worship him: (1) Rule in my life as King. (2) Give me the wisdom that comes down from above. (3) Bow my total inward being before your throne. (4) Trouble my heart with the possibility that my Lord has a rival king — even myself. (5) Thank you that many men today know where your son was born. (6) There are also more who do not know he came — move me to help.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these familiar verses say a new thing: (1) "Men will see him from all points of the compass when he comes again." (2) "Men still are wondering why no one has told them of my coming." (3) "Israel has yet to recognize her ruler."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Indonesia — point for prayer: (1) *Irian Jaya* (West New Guinea) 1,000,000. A wild, undeveloped land with many small tribes emerging from the stone age. Yet God has moved in a remarkable way through the sacrificial work of many missions, and now 70% of the population is Christian. Pray for the continuing work in evangelism, church planting, Bible teaching and Bible translation. The *Church* needs more trained leaders, but many of the tribespeople are illiterate. The large people movements need to be well disciplined to avoid error, heathen practices and nationalistic splits within the churches. Pray for the growing number of missionaries going out to unevangelized tribes from these tribal churches.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

All hail the pow'r of Jesus' name!

Let angels prostrate fall:
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all,
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all!

WEEK FIVE

—Saturday—

“ ‘Commit your way to the Lord; trust him, and he will act.’ ‘When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.’ We can commit; we can worship.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act. He will bring forth your vindication as the light, and your right as the noonday” (Psa. 37:5,6).

Dear Father, it would seem here that you are making some very definite promises. The conditions are clear, but so are the promises. The covenant concept seems to be so very prominent in all your word. If I commit my life and all I plan and do into your hands; and I trust you with what I have committed you will act! I would expect you to act through the daily routine. Can this happen today? Praise your name, I *know* it can. I do not want to simply seek your benediction on what I have already planned. I want to yield up all I have planned for your inspection and judgment. This is an invariable principle for all men in every situation. Oh, that all men practiced it!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

For me. In a practical application of this principle I think of the practice of George Mueller. He said: “To ascertain the will of God: (1) I seek at the beginning to get my heart into such a state that it has no will of its own in regard to a given matter. Nine-tenths of the trouble with people generally is just here. Nine-tenths of the difficulties are overcome when our hearts are ready to do the Lord’s will, whatever it may be.

When one is truly in this state, it is usually but a little way to the knowledge of what His will is. (2) Having done this, I do not leave the result to feeling or simple impression. If so, I make myself liable to great delusions. (3) I seek the Will of the Spirit of God through, or in connection with, the Word of God. If I look to the Spirit alone without the Word, I lay myself open to great delusions also. If the Holy Ghost guides us at all, He will do it according to the Scriptures and never contrary to them. (4) Next I take into account providential circumstances. These often plainly indicate

God’s Will in connection with His Word and Spirit. (5) I ask God in prayer to reveal His will to me aright. (6) Thus, through prayer to God, the study of the Word, and reflection, I come to a deliberate judgment according to the best of my ability and knowledge, and if my mind is thus at peace, and continues so after two or three more petitions, I proceed accordingly. In trivial matters, and in transactions involving most important issues, I have found this method always effective.”

How do you personally relate to the direction of God, and God who directs your way? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

I want to confess freely how far short I fall in the very areas where I could be blessed. (1) It is very, very difficult for me to have no will in any given matter. Dear Lord, I do, I do want to say not my will be done. I give it up to you! (2) I have acted on mere feeling or impressions. This is a sin. I confess it as another form of pure selfishness. (3) I have *not* meditated on your word enough — I need to be in your word during the day. I need also to be far more sensitive to your Spirit’s presence. (4) I must have the wisdom from above to evaluate providential circumstances. I claim it! I want to wait before I leap. Help me. Forgive me. (5) Dear God, that I would ask specifically. Forgive me for the sin of not specifically asking.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

O tell of His might, and sing of His grace,
Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space;
His chariots of wrath the deep thunder-clouds form,
And dark is his path on the wings of the storm.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

⁷Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star appeared. ⁸He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

⁹After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.

¹¹On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.

¹²And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route. —*Matthew 2:7-12, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

A delight! To now look back upon these events as an accomplished fact — at the same time to view them as happening in the present — to know that they shall always be in the future is much more than my poor mind can encompass, and yet this must be a small part of your perspective. What words were exchanged between Herod and the wisemen as they met in secret? I ask you because I know it was no secret to you. Man’s secret meetings must appear ludicrous to you! Herod should have worshiped him. One day he will worship him — as will everyone.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I wonder what there was about the appearance of the star that produced such an immediate response in the wise men? “When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.” Had the star disappeared momentarily? Did the star become brighter or nearer? There *was* something about it to obtain such happiness. Before them was a new born king — the king of the whole nation of Israel — a king in a spiritual, supernatural sense. After all, what king has ever had such an unusual announcement for his coming? There must be some significance to the gifts offered: (1) Gold — precious and pure like the nature of the One before them. (2) Frankincense — a lovely fragrance like the character of this dear One — a continual expression of praise was the conduct of our Lord. (3) Myrrh — used in burial, in part of the anointing of the body. How full of meaning are these gifts.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

How abundant are our sources for gratitude: (1) Thank you that Herod did not himself or his men accompany the wise men. (2) Thank you that worship

was such an important pursuit for the men from the east. (3) Thank you for your timing and direction of the celestial body. (4) Thank you for the provision of a “house” — who provided it? (5) Thank you for every day Mary gave in the care of our blessed Lord. (6) Thank you for the strange unusual scene that must have greeted Mary’s eyes as she met those men and received their gifts.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.” How very kind of you to take a personal interest in the safety of these men. We are not going to meet them again this side of the world to come. I imagine this incident became the largest event in their lives, or the lives of those from whom they came. Do you speak to people in dreams today? Your word *does* say that in these last days “old men shall dream dreams.” Indeed, I have! I have dreamed of the evangelization of so many who have never once heard our Lord. I have dreamed of every Christian being a student of your word.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

The worship of the wise men leads me to prayer: (1) Since you control the galaxies of space I know you can meet every need of every man — praise your name! (2) I also know you will not meet human needs apart from your cooperation. (3) Deliver me from deceit — what a sore temptation! (4) Thank you for the leadership of your word for my life today.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As I bow with these men speak to me: (1) “There *are* men in the world today who want to destroy my Son.” (2) “My presence is always seen in the worship of my Son.” (3) “My gift is enough and no gift is too small to offer to my Son.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Japan — Population: 112,300,000. Growth rate — 1.2%. People per sq. km. — 302.

Point for prayer: (1) *This talented people* are materialistic, unresponsive and hidden in a centuries-old cocoon of culture and bondage to demonic powers and multiplied varieties of Buddhism. Few are willing to make the decisive break with the past despite many being sympathetic to the claims of the Gospel. Pray for a mighty work of the Holy Spirit to break down these barriers and liberate these people through the Gospel.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

WEEK SIX

—Sunday—

“Isn’t it wonderful to know every step we take is known to our Lord? Even when we fall he knows, he loves, he lifts up!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The steps of a man are from the Lord, and he establishes him in the way he delights; though he fall he shall not be cast headlong, for the Lord is the stay of his hand” (Psa. 37:23,24). Praise your name, I’m glad to come before you and claim your promises. You are saying here in words that cannot be misunderstood that you will direct my steps, indeed so carefully will you guide me that you will be walking in my shoes! If such is true — and I know it is — then you must be in me to give such directions. Not only so, I want you to have total control. “It is no longer I that live, but Christ who liveth in me.” By this simple but profound relationship this blessed quality of yourself can be a reality for any man.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. The second verse (24) speaks especially to me. “Though he fall,” has been true so often. It has been my experience to walk in your way, and to walk in my own way. The little phrase “he (God) establishes him (you and me) in whose way he (you and I) delights.” If we delight in our way we will walk in it, if we delight in your way we will walk in that. I agree whole heartedly with George Mueller that it is not all that different to discover your way in every matter if we are truly serious about prayer and the study of your word. There have been no decisions in my life unknown or unnoticed by you. The principles of your word are altogether adequate.

How do you personally relate to the leadership of God, and God who leads? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

I am so glad I have not been “cast head long” — although I thought at times it had surely happened. In your infinite mercy my hand was held from striking

the blow that would have severed the cord of love. By your grace I was restrained from the last decision that would have removed me from contact with those who love you and me. That I found myself in such a pigpen was my fault — my choice — my stupidity. Forgive me, I will arise and go home. Dear Lord, I purpose to delight myself in your words — in your ways — in yourself in your Son.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

O Rock divine, O Refuge dear,
A shelter in the time of storm;
Be Thou our helper ever near,
A shelter in the time of storm.
Oh, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land,
A weary land, a weary land;
Oh, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land,
A shelter in the time of storm.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹³When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

¹⁴So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, ¹⁵where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

¹⁶When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. —Matthew 2:13-16, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

There is so much of yourself in these few verses! I want to tell you how very much they mean to me. Joseph was not mentioned in the visit of the wisemen but it does not mean he was not there. It could have been because he was away or working, or both. He is very much alive. He is also very much aware of the danger present. The name of the angel is not given, only his instruction. The murderous intentions of Herod were known by heaven before anyone else knew. Joseph doesn't even wait until morning — no sooner had the dream registered than he acted! What an unusual fulfillment of prophecy! Dear Lord, I want to say how very much your concern and personal interest means to me. I believe you are at work in our lives today.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Amen! Help me to be as ready to adapt my life and schedule to your will for me. Did Joseph use some of the gold given by the wisemen for their trip to Egypt? At least I believe you never give a command without the means to carry it out. Praise your name for this confidence. Praise you that you are in the business of helping man to see his limitations — even when he is a "big" man like Herod. This text lets me see your son as a dear little boy of two years old. What was the look on his face as he looked up at the stars on the way to Egypt? What thoughts were in the minds of the soldiers as they went to protect the ruler against boys of two years old? Dear Father, how wondrous are your ways!

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

From Mary and Joseph's viewpoint this is surely a text of thanksgiving: (1) They would thank you that angels were always beholding the face of the Father and the needs of his children. (2) They could be thankful they were willing to obey and not to rationalize. (3) They could be thankful for the open travel routes. (4) They could be thankful there was a place to stay in Egypt when they got there. (5) They could be thankful for the money to live on while they stayed in Egypt. (6) They could be thankful your goodness can always overcome man's wrath, either in this world or the next. (7) They could be thankful that God provided a shelter in a foreign land where once there was no shelter.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . in accordance with the time he learned from the Magi." Why did Herod react so irrationally? He could have investigated and found Jesus no threat to his rule. (1) He could have learned that God does in-

deed have his own time, i.e., God has a scheduled sequence of events — it was "the fulness of time." The completion of the promises and prophecies made to the Fathers. (2) He could have learned that time is only a relative term, i.e., created by man to give him a sense of progress. The importance of time is measured by the event. The birth of the Messiah was *the event*. That it happened during the reign of Herod or the life of the wisemen was almost parenthetical.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What a privilege it is to pray — especially as guided by this text: (1) Give me an increasing awareness of your constant involvement in my life. (2) Open my understanding to include your interest in all of my life in every relationship. (3) What an encouragement to know you know Satan's moves before he makes them. (4) Give me the total willing obedience I see in Joseph. (5) How kind you were to supply gold and other gifts to help them make the journey to Egypt. (6) Keep me aware that if I know it or not, your word is being fulfilled. (7) Defeat Satan's strategy in my own experience.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in these verses: (1) "I can deliver my children from any efforts of men to defeat my purpose." (2) "I am still at work in the lives of my children." (3) "The deceiver is not dead — he is still at work."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Japan — Points for prayer: (1) *The Church in Japan* needs our prayers. We mention some points: *The United Church of Christ*, the largest Church, is basically a government imposed union of Presbyterian, Reformed, etc., churches of nearly 40 years ago. The Church is crippled by liberalism and violent controversy stirred up by leftist young preachers over social action. The Church, and other larger liberal denominations, are in serious decline, and only kept going by a few faithful believers who carry on in spite of the leaders. Pray for a moving of the Spirit and a return to Biblical theology. (2) *The smaller and younger Bible believing Churches* are growing both in numbers, evangelistic zeal and missionary vision. There is a new surge of evangelism in progress which is being ably led by some of Japan's finest Christian leaders and evangelists. Pray for a great harvest of souls to be both won and retained in the churches.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine,
For Thee all the follies of sin I resign;
My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

WEEK SIX

—Monday—

“We have a new song — a new purpose for singing. We have a new response — wonder and praise! We have a good reason for happiness!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the Lord” (Psa. 40:3). I am so glad you are a God of song. You have originated so many songs. You appreciate singing. I like new things — all men are interested in innovation. You are the original source of all that is new and interesting! Dear Lord, whereas I do praise you and rejoice that my life can be one succession of new and interesting blessings, this is not true of most of the human population. We can “walk in newness of life,” i.e., all of life is new and fresh and interesting. But not so with so much of your world. I do want to help. How I long for the last half of this verse to be true: “Many will see and fear (wonder in adoration) and put their trust in the Lord.”

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

What is *new* about the new song you have given me? (1) A *new purpose* for singing. Sex, food and money are the themes of the songs of this world. Peace, hope and love are the themes of the new song. The restlessness, the unsatisfied feeling, the elusive desire has been replaced by a fulfillment we never found anywhere else. (2) A *new response* to the song we sing. When we truly communicate the reality of your presence men do wonder. There is a genuine deep interest. How soon are the songs of our day forgotten! There is something hauntingly real and lasting to your song. Even when men do not believe they cannot ignore the joy of the new song! What a promise! “Many will see (hear) and fear, and put their trust in the Lord.”

How do you personally relate to the song of the Lord, and God who produces song? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is just as true that we often sing the songs of time and not eternity; of earth and not heaven; of the flesh and not of the spirit. Dear Lord, forgive. Stealing is yet stealing after we have what we have stolen. Lying is yet lying after we have lied. Adultery is yet adultery after the act is completed. There is no song in sin. Dear Lord, open my mouth to you in the song of deliverance; in the song of freedom. If I pause and attempt an analysis of my sin I only end up in frustration. Dear God, I admit the fact of sin and accept gladly the fact of forgiveness!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

A mighty fortress is our God,
A bulwark never failing;
Our helper He, amid the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great,
And, armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹⁷Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸“A voice is heard in Ramah,
weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children
and refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more.”

¹⁹After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt ²⁰and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child’s life are

dead.”

²¹So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, ²³and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: “He will be called a Nazarene.” —*Matthew 2:17-23, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I do so want to tell you all this text means to me, but first of all I want to praise you for your active, up-front concern in the lives of all. For every mother in Bethlehem; they are as near and dear to you as was Jacob’s beloved wife Rachel. As her first-born was sold into Egypt and presumed dead by Jacob — and even though Rachel herself was dead — yet she somehow shared the grief. It was as if this ancient mother arose from her tomb to weep also with the bereft mothers of the little town. (We are well aware of Jeremiah’s reference to the Babylonian captivity, but I want to relate all of this as closely as at all possible to your dear Son and my Savior!) (2) You got the message of Herod’s death to Joseph faster than the couriers of the king could get it out to the provinces. Your warning and protection is such an encouragement for today!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

There never are enough or adequate words to tell you all your eternal word means to me. But it is always a joy to try. (1) If you were touched by the weeping of the mother of the wounded, I know you are concerned every time a mother weeps today. (2) If you knew ahead of the latest news just what was happening in the political maneuvers of Israel surely you know what is happening in America today! (3) Even when we make a move in what seems to be the right direction — if it is not, you have ways of letting us know. It may not be a dream as in Joseph’s experience, but you will direct us, i.e., if we are sensitive to your leading. Dear Lord, I do want to be!

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Gratitude seems a very prominent part of these words: (1) Thank you for Matthew’s ability to show the Old Testament fulfillment in so many events. (2) Thank you for each of Joseph’s dreams — you said so much in each of them. (3) Thank you that there is an end to all human opposition. (4) Thank you that our Lord lived in a town where men thought it would be impossible to live a pure life. (5) Thank you that our Lord had brothers and sisters that his beautiful life might be an example for all (cf. Matthew 13:55,56). (6) Thank you for the whole Herodian family — what an example of rejection! (7) Thank you for the beautiful innocent child Jesus.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“He shall be called a Nazarene.” Matthew says that several, or even all the Old Testament prophets agree to this designation. We believe it refers to his being despised and rejected of men. The slanderous ridicule of the Messiah coming from this insignificant town was behind the name. Let’s consider how he was despised: (1) As to his education — he had no credentials from the schools at Jerusalem. And yet this is the one quality that enhances him in our eyes. His wisdom was far beyond men. (2) As to his possessions — he had to depend on others to feed and clothe him (Luke 8:1ff.). “He who was rich became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich.”

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How meaningful prayer is when directed by your word: (1) There are many who weep today because they have lost their children — open my heart to them. (2) Keep me open to the possibility that you will use very unusual circumstances to teach me. (3) Remind me again that even the greatest of men die — your work is dependent upon yourself not men. (4) I want to remember the death of Pharaoh and Herod — opposition removed in one day. (5) I claim your protection for my life today. (6) Open my mind to your direction: When shall I decide and when shall I let you decide? (7) I do ask your infinite direction in the rule of our men in high places.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What can I hear from you through these verses? (1) “My service will not make you immune from sufferings.” (2) “Death is at times a great blessing.” (3) “It is just as important for you to decide as it is for myself.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Japan — Point for prayer: (1) *The needs and problems of the churches* — it is reckoned that around 90% of all those who seek the Lord later backslide through the pressures of family, society, unequal marriages and the pervasive influence of the spiritual darkness of Japan. Revival is the great need — to bring Christians to a point of total abandonment to the Lord Jesus, and rid them of the cloying power of their background.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

“Man of Sorrows,” what a name
For the Son of God who came
Ruined sinners to reclaim!
Hallelujah! what a Savior!

WEEK SIX

—Tuesday—

*“Let’s make known his saving help —
Let’s speak of his faithfulness and his
salvation. Of our Lord it is said: ‘he
was filled with wisdom . . . and
grace.’”*



PRAISE THE LORD FOR WHO HE IS

“I have not hid thy saving help within my heart. I have spoken of thy faithfulness and thy salvation; I have not concealed thy steadfast love and thy faithfulness from the great congregation” (Psa. 40:10). There are four characteristics of yourself in this one verse. Each of these qualities are to be made known “to the great congregation.” In David’s day it was the nation Israel. Today each man has a “great congregation” he meets during his lifetime. All the people who have touched my life and I theirs. How many of these people will hear and know of: (1) your saving help? (2) your faithfulness? (3) your salvation? (4) your steadfast love? I cannot say for all the world. I can say, I do say for my own life.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Indeed, indeed, you have given me “saving help” in all of my life! (1) Your help saved me from the bondage of drugs — I believe I could easily have been enslaved. I am so glad you gave me a reason to live so I did not need this escape. (2) Your help saved me from deep bondage — hatred for other people — I could easily have harbored resentment for others. You have been so merciful to me. I have seen such total forgiveness in my Lord. You have had much more reason to be perpetually unhappy with men — but you are not. (3) Your help saved me from chronic complaint, i.e., complaining about everything. (I sound like the Pharisee in the temple.) Dear Lord, I am *not* saying these things to be compared with others. These are temptations to me — from which you have saved me. Praise your name!

How do you personally relate to this saving by God, and God who is Savior? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is so easy to see very clearly that I yet need all four of these qualities of yourself yet operative in my life! There are several, several areas in my life where I need your saving help! (1) Save me from the praise of men. (2) Save me from the lust of the flesh. (3) Save me from the pride of possessions. (4) Save me from comfortable living. I freely confess that whereas you abide faithful I have at times been faithless — I have had but little faith in the power of the good news to change some men and women. Forgive me! I have been faithless in believing you have ways of changing all men.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Thro’ this changing world below,
Lead me gently, gently as I go;
Trusting Thee, I cannot stray,
I can never, never lose my way.
Ev’ry day, ev’ry hour,
Let me feel Thy cleansing pow’r;
Trusting Thee, I cannot stray,
I can never, never lose my way.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

³⁹When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of the Lord was upon him. ⁴¹Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. ⁴²When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. —Luke 2:39-42, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How precious is this word! As Joseph and Mary and the boy Jesus passed through the city gates and down the streets of Nazareth to their home I wonder what the residents of the town thought? Perhaps nothing: they were too occupied with their own affairs. I'm sure you thought of many things! I would not at all presume to be your counselor or read your mind, but I am sure you saw the scene in an entirely different light. What poignant words "he was (as a child) filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him." How good it would be to hear from Mary and Joseph some of the words of wisdom spoken by Jesus at this early age. Did any of his brothers or sisters remember? I do want to hear all about those so-called "silent years" when we all get to your house!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I am so glad I never tire of praising you and worshipping you through what you say to me in these beautiful words! Dear Lord, I do want to be obedient, obedient in every relationship of life. I am not, but I do want to — to obey the state and government; to obey my obligations of employment; to obey in my family relationship. Forgive me and help me! In what sense was your grace upon our Lord in his childhood? In the little carpenter shop in Nazareth, how did you express your favor with Jesus? Was it with his answers to the customers who came into the shop? Was it in his answers to his brothers and sisters in the home? Was it while working with Joseph? In all of these relationships I'm sure Jesus wanted to represent you perfectly, because of this desire, and out of your love he did perfectly mirror all a boy of that age should be. Thank you!

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

A charming area for this expression! (1) Thank you for the unresisting willingness to keep the law as seen in the conduct of Joseph and Mary. (2) Thank you for their meekness in taking up residence in a very difficult town. (3) Thank you for the beautiful example of the natural homelife of our Lord. (4) Thank you for every meal Jesus ate at the table in Nazareth. He can eat with me again today. (5) Thank you for all the Passover meant to Jesus — did he know then that he would be God's Passover Lamb? (6) Thank you for the joy of the journey — and all the conversations along the way. (7) Thank you for the emphasis upon family unity.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... according to the custom." So many, many

things are done "according to the custom"; some customs are good and some have lost their meaning. It was customary for every male Jew to go to Jerusalem three times a year to observe the feasts of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. It was the custom to bring your child to the temple for worship when twelve years old. These customs, and no doubt others, were observed by Joseph and Mary. What meaning did all of this have to our Lord? We wish we knew just how God lived in human form, i.e., how much influence the body had on the spirit. What were the thoughts of Jesus as he walked the seventy miles from Nazareth to Jerusalem?

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

This is such a charming story I can find many places in it for prayer: (1) May I have the same humble willingness to obey your law as I see in Joseph and Mary. (2) If our Lord could grow in wisdom surely I have even a greater need to do so. (3) Give me your grace for this day and its cares. (4) May I establish good habits that become customs in my family. (5) Thank you that we may remember our Passover Lamb each day. (6) Increase my wisdom. (7) Deepen my appreciation of your grace.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

How meaningful are your words to me through this text: (1) "The body of my Son is yet growing in wisdom and grace." (2) "Custom can be a very meaningful expression of your love for me." (3) "Custom can be dead and dull — you decide."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Japan — Points for prayer: (1) *The training of leaders* is being ably done through many Seminaries. There are also some fine Bible Schools that emphasize the spiritual life of the students. Pray for the calling of dedicated young people into the ministry and also for missionary service. (2) *Missionary vision* is growing. There are now about 140 Japanese missionaries serving the Lord in 24 countries. Pray for the sending of more students with a call to the mission field.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Day is dying in the west,
Heav'n is touching earth with rest;
Wait and worship while the night
Sets her evening lamps alight
Thro' all the sky.
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts!
Heav'n and earth are full of Thee!
Heav'n and earth are praising Thee,
O Lord most high!

WEEK SIX —Wednesday—

“ ‘As a hart longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for thee, O God.’ The great Creator of the universe was once a precious little boy!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“As a hart longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for thee, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God?” (Psa. 42:1,2). You are alive, responsive and present. You can and do bring refreshment to the whole life of man. You have created a deep longing in us that can only be satisfied in our praise and worship before you. We are uncomfortable until we give ourselves to you. All of these qualities and more are found in those two verses. The deer was created for the flowing stream — man is created for you. The whole of man: (1) his mind; (2) will; (3) emotions; (4) conscience reaches out to you. It is so good to know you are alive and eager to satisfy the deepest needs of all men. We surely can answer the psalmist’s question: we behold your face in the face of your Son!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I like the preciseness of the text. A deer prefers the “flowing stream,” not the still pool. So it is you are perfectly matched with me. More accurately, I was created to complement yourself! I like also the thought of refreshment and contentment here suggested. Peacefulness and serenity are only mine in you! Bless your name forever! I am so glad that there will never be a time when I cannot fully satisfy my intellectual pursuits in an examination of your word. There are no choices in my life that cannot find definite direction from what you have said. There are no emotions that cannot find total expression within your will. My conscience can always be good and clear and clean as I obey you word. Praise your name!

How do you personally relate to the desire of God, and God who longs for you? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

How easily I say the above words — too easily. To will indeed is present. But to do that which is good and right — ah, there is where I need another One to work in me both to will and to work. I have been deceived! I have been trapped! Someone has lied to me! How weak I am! How open to error! Satan is the deceiver, the trapper, the liar. Dear God, oh, flowing stream of clear water! Oh, fountain of refreshment and cleansing I come to you! When shall I ever learn that “in me, that is in my present body, dwells no good thing”? When? When? Now! I learn it now. But to remember at all times, with all people and in all circumstances! I must, I will meditate on your word day and night. I *want* to lose myself in you.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Holy, Holy, Holy! all the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
Which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

⁴³After the feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. ⁴⁴Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. —Luke 2:43,44, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What a meaningful time it must have been for Jesus to enter into the observance of the Passover feast for

the first time. When we pause to consider we know he was present at the first passover in Egypt. Dear Lord, I have a difficult time each time with this attempt to reach above my perspective to yours. I know it is good, and I want to do it, I am greatly blessed by it, but I need your help, your wisdom. As an example: "Why did your Son stay in Jerusalem while he knew his parents had left him?" Was it to call attention to his mission for you? It was such a typical human thing to do. Our own children have done so many similar things. So are all the subtleties of your actions among men. Blessed be your name!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Indeed, indeed, I gladly enter into it! How I would like to have been there to recline at the Passover table with my Lord. I would not want to say anything, or to even be observed, just a silent invisible guest to watch Joseph and Jesus as they ate together. I am shocked to remember I do indeed share with him in another feast which is but the fulfillment of the Passover. I hear him say again to me: "I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in my Father's kingdom" (Matthew 26:29). I believe one expression of the Father's kingdom is the church of our Lord. Every Lord's day I can expect him to keep his appointment. Will I see him there?

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Dear Lord, I shall center most of my expression of worship in 2:44 — (I really do not know why I write such introductory words.) (1) Thank you for the boy Jesus so much like every boy — and yet so unlike every boy. (2) Thank you for this dear glimpse of the frailties of Mary and Joseph. (3) Thank you for the attraction of the temple and its worship that kept my Lord in Jerusalem. (4) Thank you for the trust Mary and Joseph placed in Jesus, i.e., that he was able to take care of himself. (5) Thank you for the strong family relationships — in that they looked first among their relatives. (6) Thank you for the concern his parents had that it was no more than a day's journey before they began inquiry. (7) Thank you for the reminder that we can never take your presence for granted.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD FOR MEDITATION

"Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day." In the close mutual fellowship of the Hebrew family this would be easy to do. Most especially when there were large crowds in the temple, and even on the road home. How many things there were to discuss about the Passover feast or the events

of life with persons Mary and Joseph had not seen in several years. Since Jesus was the oldest of at least seven children (Matthew 13:55,56) it could be that Mary was a little preoccupied with the other children — (or were they left at home?) There are as many rationalizations and justifications then as there are now. The only way we will know Jesus is with us is for us to take time to see him, to hear him, to speak to him. How sad and inadequate is that day when we have gone through all twenty-four hours and we have not looked into his blessed face, nor heard his dear voice or spoken to him about the events of the journey. Dear God, forgive!

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What a loss there is in assuming Jesus is with us. (1) May I remember Jesus has never left his point of interest. (2) Keep me aware that Jesus is in his temple — even my body — in the person of the Holy Spirit. (3) Teach me over again that I *must not* assume anything in spiritual development. (4) I am so glad I know where to look for my Lord — all I will ever know of him is found in the gospels. (5) I want to make direct contact with Jesus by reading his life as recorded by his biographer — he will not be found among his relatives. (6) If Jesus seems distant or not present, I know who has been lost. (7) Thank you that Jesus is alive for evermore.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD ANSWERS

In these two verses speak to me: (1) "My Son is still at work in My House." (2) "Jesus is at work through his body the church." (3) "Make sure you are with him."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Japan — Point for prayer: (1) *Missions* — There is complete freedom for the entry of missionaries, but adaptation to the culture and learning what is reputed to be the world's hardest language is a barrier to effective service that takes years to cross. Pray for the first term missionaries as they seek to prepare themselves for future usefulness, and pray that they may not be discouraged, but filled with faith and power for their difficult task. There are many opportunities for both career and short-term missionaries, the latter in teaching English and using this as a door for evangelism; many missions use this method to great profit.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I love Thy Kingdom, Lord,
The house of Thine abode,
The Church our blessed Redeemer saved
With His own precious blood.

WEEK SIX —Thursday—

“By day the Lord commands his steadfast love; and at night his song is with me. . . .” Are those more than words of the Psalmist? We can make them so much more!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“By day the Lord commands his steadfast love; and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life” (Psa. 42:8). Bless the Lord, oh, my soul — my whole self! There is such encouragement in each of these words: (1) All day long you will look upon me like a loving parent with eyes and heart full of steadfast love. (2) When I retire I have a song to sing — it is a prayer song of praise and gratitude. (3) The One to whom I lift up my praise is vitally, personally interested in all of my life every day of my life. This is the model of his interest in every man and woman upon this earth.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. There is a “command” in your steadfast love. What does this mean? I take this to mean that whatever thought of interest and concern you have for me it is accompanied with adequate energy to carry it out, or to find its completion! Praise your wonderful name! It is exciting to contemplate just how your steadfast love will be fulfilled in my life today! I shall watch for it!

I have not always had a song of prayer and praise to close out the day. Why is this? Isn’t it because I want to be the god of my life? If I run the decisions of the day, I have no song of praise to you at night.

How do you personally relate to the steadfast love of God, and God who is Love? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

The above expression of praise has much of the element of confession in it. I am trying to be open and honest. How easy it is to hide behind your words. Dear Lord, forgive me! If for just today I can hold this one steadfast conviction: all that happens in this day is

under your control of steadfast love. I need not understand it. I need not explain it. I need not in any way resent it. How exceedingly far short I fall in fulfilling this intention — forgive me! I do not purpose to *do* better — I purpose to *be* better. It is my *life* you want.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

There is a place of comfort sweet,
Near to the heart of God,
A place where we our Savior meet,
Near to the heart of God.
O Jesus, blest Redeemer,
Sent from the heart of God,
Hold us, who wait before Thee,
Near to the heart of God.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

⁴⁵When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. ⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.” ⁴⁹“Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” ⁵⁰But they did not understand what he was saying to them. —Luke 2:45-50, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How could I find six verses with more poignancy? It is my purpose here just to rehearse what beauty,

power, meaning, purpose I see in these words, and lift my heart to you in adoration. There was a real love attachment to Jesus on the part of Mary and Joseph — of course, this would be natural as parents. (Joseph no doubt loved Jesus no less because he was not the father.) But there must have been some other deep yearnings in their hearts. To lose Jesus was indeed to lose the most important member of their family. They traveled a day before they discovered their loss — they walked another day back — and spent almost the whole third day looking for him. It would seem the temple was the last place they looked — at least in the worship area frequented by the teachers. Luke has questioned those who could tell him of the exchange between our Lord and the wisemen of the temple.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I open my conscience — write these words upon it! (1) Jesus is found right where you left him. Go back, go back to your first love, to the place where you stopped walking and talking with him. (2) Look inside for him. He is in the temple. Your temple, your body is the dwelling place. He is there to sit with you and teach you! Hear him! Open up his word, digest it, hear it, ask him to repeat it! (3) He has two basic things to give *me*. (a) Understanding of the meaning and purpose of life. If life is going to make sense at all, it will be because Jesus has explained it to me. (b) He has answers to my questions. But even my Lord cannot answer the questions I do not ask. Quit hiding. Stop procrastinating. *Ask* him! When Mary and Joseph found him they chided him. How like myself. It is *never* my Lord's fault that I cannot find him — he has been in the same place all the time. He hasn't left — I have. Forgive me!

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

How glad and grateful were Mary and Joseph when they found Jesus and so with me: (1) Thank you that we all know where Jesus is if we have lost him. (2) Thank you that Jesus was listening as well as talking — so today. (3) Thank you that he can ask questions I cannot answer — but he has given also the answer. (4) Thank you for the continued amazement I can have in the presence of his wisdom. (5) Thank you that Jesus said we really need not seek him since we already know where we can find him! (6) Thank you that my body is the father's house, i.e., he lives in me by the Holy Spirit and he has fashioned this body. (7) Thank you that we know more than Mary and Joseph — we know him of whom Moses and the prophets spoke.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“And they did not understand the saying which he

spoke to them.” How easily we can relate to his parents. There are many words of our dear children that we miss. We do not hear what they say. The more serious fact is we fail to understand them. Do we understand his saying any better? There are several meanings (or applications) in these words. What is our Lord saying? (1) “I must worship my Father and here is a special place set aside for this purpose. I have been here ere you left it. If you had come first to the temple you would never have lost me.” How true this is that we will find him in worship. We shall never lose him if we seek him there. (2) Perhaps he said: “This is why I came to earth, i.e., to make my Father known — this is but the first expression of what will become my consuming passion. My mission has been announced to you and this is but the beginning.”

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Prayers from “the Father's house”: (1) May I look for my Lord just where I lost him. (2) Forgive me for the wasted days I spent looking for you. (3) Your dear Son never left the temple courts — I claim his presence and intercession at your right hand. (4) How glad I am Jesus listens to me now. (5) Guard me from misunderstanding my Lord's motives. (6) I want to be among those who hear him with amazement. (7) By faith I claim the wisdom that comes down from above.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

May I hear you speak to me: (1) “Keep your ears open to my questions for today.” (2) “I will be found in the presence of my son.” (3) “Association is not the same as companionship.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Japan — point for prayer: (1) *Student witness* is a strategic ministry — Japan has 933 colleges with two million students. The greatest hindrances are apathy and Marxism (90% of students claim to be atheists, though most express themselves more favorable to Christianity than to any other religion). Young people, generally speaking, are unwilling to fully commit themselves to the Lord. There is a need for a witness to be started in the secondary schools.

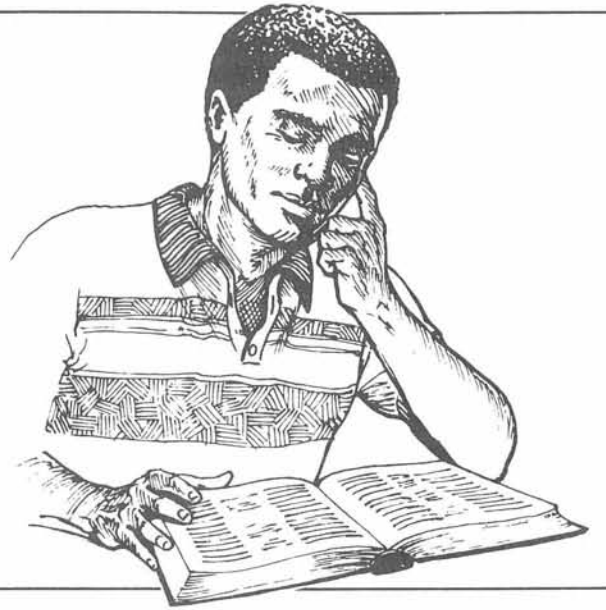
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Guilty, vile and helpless we;
Spotless Lamb of God was He;
“Full atonement!” can it be?
Hallelujah! what a Savior!

WEEK SIX

—Friday—

“We can say of our Lord: ‘. . . your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia.’ Mary ‘treasured’ the words of her Son — can we do less?”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Your divine throne endures for ever and ever. Your royal scepter is a scepter of equity; you love righteousness and hate wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows; your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia. From ivory palaces stringed instruments make you glad; . . .” (Psa. 45:6-8a). I realize this is a Messianic Psalm and I am to see my Lord in these verses. Such a beautiful vision of both divine beings — inspired by the Holy Spirit. Let me mark out the several attributes of yourself and your Son: (1) You (and he) are king! How gladly I acknowledge this! (2) You are eternal! No change in rulership — no wonder as to who will reign! Bless your name! (3) Your rule is one of total fairness — a perfect balance of mercy and law. (4) You reign in a clear-cut well-known, black and white distinction — all you do is right, all against you is wrong. (5) Our blessed Lord came to exemplify in his own person each of these qualities.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. How I relish this time with you. Nothing lifts my heart more than to lift it up to you! Was my Lord the happiest man in all the world? I believe he was! His joy came from the confidence that he knew he was right! My Lord walked in the fulfillment of your will. There was no shadow of turning in his conduct. To know you are totally right could bring a satisfaction above that of anyone now walking on this earth. Since Jesus hated sin of all kinds and did not in any form participate, he had no pride in his righteousness. He fulfilled righteousness with no exalting of self. The deep gladness we do not want to brag about when we have done your will could be a faint comparison. The description of your garments suggests the king’s wardrobe, but we remember it is the fragrance caught by the disciples in the upper

room when you came forth from the tomb!

How do you personally relate to the throne of God, and God who is King?

CONFESSION OF SIN

How can you be my king if I am an unwilling subject? How can you rule from my mind if I will not think your thoughts? Dear sovereign, it is *not* because I do not acknowledge you as king — indeed I do — but I am caught between two powerful rulers, yourself and the great deceiver. I freely confess my decision to sin was my own. I was given, or originated, excuses both before I sinned and afterward. But the decision was mine. How could I have made it? I do take courage that my total track record is improving — (or is this another excuse?). Away with such thoughts! I simply cast myself at your feet and ask and receive forgiveness and a clean, clear record. May I write on it my praise and love for you.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I will sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ who died for me,
How he left His home in glory
For the cross of Calvary.
Yes, I’ll sing . . . the wondrous story
Of the Christ . . . who died for me, . . .
Sing it with . . . the saints in glory,
Gathered by . . . the crystal sea.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

⁵⁰But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁵¹Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. —Luke 2:50,51, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

My dear heavenly Father, as you know I am but attempting to read these words as if indeed they are: alive, fresh, new — help me! I see my dear Lord walking alongside Mary and Joseph on his way to Nazareth “and (he) was obedient to them.” Did this require any humbling of his spirit? I’m sure there were countless times when our Lord could have told Mary or Joseph that there was a better way to do whatever it was they asked of him — but he didn’t. How often could Jesus see the inadequacies of his parents? Did Mary and Joseph argue? Did Jesus hear the argument? Was there any sibling rivalry among the children in the house of the carpenter?

Please express your response to this text.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I feel very, very much like Mary — “his mother kept all these things in her heart!” As she watched the process of which Luke speaks, i.e., “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.” What did she think? Jesus, as always, was the embodiment of all he said. “Let your light *so* shine before men that they may see your good works (but) and glorify your Father in heaven.” Our Lord’s good works in character and action were of just this kind. How beautifully did the flower of God’s planting grow! How the mother’s heart swelled with pride! But *praise* would be a better word. How unobtrusive are the works of God. Somehow he is hidden behind his actions — men can even attribute such works to themselves and miss the point altogether. Mary (and Joseph?) were not going to do this, and neither am I!

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the unspeakable condescension of my Lord as he took the form of man. (2) Thank you for the incredible moral force of the phrase “was obedient to them.” (3) Thank you for Mary and Joseph, who themselves were obedient to you. (4) Thank you for the dear mother of my Lord, thoughtful and full of love. (5) Thank you for the natural growth process found in my dear Lord — not at all understood — but appreciated. (6) Thank you that even Jesus increased in wisdom, i.e., the application of truth to life — should I not do likewise? (7) Thank you that men — all men in Nazareth could see something admirable in Jesus.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature (years), and in favor with God and man.” It would seem that our increase is only in one direction: in stature or years. Of course this is a reference to the fact that as my Lord developed physically he also developed spiritually. Jesus was able to apply to life, and in an increasing measure, your truth. Wisdom is the very

best use of knowledge. In the natural maturation process Jesus applied everything he knew to his daily conduct. This became a “showcase” of how to live the ideal life. All that a young man from 18 to 30 should know and do was here on exhibit. Who saw it? Who knew about it? There were those in Nazareth who knew something amazing was being lived out before their very eyes. Was there anyone in that little town who discussed it among themselves? Surely there must have been sincere women who had enough spiritual perception to know what was happening. Amazing obscurity!

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the attitude of Jesus as a young man there is so much to learn: (1) Keep me sensitive to your willingness to be in our company. (2) Give me the kind of yieldedness I see in Jesus. (3) Grant me a meditative capacity far beyond what I now have. (4) May I try to think over the thoughts of Mary’s heart. (5) Since wisdom is the best use of knowledge I come to you and ask: “Give me wisdom.”

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these two verses there is much you can say to me: (1) “If my Son yielded himself to humble parents what do you have to complain about in human relationships?” (2) “Quietness sometimes teaches more than many words.” (3) “The threefold growth of my Son is yet today’s example: (a) wisdom, (b) stature, (c) social.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Japan — Points for prayer: *Unreached peoples*: (1) *Okinawa and all the Ryukyu Islands* need pioneer evangelism and there are very few Christians among the Ryukyu people. (2) The majority of the people in the *cities* have never really had a chance to understand the Gospel. 65% of the *towns* and 85% of the *villages* have no witness for the Lord. (3) *The 700,000 Koreans* form an unpopular and dispersed minority. About 60% are Communist and there are only 6 Korean churches in Japan (all in Tokyo). They are not welcome in Japanese churches.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

When my life-work is ended,
and I cross the swelling tide,
When the bright and glorious morning I shall see;
I shall know my Redeemer
when I reach the other side,
And His smile will be the first to welcome me.
I shall know . . . Him, I shall know Him
And redeemed by His side I shall stand,
I shall know . . . Him, I shall know Him
By the print of the nails in His hand.

WEEK SIX

—Saturday—

“How often — very often we have found help from him in every time of trouble! In depression — in forgiveness — in sorrow and death! Open my heart to speak to my conscience!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help (or a well proved help) in trouble” (Psa. 46:1). Bless and praise your holy name! Your character is here described as: (1) our refuge; (2) our strength; (3) a very present or always present help in trouble; (4) a well proven help in trouble. I want to pause and lift you up before all men, before the whole world (how I wish I could) as altogether worthy of our praise and wonder. How very often do we all need a place to rest and recuperate? A quiet place of reflection and peace. You are just that place — in you I find all this and more. How soon our strength is gone! How soon our energy has been dissipated! What power or energy would it take to hold one star in its orbit? But there is moral strength of which we have even less. Live in me — and you want to live in all men — be my strength! It would seem man is always in trouble and therefore always needs you.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Dear Lord, I want to tell you all over again how much I appreciate your always being present when I need help! I have never found you too busy or absent. Indeed I have proved you over and over again! I want to name the kind of help you have been to me — (not that you do not know — this is but another form of praise as you also know). You have been right there to help me in discouragement — I have started a song of praise and love for you and my depression was gone! You have helped me so much when I have had an argument with someone — forgiveness from you led me to forgive them from my heart. At the time of death — what a bright confident hope I found only in you! Thank you. Praise you for such a proven helper! The only help!

How do you personally relate to the refuge of God, and God who is our strength? Speak it out or

write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Have there been days when I did not look for or want a refuge? Have there been times when I was “the strong man”? Could it be that I got into trouble and worked out my own solution? Dear Lord, you know this has been tragically true! Forgive me! That I should act so independently when I am so totally dependent is beyond explanation. Sin is *nonsense*. The worship and fellowship I enjoy with you makes sense. There is a person — a powerful person who wants to throw confusion and chaos into every situation. His name is Satan. I resist him, hate him and reject and refuse his suggestions. At the same time, I freely admit I must find a refuge in you.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Bless Thou the truth, dear Lord
To me — to me —
As Thou didst bless the bread
By Galilee;
Then shall all bondage cease,
All fetters fall;
And I shall find my peace,
My All in All.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

3 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar — when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene — ²during the priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert. — Luke 3:1,2, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How fleeting and empty is all the pomp of men. Here are seven men of whom we would know almost nothing if it were not for two other men who in their day seemed to be almost nothing. If it were not for John the Baptist and your dear Son no one would know about Pilate, Herod, Philip, Lysanias or Annas and Caiaphas. Even Tiberius Caesar gains prominence by his association with the King of kings. Dear, dear Lord, I want to hide myself in your greatness. I, like John, want to decrease until it is no longer I who live. I want my dear Lord to increase, more and more until we see no one, but only Jesus! It must be almost ludicrous or humorous to you in retrospect (i.e., from man's perspective) to review the balance sheet of life.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I want to learn and apply every single word of this text to myself. Let me look again at each of these men and see myself: (1) It was in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar — amid all the multitude of important things he must now be interrupted with news of a weird man in the desert. Does your word get any better hearing with me? (2) Pilate had a tough job. Now to add one more pressure someone came to tell him of a man many people said was a prophet with God's word. I have a tough job — I am pressed on every side. Can I pause long enough to hear you speak to me? (3) Annas and Caiaphas were "born and bred" on religion — we don't need another fresh look at God's word — we are leaders — we know what God says. Dear, dear Lord, how dangerously close do I come to reproducing their sin! Forgive me!

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

I do want to open my heart in gratitude! (1) Thank you for the clear fulfillment of your word "he that sows to the flesh reaps corruption." (2) Thank you that your honor does not disappear. (3) Thank you for the governor of Judea — he did say, "I find no fault in him." (4) Thank you for the little kingdoms and little kings who are all forgotten in the eternal presence of the King of kings. (5) Thank you that religion will ultimately all be gone with Caiaphas and Annas, but Christianity abideth forever. (6) Thank you for your great desire to communicate with man. (7) Thank you for the son of Zechariah who was ready to hear and speak your word.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

"... the word of God came to John ... in the desert." Of course this is the direct input of the Holy Spirit as related to the prophetic office, but it does offer a number of parallels to us. If anyone was ever in

a desert of society our generation is there. There is a dryness and a sameness about all of life. Boredom is one of the largest problems we have in our day. How startling it would be to have someone like John appear on the scene. How we need to wake up! The word of the Lord has come into this wilderness experience! We have it in permanent form. What it needs is "a voice." John said he was glad to be just a voice. But a voice must be heard to produce any results. Someone may cry out long enough and loud enough to be heard. If all of us wait for someone else to say something — nothing will be said. We all have the word of God — it has come from God to each of us saints. May we let it be heard.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the names and offices of long dead rulers there are points for prayer: (1) May I remember you remember who is ruler in each country — I do ask your grace in the life of our president. (2) How can I pray for a governor who has been caught in bribery? In the same way Timothy prayed for Pilate. (3) Could any good come of praying for a son of Herod the Great? We are sure many prayers went up on his behalf. Can I do less for today's men in high places?

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me again in these verses: (1) "Men in authority are all known to me." (2) "My word has come to the world in the form of my Son." (3) "My word is needed today for the same purposes as in the days of John — that men may repent."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Japan — Points for prayer: (1) *Literature* is widely used and increasing in quality and range of coverage in subject matter. 70% of converted students attribute their conversion to Christian literature. There are 70 Christian bookstores, 90 publishers and 25 printing presses. (2) *Ministry in hospitals* has proved an especially fruitful field — there are many long-term patients in the large number of T.B. hospitals among whom many have come to the Lord.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Jesus has loved me — wonderful Savior!
 Jesus has loved me, I cannot tell why;
 Came He to rescue sinners all worthless,
 My heart He conquered — for Him I would die.
 Glory to Jesus — wonderful Savior!
 Glory to Jesus, the One I adore;
 Glory to Jesus — wonderful Savior!
 Glory to Jesus, and praise evermore.

WEEK SEVEN

—Sunday—

“When we relate ourselves to these words they take on a beauty not of this earth: ‘there is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her. . . ’ (Psa. 46:4,5).”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved” (Psa. 46:4,5). This sounds like a description of an ideal city made beautiful by a river flowing through it. God lives and reigns in this city. Since God through the Holy Spirit lives in us and we are compared to a city elsewhere in his word we want to relate these lovely verses to man as a habitation for God in the Spirit. Notice: (1) The river is the Holy Spirit in his various expressions. When we keep on drinking at the Spring of living water which is his Son revealed in his blessed word — an artesian well springs up and flows out to all in several directions. (2) What an awesome privilege to be “the habitation of the Most High”! This is almost more than we can assimilate. We are impregnable through him!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Dear Lord, my total gladness comes from you! It is when I spend time before your throne, time in your word, time in public teaching and worship that I am glad. There is no gladness apart from you. I want to welcome you as the occupant of my house, indeed I want you to make my house your home. I cannot understand how the Most High God could live in me! If I do not believe you can or will, the whole response of wonder and beauty is lost. I do believe my strength is your strength, your help is my constant need, but also constantly present.

How do you personally relate to the presence of God, and God who lives in us? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

It will not be difficult to confess my shortcomings as

they relate to this relationship! My sins have been — and are — the following: (1) My mind is so dull through overuse in mundane matters. I cannot think your thoughts as I should. (2) My schedule excludes you from my conscious mind or at least I have not learned how to include you “up front” in my consciousness. (3) Too many times I simply do not want to think your thoughts — forgive, forgive me — perhaps this contrast is too great. I do believe I can “bring every thought into captivity” and I purpose to do that today. I want your transformation by the renewing of my mind!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Though Satan should buffet, tho’ trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.
It is well . . . with my soul, . . .
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

³He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁴As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet:

“A voice of one calling in the desert,

‘Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.

⁵Every valley shall be filled in,
every mountain and hill made low.

The crooked roads shall become straight,
the rough ways smooth.

⁶And all mankind will see God’s salvation.’ ” —Luke 3:3-6, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What an amazing man was your servant and prophet John the Baptist! Dear Lord, I want to go with the crowd and see and hear this wonderful man. At the same time, I want to go with you to hear him, for you were in attendance on that day. How I wish I could hear him speak to me about my sins. What was it in the preaching of this prophet that produced repentance in the hearts of those who heard him? A sorrow for sin against yourself is the answer. On second thought, do I *really* want to hear John preach? If I want the course of my life altered — “the valleys filled in and the hills and mountains leveled off” — then the answer is “yes,” but not until and only when this is true am I ready to repent.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Speak into the deep needs of my life. I have too many valleys and hills on the way that should be a highway for the King. Level off my heart! Am I truly ready to receive an answer to my own prayer? What do you say of the mountains of selfishness? Do you honestly want them torn down and filled in? Are these words more than pious platitudes? Dear Lord, straighten me out! At the same time, I sorrow and cry over my sins. I yet look into the Jordan — there I can find the purpose of my repentance: “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” In my situation I can look back to that time and place where such was once accomplished. Oh, how I need to renew this relationship!

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

The one immediate response to forgiveness is thanksgiving: (1) Thank you for John’s preaching — how I want to be able to preach like him. (2) Thank you for repentance — how much we need it *daily*. (3) Thank you for the confident assurance of the forgiveness of sins. (4) Thank you for the beautiful book of Isaiah and every word in it about your Son. (5) Thank you for the privilege of being a highway for my Lord. (6) Thank you that I can be in the constant action of keeping my heart straight that he might travel through it to others. (7) Thank you for the promise that “all mankind shall see God’s salvation.”

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“*And all mankind shall see God’s salvation.*” In a way unknown in John’s day God’s salvation can be spread to all mankind via satellites. However, Colossians 1:23 does say the gospel “which has been preached to every creature under heaven.” The first

century Christians took seriously the great commission. It could seem to be the only generation who did. One day every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father. But such a forced obedience is hardly what the prophet had in mind.

I am as guilty as the next person in the terrible disobedience we practice as related to all mankind being told of God’s salvation. The answer is as profound as it is simple: let mankind in your part of the world see his salvation. When every Christian today shares as the Christian of the first century, we will see the fulfillment of these beautiful words.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the mission of John the Baptist we can find areas for prayer: (1) Dear Lord, I want to learn how to preach repentance. (2) Enlighten my heart from your word as to how to obtain the remission of sins today. (3) I want to be a voice in my desert. (4) The repentant heart is the only preparation we can make for your coming — keep me open to change. (5) Fill in the valleys of my life. (6) Cut down the mountains to your measurements. (7) Dear Lord, straighten me out — I do so want my heart to be your highway.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in these verses: (1) “Baptism for the remission of sins is still correct — preach it.” (2) “The One of whom John was forerunner is now King-of-kings.” (3) “Open your eyes — unstop your ears, I want all mankind to see my salvation.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Japan — point for prayer: (1) *Christian radio* has had a great impact. The Pacific Broadcasting Association prepares 4 weekly and 3 daily programs transmitted over 92 Japanese stations. The average Japanese spends 6 hours a day watching television; brief 3 minute T.V. advertisements on commercial stations have proved very profitable for reaching needy people. Pray for all follow up work, personal visitation and linking contacts with a local church.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Great God of wonders! all Thy ways
Are matchless, Godlike, and divine;
But the fair glories of Thy grace
More Godlike and unrivaled shine,
More Godlike and unrivaled shine.
Who is a pard’ning God like Thee?
Or who has grace so rich and free?
Or who has grace so rich and free?

WEEK SEVEN

—Monday—

“Great is our Lord — and greatly to be praised — you are the joy of the whole earth! Isn’t the worst sin that of ingratitude? Teach us to repent!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised in the city of our God! His holy mountain, beautiful in elevation, is the joy of all the earth, Mount Zion, in the far north, the city of the great King” (Psa. 48:1,2). Two or three lovely qualities of our God: (1) He is great. (2) He is greatly to be praised. (3) He rules from his beautiful capital or city. Indeed, indeed *great* is our Lord! In every way we want to express it, he is great! (1) Great in desire to give us a purposeful life. (2) Great in communicative ability through his two books: (a) the Bible and (b) the world about us. He is to be greatly praised in his place of rulership. Where is that? In David’s day it was Jerusalem. Today it is your body and mine. What a life-changing thought! If out of our bodies he is to receive the praise he so richly deserves such could become the joy of all the earth. I want it to start with me in my little part of the world.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me! Dear Lord, you are great in my eyes. You deserve all the praise I can give and much more. To try to contemplate the meaning of being the place of your rulership is mind boggling! I realize the whole church is “Mount Zion,” but what is true of the whole is also true of the part. I am your place of rulership on this earth. My body is “His holy mountain” — my body is “beautiful for elevation” — because my body is a habitation for yourself in the Spirit it can become a source of “joy for the whole earth.” I have no desire to press a metaphor beyond its meaning. At the same time such thoughts lift my heart to you in wonder and praise! That I could be a part of “the city of the great King” moves me deeply!

How do you personally relate to the greatness of God, and God who is Great? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

That you should be so great and be so completely ignored is an amazement to demons and angels. It seems but an idle thing to most men. Oh, sin of all sins! How can I change my mind about including your praise in my daily routine? Surely there are areas where I can call attention to yourself — I know there are — if I really want to praise you I will! Forgive me for this terrible sin. If I do not express praise, it is because I do not know you as I should and could. I am only holy because I am your abiding place. I do respond to the purifying thought of your presence in me! It is because I want to honor you and not in any way cast reflection on your person that I act and react. Forgive me! Cleanse me!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

O happy bond, that seals my vows
To Him who merits all my love!
Let cheerful anthems fill His house,
While to that sacred shrine I move.
Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away!
He taught me how to watch and pray,
And live rejoicing ev’ry day;
Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away!

HIS WORD

⁵People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. ⁶Confessing their sins, they were baptized in the Jordan River. ⁷But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹And do not think you can say to

yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ¹⁰The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. —*Matthew 3:5-10, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Oh, to be able to stand on the banks of the Jordan — or in its waters, and hear John preach! I know his words are as contemporary to you as are our words today. In their meaning they speak today as they spoke then. You see everyone present on that eventful day — you know who were chaff and who were wheat. Did any of the vipers change their nature as a result of John's preaching? I would surely like to believe they did. Who was it? Who was saying, "We have Abraham for our Father"? You know them every one! What a fearful word to hear: ". . . every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Lord, I am glad to confess my sins before you, and in the presence of men, if that is necessary. Nothing is hidden from men that will not ultimately be revealed. Why were these persons baptized by John? Mark says plainly that it was for the forgiveness of their sins. We conclude this must mean that where they were truly repentant that in the act of burial there was the death and burial of the former selves and in the act of emergence from the water a new person — clean, whole, forgiven came forth. Dear Lord, I have expressed these thoughts because they represent just what I want to be my testimony! I do want to be raised up a child of yourself, a true son of Abraham.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

"Glad" is too small a word to express my joy. (1) Thank you for the response to John's message — I believe people are still listening for a voice from heaven. (2) Thank you that people will and do repent — even today. (3) Thank you for John's holy boldness — he spoke to the conscience! May I hear him! (4) Thank you that I cannot and must not trust in position or title — only in you. (5) Thank you that you will never lack for true children — even from stones. (6) Thank you for the sharp, heavy ax of your word — cut! strike! I want to be clean! (7) Thank you we can produce fruit that indicates genuine repentance.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"We have Abraham as our Father." What a jarring

revelation! To have someone tell you — and convince you that your religion was false! Such was the response of the Pharisees to John's preaching. At the same time, the deep satisfaction with worship by the law must have been present in their hearts. The sense of guilt and unfulfillment was calling for something better. We are not told, but there must have been some sincere men among these leaders who welcomed the opportunity to repent and change. There were others who were blinded and when they recovered from the shock fell back into the bondage of legalism.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the baptizing and preaching of John I find real motivation for prayer: (1) Give me a much larger audience to hear your word. (2) Grant the convicting power of your Holy Spirit as I speak your word. (3) Dear Lord, how I do want to baptize someone into the body of your Son. (4) Speak to my heart that I might speak to the hearts of those who hear me. (5) How I do want my conduct and attitude to be a true evidence of my surrender to your will.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

How I do want to hear you speak to me through these verses: (1) "You cannot continue in sin with my approval." (2) "Only a yielded heart can house my Son." (3) "Every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

INTERCESSION FOR A LOST WORLD

Korea (South) — population: 34,800,000. Growth rate — 2%. People per sq. km. — 353.

Point for prayer: (1) *The receptivity of the Korean people* for the Gospel has been unmatched in this century, with rapid growth, dramatic revivals and strong indigenous churches that have shown great faithfulness in years of persecution under the Japanese and later the Communist invaders. Communism remains a serious threat. Pray that this uncertainty may be used of God to keep the believers praying and the people hungry for spiritual things.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Dying for me, dying for me.
There on the cross He was dying for me;
Now in His death my redemption I see,
All because Jesus was dying for me.

WEEK SEVEN

—Tuesday—

“... according to thy abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.’ Does this speak to a need of yours? Claim the promise of mercy and cleansing. Allow his winnowing fork to separate the wheat from the chaff.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy steadfast love; according to thy abundant mercy blot out my transgressions” (Psa. 51:1). There are three qualities of yourself mentioned in this verse: (1) mercy; (2) steadfast love; (3) abundant mercy. David needed and wanted all these attributes of yourself applied to his need. Mercy is nonreciprocal goodness or kindness. David wanted you to be kind to him even though he deserved punishment. David wanted to sense and enter into your steadfast love. David needed abundant mercy, i.e., considering the enormity of his sin. The need of the king is the need of the whole world. What a lovely portrait appears from this psalm. It is of yourself as a father who loves his willful, ignorant lustful son with an everlasting kindness. “You looked beyond his fault and saw his need.” Praise your glorious person!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me — praise you for what you mean to me! I, like millions of others, can immediately identify with David. Why is my call for mercy always “after the fact”? Dear Lord, here is one time when it isn’t! I acknowledge to you that I live and move and have my total being in your mercy! I am the living object lesson of your mercy! How strong is the expression: “steadfast love.” It is this quality that makes possible the abundant mercy we are given in blotting out our transgressions. I understand that the expression “blot out” as related to clay or wax meant to rub out or smooth over until the record disappeared. Bless your wonderful love — blot out my sin!

How do you personally relate to the forgiveness of God, and God who is Mercy? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Such is the whole purpose of this psalm. This is the fresh expression of guilt and sorrow. This is the cry of the wounded — the anguish of the one who has been pierced by the arrow of truth. Nathan the prophet has just relaxed the bow of God’s judgment. Dear Lord, this is my cry! I do want to do more than cry over my sin. I want to go much further than guilt for my transgressions. I want to so fully appreciate your loving kindness, so truly accept your forgiveness that the motivations for daily living will be totally altered. Dear Lord, I want this to be much more than pious platitudes! Write your words upon my heart! True humility is my greatest need!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

A wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord,
A wonderful Savior to me,
He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock,
Where rivers of pleasure I see.
He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock
That shadows a dry thirsty land;
He hideth my life in the depths of His love,
And covers me there with His hand,
And covers me there with His hand.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

11“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. **12**His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering the wheat into his barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” —Matthew 3:11,12, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Speak the words of John into my heart of hearts! John says every day I live: "After me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry." Our Lord was before John (even as John said) — our Lord came after John and our Lord is now with John. We could say that Jesus was also above John in every sense. What John said and felt about your Son I want to also say. After I have long gone from this earthly scene my blessed Lord will be here in all his power and beauty. John was a prophet and could claim some divine distinction and comparison with your Son. I have no such position — I feel there is nothing but contrast in my relationship with him. If John, the greatest born of woman, felt he could not even carry his sandals, where does that put me?

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

This I have been doing, but as I have said so often, I do so with the thought that I stand where all men stand. Just here I want to stand in my own place! Before I go down into the water I want to allow his winnowing fork to thoroughly cleanse my heart. May the wind of the spirit blow out all chaff. May I stay long enough before you in repentance — in fasting and prayer — until I am ready to let go of all that is chaff in my experience. Dear Lord, take what wheat there is in my heart into your garner. I feel like Peter when our Lord said to him — "when you are converted (after the cleaning period) strengthen your brothers." Until I am cleansed I cannot. I am so glad my strength is in you. I have none of myself!

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

In the midst of true repentance there is thanksgiving: (1) Thank you for the baptism John preached — it prepared all of us for the baptism our Lord commanded. (2) Thank you for the perception of John — he knew his relationship to our Lord. (3) Thank you for power and purpose of our Lord. (4) Thank you for the privilege of falling at his feet in worship. (5) Thank you that Jesus is administrator of both baptism in the Holy Spirit and baptism in fire. (6) Thank you that we all can be either wheat or chaff — it is up to us. (7) Thank you that Jesus is as much alive now as he was with John in the Jordan.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." Such an expression probably meant very little if anything to the multitude who first heard it. Perhaps a connection was made between the chaff and the Ho-

ly Spirit and the fire. The wheat would be baptized in the Holy Spirit and the chaff would be baptized in fire. Our Lord would be the administrator of both baptisms. We need to be reminded that the twelve apostles were present in the crowd for part of the qualifications for the apostleship was to be with Jesus from his baptism until his ascension (Acts 1:21,22). It would be three years later that our Lord would take these general words and make them specific in reference to his apostles (Acts 1:1-5). The understanding of the promises must be read in the light of the historic fulfillment on Pentecost and the house of Cornelius (Acts 2 & 10).

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

For what can I ask you as I read these verses? (1) Teach me over and over again the true meaning of repentance. (2) Break my heart that I might bow before you in worship. (3) Give me real wisdom in the searching out of the fulfillment of this promise of Holy Spirit baptism. (4) What is the baptism in fire administered by my Lord? Is it the lake of fire (Matt. 25:41,46)? (5) Dear Lord, purify my motives until all dross is gone.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these two verses speak to me: (1) "My Son will indeed baptize many in fire." (2) "Let him remove the chaff from your heart." (3) "There is an eternal barn called heaven."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Korea (South) — Points for prayer: (1) Christianity has made a vital impact on Korea. There are 2,000 churches in Seoul alone. One third of all parliamentarians are Christian. Revival in the 600,000 strong army had raised the number of believers to 51% in 1977. (2) The Protestant Church, founded on sound indigenous principles, blessed with many periods of revival, and refined by years of suffering has emerged as a mighty praying, evangelizing army of believers. Early morning prayer meetings attended by hundreds are still the pattern in many denominations. Pray that materialism and present ease of being a Christian may not blunt their earnestness and outreach.

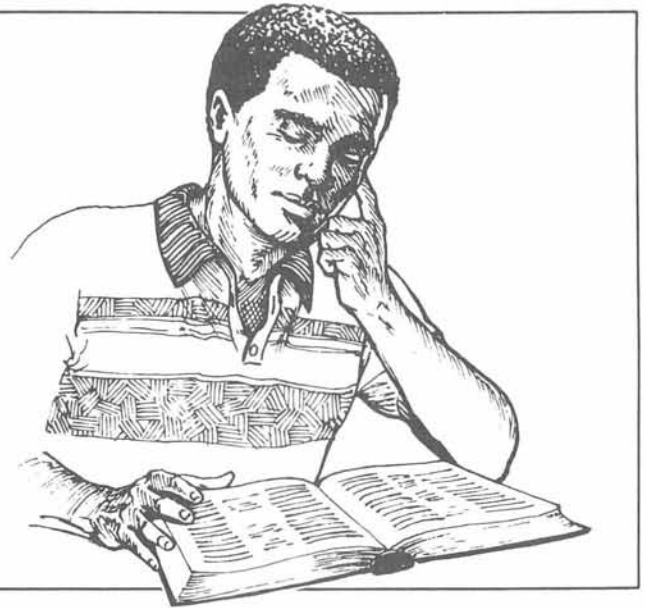
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

In the bright sunlight, ever rejoicing,
Pressing my way to mansions above;
Singing His praises gladly I'm walking,
Walking in sunlight, sunlight of love.
Heavenly sunlight, heavenly sunlight,
Flooding my soul with glory divine:
Hallelujah, I am rejoicing,
Singing His praises, Jesus is mine.

WEEK SEVEN

—Wednesday—

“Was David the only one who found comfort — hope — peace in these words? Let’s lift them up for our own hearts. Our righteousness is fulfilled in him — not ourselves!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (Psa. 51:6,7). I do want to lift the qualities of yourself from these two beautiful verses and praise you for each of them. (1) You have personal preferences and strong desires. This speaks of One who is so real. (2) You want reality in the deepest desires of man. You want his words and his actions to match. You want my prayers and my conduct to be equal. (3) You are a teacher — you can make the best use of the knowledge I already have. This teaching is for my “secret heart.” As David cried this prayer out of the anguish of his own need, so do I. As he expected an answer so I expect an answer. What I have said of David and myself can be and should be said for all men. Blessed be your name!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

“Purge me with hyssop” seems to refer to the action of applying the blood of the passover lamb. Such a plant was used with my Lord while he was on the cross. Dear Lord, there is nothing I want more than “truth in my inward being”; “wisdom in my secret heart” — to be clean before you. The deep, consuming desire of my heart is to be washed! That I could be “whiter than snow” is almost more than I can take in. All of these expressions are related to several qualities of your nature: (1) You know me. (2) You love me — and personally care. (3) You have provided for my sin in forgiveness. My largest response to all we have shared together is to accept all you offer in the attitude of wonder and joy! “Praise” is such a weak word to express my exhilaration!

How do you personally relate to the truth of God, and God who is Truth? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

This whole psalm is devoted to this subject. At the same time I need to say there is no praise like the praise of a forgiven sinner. I do want to enter into the deeper reasons for my sin. I want “truth in the inward being.” It seems to me that the simple fact that I do not like to be uncomfortable becomes an occasion for Satan. I do not want to “endure” temptation. I want to overcome temptation and be done with it! But it never, or very seldom happens that way. The offer of Satan is made. If it is immediately rejected he leaves. But he comes back, and with the same offer. It is in a consistent rejection I fail. It is also in the “inward being” and “secret heart” that I settle for a lie — a rationalization for the sin. Dear God, dear God, wash me and I shall be whiter than snow!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,
For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I’ll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by My gracious, omnipotent hand.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹³Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. ¹⁴But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?”

¹⁵Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented. —Matthew 3:13-15, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It was one long walk from Nazareth to the banks of

the Jordan. It took my Lord more than one day to travel this far. What did he think as he walked? Did he stop to visit with anyone on the way? What were his thoughts as he lay down at night? Did he sleep out in the open or did he find those who gave him a place to lay his head? Of course I must leave all these questions to you. Since you live in the eternal “now,” Jesus is still making that journey. He did find John. What flashes of divine recognition passed between the eyes of John and Jesus? John did know him and in a sense that moved him to say: “I have need to be baptized by you.” John is saying essentially: “Why come to me? I am here to preach repentance; you have no sin of which to repent. I am here to baptize those who repent so as to obtain forgiveness. You have no need of either.” Dear Lord, I stand with John!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I must pause long before these words: Jesus was baptized not because he was a sinner, but “as a sinner for me.” It is in his baptism I find righteousness. My baptism is only effective because of his. Jesus began his ministry by taking the sinner’s place and he ended his ministry in the same way. It was in the water and on the cross he filled up righteousness and handed it to all mankind. Oh, dear Lord, I say these words just to remind myself once again how much I owe to your dear Son. I owe him all — he has provided all. Open the eyes of my heart that I might see with illuminated understanding his baptism. Matthew’s description is from John’s viewpoint — the heavens were opened to the vision of John — *he* saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and alighting upon him — and remaining on him. And then that never, never to be forgotten announcement! “My beloved Son!” “The One with whom I am well pleased!”

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Yes, yes. (1) Thank you that my Lord demonstrated my need to be baptized. (2) Thank you for the sensitive spirit of John the Baptist. (3) Thank you for the genuine humility of John. (4) Thank you for the only righteousness I have — that given me by Jesus. (5) Thank you that accepting his righteousness shuts out continuing in sin. (6) Thank you for the clear example as to how to be baptized. (7) Thank you for the announcement eternal. May I hear it every day. “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Oh, how I agree with you!

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“ . . . I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” We can surely appreciate John’s dilemma. Jesus had no need that could be satisfied by John.

Most of all, for Jesus to come to a sinner’s baptism was unthinkable. The baptism of John was a public testimony of sin and repentance. The righteousness our Lord came to fill up was accomplished by his association with sinners here and Calvary. Here he associated himself with sin and sinners; on Calvary he identified himself with sin and the sinful. In this way he provided for our righteous standing with God.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Surely at the baptism of our Lord we should pause to pray: (1) Jesus walked seventy miles to be baptized — May I always remember the importance of my baptism. (2) What a privilege to see my Lord’s baptism as an example of obedience. (3) I want to share the humility of John. (4) Thank you for the righteousness fulfilled in my Lord’s baptism. (5) Give me a firmer grasp on the righteousness I have in Jesus. (6) Deepen my gladness as I participate in the meaning of being baptized into his body. (7) I am so glad John consented to the words of my Lord — even when he could not understand — a great example for me.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Jesus is saying something to me at his baptism: (1) “You have died and been buried to be raised to walk in newness of life.” (2) “Think again of the meaning of your baptism — You will never exhaust its meaning.” (3) “Because I fulfilled righteousness you are counted as righteous before me.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Korea (South) — Point for prayer: (1) *Division* has sadly caused major splits in every major denomination — over earlier compromise under Japanese rule, liberal theology and ecumenism. The bitter divisions have led to authoritarianism among preachers and an emphasis on right doctrine at the expense of fellowship with the Lord and His Word. Pray for a spirit of love and reconciliation among all true believers.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!
All Thy works shall praise Thy name,
in earth, and sky, and sea;
Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and Mighty!
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!

WEEK SEVEN

—Thursday—

“Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you.’ After all nothing happens without his knowledge! We live by the bread come down from heaven.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Cast your burden (what he has given you) on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved” (Psa. 55:22). I am finding so many lovely qualities of yourself in the psalms of David. This charming expression is such an encouragement to me! There are many days (and nights) when I want to give up and throw in the towel. I am ashamed of my weakness and failure. How could I be so stupid? How could I repeat what I know is fruitless? I can blame it on irritability or fatigue or three or four other excuses and then I hear you say: “Cast all your cares on me.” “I care for you.” “I have been there all the time.” In one sense I have given such burdens to you, give them to me. What a weight lifted! I am stronger because of this experience. I am more intent than ever to walk and live in your way.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. What I have said above is a pattern for all men, i.e., it is the common experience of temptation and sin and forgiveness and renewed strength. Right here I want to apply this to my own heart. My biggest problem, or at least one of the biggest, is to read or hear of some brother or sister who overcame a burden and then to try to follow the pattern they set. In one sense all temptations and sins are alike; in another sense all are individual and the *only* one who can help is the Lord himself! Attempting to cast off my burdens by following someone else’s example has frustrated me. Casting my burdens on others has been less than adequate — only when I cast the whole load on you and leave it there do I find the relief of a burden let go! Since you have been with me from the beginning you know how to forgive and sustain. Bless your name, I am on the rock to stay!

How do you personally relate to the security of

God, and God who sustains you? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

It would seem all my worship so far today has been one long confession of sins. Let me spend some time with you on your response to my confession. Have you not bound yourself by your own law that if I confess my sins to you, which I do, however inadequately, you are faithful and righteous to forgive me of the same sins I have confessed? Further, you will cleanse me, and forget what I have done? How I do need this assurance! My being “sustained” and “not moved” has so much to do with my acceptance of your kind of forgiveness. A “fresh start” or “clean page” would not describe the new beginning I have right now! Bless your love and forgiveness forever!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

When you met with great temptation,
Did you think to pray?
By his dying love and merit,
Did you claim the Holy Spirit
As your guide and stay?
Oh how praying rests the weary!
Prayer will change the night to day;
So in sorrow and in gladness,
Don’t forget to pray.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. ²After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell

these stones to become bread.”

“Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live by bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ ”

“Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:

‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’ ”

“Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ” —*Matthew 4:1-7, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Surely, dear Lord, you need to read these words to me! At the same time, it is renewing to try (and that is all I do) to relate these beautiful words to yourself. I am so glad that the Holy Spirit had such a vital part in these temptations. What has become an occasion of sin for me was a time of growing for my Lord. I am sure it was his relationship with you that made the difference. My blessed Lord entered the arena of conflict in the only three realms of desire available to man: (1) appetite, (2) audacity, (3) and ambition (*H. Fowler*). How glad I am Jesus met Satan on his own ground and overcame him. It is only as I find refuge in Jesus that I find any victory over temptation.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I am delighted to affirm the Holy Spirit’s constant ministry in me and for me. He is my encourager and the strengthener of my inner man. I, by acceptance of your promises, claim his strength. Here is a list of the desires through which Satan works: (1) *Self-preservation*: Satisfying body needs for food clothing, shelter, self-defense. (2) *Mating desires*: Sex, care of family, children’s appeal to us. (3) *Social desires*: Gregariousness, companionship, approval, self-assertion, pride, ambition, competition. (4) *Desires to submit*: Tendency to imitate heroes, conform to law, to regard higher powers with respect. (5) *Acquisitive desires*: Joy of ownership. (6) *Creative desires*: Pleasure of being a power or a cause capable of creating or destroying. (7) *Aesthetic desires*: Enjoyment of the beautiful. (*H. Fowler*) Dear Lord, I look so carefully at each one of these and want to find them in you not in the world.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the personalness of this encounter — it is just how Satan tempts me. (2) Thank you for the wilderness setting — how like my temptations. (3) Thank you for the wild animals (Mk. 1:13a). This is all men mean to me when tempted. (4) Thank you for

the assurance of the presence of the Holy Spirit — oh, how I need him! (5) Thank you for the example of fasting — to supplement the desires of the body.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Do not put the Lord your God to the test.” Why not put God to the test? Didn’t he say, “prove me” or “test me” in Malachi 3:10-11? Why then is this test or trial wrong? It is because it is based on the *a priori* assumption that God does not (sometimes) mean what he says and therefore needs to prove to us that he does before we will believe him. It is the same root sin involved in our Lord’s words: “A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign.” It was by and through signs our Lord confirmed his deity. For those who do not want to believe, no signs are enough. For those who do not want to believe in God’s essential character there will never be enough proof.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What a wonderful text for prayer requests: (1) Lead me by your Spirit to be tested and made strong. (2) Teach me how to use discipline. (3) Reinforce my conviction that all of life should be and can be directed by your word. (4) Give me the courage and humility to reject Satan’s suggestions of doubt. (5) Guard me from self pity — Satan’s deception. (6) Give me a deeper understanding of angels’ ministry for me. (7) Give me a full acceptance of your total sovereignty.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these verses you do indeed speak to me: (1) “The devil is bound but not dead.” (2) “You can live a complete, full and totally satisfied life apart from Satan.” (3) “My Son did not seek the praise and approval of men.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Korea (South) — Point for prayer: (1) There is a growing missionary vision which Christian leaders are seeking to foster and co-ordinate. There is a need for more to be done to train workers for the mission field. Pray that all the churches may become enthusiastic for missions. There are now about 280 Korean missionaries in many lands of the world and there are plans to send out many more.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine,
For Thee all the follies of sin I resign;
My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ’tis now.

WEEK SEVEN

—Friday—

“We can offer the sacrifice of a broken spirit — a broken and contrite heart — he has already said he will accept this offering. However — he wants exclusive claim on our hearts.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The sacrifice acceptable to God (my sacrifice, O God) is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Psa. 51:17). Such a blessed verse! So much is said of you and of all men in this one verse! Let me mark out the attributes of yourself. I see in these burning words: (1) You do want to be appeased, i.e., you have been offended and you expect some type of expiation. (2) If proper action is taken you will be satisfied, i.e., you are ready to accept man’s efforts to be forgiven, or reconciled to yourself. (3) Man should feel very, very deeply his need of communion of spirit intimacy with you. Indeed, this was true of David — it is true of myself, and I am persuaded of all men. (4) The inner man must be totally yielded or “broken.” (5) There must be, and will be grief over sin against you. (6) You could blame us for our ignorance and wilfulness, but you will not, you will love us and accept us.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

For me — I want to shout “glory, hallelujah!” There is nothing I need or any other man needs more than such reconciliation. Essentially you are saying to me: “It is *not* what you *do* that I accept, but what you *are*.” Do I now have a contrite heart? If tears and loud cries indicate the presence of such a heart I must say “no.” At times “with strong cries and tears” I *have* tried to learn yieldedness or obedience. But on this day I am silent and still before you. I am like Job on the dust heap. I consider my willfulness and your greatness and I am mute. Dear Father, as you know my stupid, rebellious spirit you know I want nothing more than to let you break it with your goodness, your holiness, your promises. I want to offer it up as my sacrifice to you. I do it through my body (Rom. 2:1).

How do you personally relate to the forgiveness of God, and God who is Forgiver? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Psalm 51 will move me like no other to an open confession of my sins. I want to let verse 17 percolate through my spirit one more time: (1) A broken spirit or heart is one that for some reason will not function as it should. Surely this is what I have found of myself! My thoughts, my choices, my affections, my conscience have all malfunctioned. It is in presenting this mess to you with a humble willingness to give you control of my mind, will, emotions and conscience that I will find help and you will receive an acceptable sacrifice. (2) A contrite heart is one that is much more than sorry. There is a sorrow that leads to death and not life! David is the good example of the broken spirit — the contrite heart. Repentance is a change of mind, brought about by a godly sorrow for sin, that results in a complete change of conduct. It is only in the changed conduct that God’s purpose for sorrow is seen. Dear God, I am assimilating all of this, I want it to be my life before you!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Consecrate me now to Thy service, Lord,
By the pow’r of grace divine;
Let my soul look up with a steadfast hope,
And my will be lost in Thine.
Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To the cross where Thou hast died;
Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To thy precious, bleeding side.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

⁸Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹“All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

¹⁰Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

¹¹Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him. —*Matthew 4:8-11, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How shall I ever really and truly empathize with you in this record concerning your Son? I want to, but I am so alloyed with ignorance and failure. Even as I say this I know in this text is the answer to my needs from your Son! What little promises has Satan made to me, or any man as compared to what he offered Jesus! Could Satan have kept his promise? Did he actually own the kingdoms of this world? It would make little difference if we believed he did. This is part of Satan’s deception: that we should believe him. He is a liar and the father of lies — we should assume that nothing he says is true and reject him out of hand. Jesus’ answer is the answer I want to give: *worship* is the crucial issue — not if he could fulfill his promise. Service is implicit in worship — how easily we are deceived.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I must not forget that this offer of the devil was in the very area of our Lord’s interest. He came to establish his kingdom. It is at the beginning of his ministry and there stretches before him all the difficult times — all the ignorance of weak disciples — and ultimately the cross! Here is a way out — here is a shortcut! How often have I accepted the shortcut! Dear Lord, forgive! Satan does not leave out the stipulation — “if you will bow down and worship me.” Jesus was a man — Satan is an arch-angel — our Lord is flesh and blood — Satan is spirit. There is a real strong temptation here. I can only praise you and bow down before you in gratitude that Satan was overcome!

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you that Jesus was tempted and overcame in all the basic temptations of my life. (2) Thank you that I know how fleeting and unsatisfying are the splendors of this world. (3) Thank you that Solomon accepted the offers and found them empty! (4) Thank you that I can tell Satan to his face that he is a liar and I want the truth — even my Lord. (5) Thank you that Satan does leave. (6) Thank you that angels are the silent observers of all this conflict and do minister or attend to us. (7) Thank you that I have been warned once again in praying and worshiping in con-

nection with these temptations.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... he left him until an opportune time.” When would be an opportune time to return and tempt our Lord? This question is easy to answer since he was tempted in all ways just as we are. Satan must have returned when our Lord was worn out from emotional physical effort. When emotion is depleted it is easy to allow our view to become distorted. In such a time we are glad Jesus’ view of the scriptures was just as clear as when he was rested. At the same time we believe our Lord sought and found adequate rest. If we must have rest in order to think clearly, our Lord must (as a lifestyle) have set this example. Satan must have come to him again when those of his home town rejected him. Jesus was disappointed; he was hurt by their blindness. At the same time, he knew the record of the prophets before him.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In this final effort of Satan I find real need for prayer: (1) Draw me nearer to yourself that Satan might flee. (2) Keep me more and more aware just how powerful is our enemy. (3) Thank you that my Lord knew what he missed when he chose what you can give. (4) How wonderful to know Jesus overcame Satan to become the perfect sacrifice for my sin. (5) How I want to learn more of how to follow my Lord’s example in overcoming the evil one. (6) Teach me to worship you only. (7) Purify and enlighten my service for you.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

My Lord addressed Satan to enable me to hear you speak: (1) “This offer of Satan has never been withdrawn — it must be refused.” (2) “You will bow down and worship someone.” (3) “You *must* command Satan to leave — he will not do it if you do not.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Korea (South) — Point for prayer: (1) *Missions* have placed a healthy emphasis on Korean leadership and initiative. Most missions today are involved in leadership training programs or in specialist ministries. Missionaries who go as servants of the Korean Church are both needed and welcome.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer’s ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.

WEEK SEVEN

—Saturday—

“God is ‘a high eminence up to which I can climb and not only find protection but solitude and perspective for life.’ ‘As in Adam all die so in Christ shall all be made alive’ (I Cor. 15:22).”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Lead thou me to the rock that is higher than I; for thou art my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy” (Psa. 61:2b,3). It is my truest, greatest joy to come before you in praise. These verses offer such an attractive picture of yourself! You are a high eminence up to which I can climb and not only find protection but solitude and perspective for life. I think of Alice Springs in the outback of Australia and the incredibly large rock that rises from the desert floor. Each person will envision something similar, or dissimilar that will represent you as such a “Rock.” The blessing of praise is in you we can find the rest and peace that comes from total security. How I seek and find this place, which is actually a Person. I need to begin the day “in perspective.” Without my journey to “the Rock” I would not even want to look at life.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I have tried in the above praise to be objective and speak for all men. How very poorly I have done it you know. In this time of praise I lift my own heart up — I pour out my personal joy and happiness that I have such a refuge, such a strong tower against my enemy. There are steps up to the top of this tower — if I am going to be removed from the enemy, if I am going to see life as you do, I must and gladly take them. They are: (1) Concentration on what you have said — each word. (2) A humble attitude toward what you say. (3) A deep willingness to receive your word — read it as a child reading a love letter from his parent. (4) A confidence that each time I read it there is something wonderfully good for me. (5) A strong desire to thank you for all you show me.

I have only one enemy — I am no match for him. The further I can get from him the better I will be. In you I have no fear — in you I have all your strength. How I do need you!

How do you personally relate to the refuge of God, and God who is our Rock? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

As with all other attributes of yourself I must and do confess to terrible blindness and dullness of hearing. Why is it that at times I do not want such a rock or refuge? Why is it that at times I actually prefer to encounter the enemy and lose? There is something terribly independent about me. There are periods when I do not care what anyone thinks about what I do. I am slain like the heroes in the plain of battle. Indeed, I act like the dumb animals. But I praise you over and over again that these times have been less and less frequent. Indeed, I have an almost constant desire to climb to the rock that is higher than I. Oh, Rock, move in my experience until wherever I look, I see you. Forgive me, I am tired, I need your peace and protection. I gladly accept them. Hide thou me!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

From ev’ry stormy wind that blows,
From ev’ry swelling tide of woes,
There is a calm, a sure retreat:
’Tis found beneath the mercy seat.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

²³Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry. He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph, the son of Heli, ²⁴the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melki, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph,

²⁵the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos,
 the son of Nahum, the son of Esli,
 the son of Naggai, ²⁶the son of Maath,
 the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein,
 the son of Josech, the son of Joda,
²⁷the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa,
 the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel,
 the son of Neri, ²⁸the son of Melki,
 the son of Addi, the son of Cosam,
 the son of Elmadam, the son of Er,
²⁹the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer,
 the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat,
 the son of Levi, ³⁰the son of Simeon,
 the son of Judah, the son of Joseph,
 the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim,
³¹the son of Melea, the son of Menna,
 the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan,
 the son of David, ³²the son of Jesse,
 the son of Obed, the son of Boaz,
 the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon,
³³the son of Amminadab, the son of Ram,
 the son of Hezron, the son of Perez,
 the son of Judah. —*Luke 3:23-33, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

When our Lord stepped out of his home in Nazareth for the last time and set his face toward the Jordan and John the Baptist, what were the thoughts of his heart? Yea, what were the thoughts of his beloved mother? How did his four brothers react? Were his sisters married? Did they discuss his departure with their husbands? I can know what you thought by reading your record. This is enough. O my dear Lord, how I love him.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

All the list of names found in the genealogy of my Lord are a tremendous challenge to me. I want to examine every one and become friends with them all. I did this in the list of Matthew, but time and space just does not permit it here (it will in other studies and worship). Just now I want to express my joy and praise for two of the interesting people who preceded my Lord's ministry and in a small sense made it possible! (1) Jesus was "the son of Isaac." He has always appealed to me as a meaningful example. We could conjure up all kinds of pictures as to just what he did when his father Abraham told him he was to be the sacrifice on the altar they had just built. But the text does not tell us. Perhaps he was as meek as the lamb he typified! (2) I like the father of Isaac too. He left his home and walked "by faith" which meant he moved when you spoke.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Gladly do I review five men for whom I can truly be thankful: (1) First of all and most of all my Lord in all the strength of manhood, pure and holy and

undefiled — separated and yet identified with us sinners. (2) Thank you for Heli, the father of Joseph — he must have been a good father to rear such a fine son. (3) For Nathan, whose name was like the prophet who moved David to repentance. (4) Thank you for Jesse the father of David — such a patient, good man. (5) For Boaz who let love and respect overrule prejudice and bigotry.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"The son of Seth, the son of Adam." What would it mean to be "the son of Adam"? Seth was surely a commendable example. From Seth we have the "sons of God." In a real sense we are all "sons of Adam." As a result of our heritage we shall all die. It is a much greater fact that we can be sons of the second Adam. "The life giving spirit." "As in Adam all die so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15:22). This is only in reference to our physical escape from the grave — such an escape is promised to all men. But when our Lord is also our elder brother we shall escape everlasting punishment. This is the "much more" of "the free gift" (Rom. 5:19ff.).

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

There are many in this list who can teach me much: (1) I claim my inheritance through my being a son of yourself through Jesus. (2) I claim also my royal priesthood through my heritage in my Lord. (3) I want the transparent sincerity I see in Joseph. (4) I want a heart like David.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What are you saying to me through this genealogy table? (1) "I have been wise and faithful over many, many years." (2) "No one or nothing will ever stop my plan to save man." (3) "The second Adam, the life-giving spirit has come."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Korea (South) — Point for prayer: (1) *Student work* in the 97 colleges and universities and among the 190,000 students has made great progress. Emphasis has been on Bible study and personal evangelism, and now workers have gone out to the USA, Germany, Switzerland and other lands to witness among students. There are many Christian schools all over the country in which the Gospel is preached.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

O worship the King, all glorious above,
 And gratefully sing His wonderful love;
 Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of days,
 Pavilions in splendor, and girded with praise.

WEEK EIGHT

—Sunday—

“Your power and glory or character are with me — in me in the person of yourself through the Holy Spirit. Teach us how to appreciate this truth. Your Lamb has taken away the sin of the world! Praise his name!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“So I have looked upon thee in the sanctuary, beholding thy power and glory. Because thy steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise thee. So will I bless thee as long as I live; I will lift up my hands and call upon thy name” (Psa. 63:2-4). This is a little more text than we ordinarily use in praising you, but there were so many beautiful expressions of adoration I just could not leave one out. I will just mention them as I lift my heart to you in praise: (1) In the tabernacle and the temple your Shekinah glory or brightness appeared. It was a source of encouragement to know in this physical way you were present. It wasn't the smoke or fire or effulgent brightness that left a lasting impression — it was *the power and character or glory* of the person behind such manifestations. We have the same One present in us as his sanctuary! — even our bodies.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write it out in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me — (2) “Because thy steadfast love is better than life my lips will praise thee.” There is nothing in my life to be preferred above your steadfast love. Your love is like a light that never goes out that follows me wherever I go. This light only awakens me when I am responsive. (3) “I will bless thee (or praise thee) as long as I live.” You merit our continual praise. There is really nothing I do in life of more importance than pausing often during the day to contemplate your goodness and continually allow such praise to change my attitude toward all of life. (4) “I will lift up my hands and call on thy name,” but another form of praise and adoration. This surely seems like a spontaneous act of worship — no one asked David to raise his hands.

How do you personally relate to the power of God, and God who is steadfast Love? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

The lack of praise can be one of my worst sins. The causes are easy to discern. (1) I have not tarried long enough before your word in prayer to see your power and glory. (2) I have been too tired to be able to see clearly — my spirit has been insensitive because of fatigue. (3) I have been unwilling to face up to disobedience in some areas of my living. Dear Lord, I want to rearrange my schedule. I want to rest long and be refreshed. I want you to cleanse my heart and purify my hands.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim thro' this barren land;
I am weak, but Thou art mighty,
Hold me with Thy pow'rful hand:
Bread of Heaven,
Feed me till I want no more;
Bread of Heaven,
Feed me till I want no more.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

²⁹The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ ³¹I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.”

³²Then John gave this testimony: ‘I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. ³³I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and re-

main is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴I have seen and testify that this is the Son of God."

—John 1:29-34, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How shall I ever read these words with the meaning they deserve? Perhaps all I can do is to take my place with one of the spectators at the feet of John. This announcement meant more to you than to anyone else except our Lord. "The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world"! I see the quizzical look on the faces of those about me. They understand the Levitical system of offerings but a lamb to remove the sins of the whole world? How can it be? John said something else just as startling. He said that the whole purpose of his ministry was now complete — his purpose was to reveal to Israel God's Lamb — the Messiah! Dear Lord, have I at all represented your thoughts in the above expression? I have tried — forgive my ignorance!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

This will be easier and at the same time more difficult. I am mute before you as I try to assimilate the meaning of these momentous words: "The Lamb of God." Indeed, I do want to "look" and look again, and again. I shall never be able to look enough or to catch the wonder of your love or the fulness of your plan for man. I shall be looking when I fall down before you in heaven and shout with the angels "Worthy is the Lamb!" How much did John know of your Son's pre-existence when he said of him "He was before me"? Did he even know a one-hundredth part of what the other John meant when he said, "In the beginning was the word"? All four biographers said Jesus would baptize in the Holy Spirit — it must be very important for four of them to say it?

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

I shall run out of space before I run out of thanksgiving from this text: (1) Thank you for that wonderful day of all days when John identified my Lord and his mission. (2) Thank you that he has taken away my sin, I need not feel guilty at all! (3) Thank you that Jesus is always ahead of each of us — oh, I want to follow you, dear Lord! (4) Thank you for the eternal existence of my Lord, he has always been alive and well. (5) Thank you for the bold humility of John the Baptist. (6) Thank you for the dove which identified all three divine persons — the dove was the embodiment of the Holy Spirit — it came from yourself — it identified your Son. (7) Thank you for the powerful promise of Holy Spirit baptism.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God." Did John know Jesus was his relative? Had John seen Jesus before he met him on the banks of the Jordan? We do not know the answers to these questions. John was in the wilderness until the day of his message to Israel. John was certain when he gave his testimony. There was a positive strong assertion in his voice when he said: "This is the Son of God." We have much more reason than John had to give the same testimony. We have the four books of the eyewitness biographers. The apostle John wrote the purpose of all four gospels when he said, ". . . These are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31). We have seen and we do believe and we do claim the eternal life he promised!

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

(1) I want to see your Son as my sacrifice for every day. (2) Give me a deeper awareness of the fact that my sins are taken away as far as the east is from the west. (3) Let me appreciate the universal salvation provided by my Lord. (4) Deepen my understanding of the rank of Jesus as Lord of lords. (5) How I want to follow John's example in making my mission to make my Lord known. (6) Grant wisdom in understanding the anointing with the Holy Spirit of my Lord at his baptism. (7) Open my heart to see him as truly the Son of God.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

(1) "Your ministry offers something John could never offer." (2) "The presence of the Holy Spirit in you identifies you as a Christian." (3) "So many men have yet to know that my Son came to save."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Korea (South) — Point for prayer: (1) Christian broadcasting has a strong base with two missionary stations in the country broadcasting to both the Koreans and the closed lands of China and Russia. Pray for these key installations, their staff and the impact of these programs in the target areas.

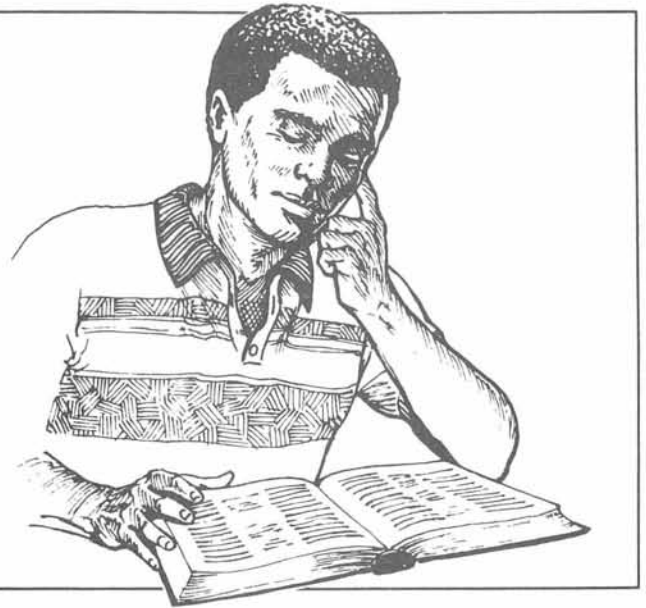
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

We would see Jesus, the great rock foundation,
Whereon our feet were set by sov'reign grace;
Not life, nor death, with all their agitation,
Can thence remove us, if we see His face.

WEEK EIGHT

—Monday—

“You can and do satisfy the total and deepest needs of our hearts — I am so glad to acknowledge this! This is your day — if I have it in my heart to make it so.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“My soul is feasted as with marrow and fat, and my mouth praises thee with joyful lips, when I think of thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the watches of the night; . . .” (Psa. 63:5,6). How I do want to hold you up as the One worthy of praise and adoration. Before all men I do want to so exalt you. The reasons for such exaltation are found in this text: (1) You satisfy the total and deepest needs of the human heart, or soul. Indeed, you offer the fulness of satisfaction. (2) You alone can give abundant reasons for songs of joy.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Surely what is true for all men is more than true for this one man. In all these many days I have found more than a thousand qualities or reasons for adoration of yourself. My mind, affections, will and conscience have found more than enough reasons for joyful praise. I want to remember some descriptive verse of yourself just before I drop off to sleep. My subconscious mind will integrate this quality into my spirit and when I awaken you will be more precious than ever before! The basic reason for such meditation on your nature or character is because I need to. Either I meditate on your divine goodness or Satan will offer me his options. I much prefer yourself!

How do you personally relate to the joy of the Lord, and God who is Joy? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

It has not always been so! i.e., I have not always wanted to meditate on your goodness. Neither is it always true now, i.e., as you know, my mind is take up with “other things” and the weeds choke out the word, and when this happens something else is choked

out: True praise is stifled when I do not open up your word and think through the words upon that page. “Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against you.” At the same time, the opposite result is also present. When I hide your word in my heart it tells me of your greatness and goodness and songs of joy leap to my lips! The tragic truth is this does not happen as often as it should. Forgive me for preferring to be poor when I could be so rich — for preferring hunger to being filled.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

All that I am and have,
Thy gifts so free,
In joy, in grief, thro’ life,
Dear Lord, for Thee!
And when Thy face I see,
My ransomed soul shall be,
Thro’ all eternity,
Something for Thee.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

³⁵The next day John was again with two of his disciples. ³⁶When they saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!”

³⁷When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. ³⁸Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, “What do you want?” They said, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?”

³⁹“Come,” he replied, “and you will see.”

So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent the day with him. It was about the tenth hour.

⁴⁰Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed

Jesus. "The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ).

⁴²Then he brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter).
—John 1:35-42, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I am always full of trembling wonder that I can not truly represent the meaning of the text as it relates to yourself. But I am also always ready to try. I am blessed and helped so much by the effort. No wonder you said what you did of John — it took one of deep humility and one of a clear eyed vision to turn his own disciples from himself to your Son. And John really meant it! There were no "sour grapes" in John's choices.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How anxious I am to relate every word of these verses to my own heart! What would it be like to spend a whole day in the presence of my Lord? How would I react as I looked into the face of the Son of God and heard him speak directly and personally? Since one of the disciples is unnamed I can opt to use my name. It is most interesting to observe the natural tendencies of men are not thwarted or hindered in their response to Jesus. The natural response of Andrew was to tell his brother. But it wasn't the natural response of the "other disciple" — (we believe the disciple was John the apostle — the writer of the gospel). What did John do? We are reading what he did. I want to let Jesus look into me and tell me who I am. And when he does I will believe him!

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

I am sure Andrew and John thanked you for all their lives and are presently thanking you in your presence for that glad day: (1) Thank you for the repeated emphasis John gave to the identification of Jesus. (2) Thank you for the wonderful naturalness of all the action of the text. (3) Thank you that even today you are at work in the very ordinary affairs of our coming and going. (4) Oh, dear Lord, I hear you say to me, "What do you want?" Thank you that it is you I want! (5) Thank you that there are several days in my schedule when I could begin listening and learning. (6) Thank you that all of us know someone who needs to hear about the Messiah. (7) Thank you that Jesus knows me better than I know myself.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"You will be called Cephas (which, when translated, is Peter)." How very much was in these few words!

Our Lord could give each of us a name that would exactly describe our character. I wonder what name he would give me? What name would he give you? Cephas or Peter meant "a stone" or "a rock." Our Lord was speaking in a dimensional form, i.e., he was telling Peter what he would become, what he should become, what our Lord would help him become. So it is with us. I am not what I should be nor what I want to be, but thank you dear Lord, neither am I what I used to be. When our Lord believes we can attain a certain goal and then lives in us in the person of the Holy Spirit to help us, we can do all things through him who thus strengthens us!

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD IN PETITIONS

(1) Give me the repetitious urgency of John. (2) May any who follow me be pointed to my Lord. (3) I want to appreciate all over again the meaning of the words: "The lamb of God." (4) Speak your words: "What do you seek?" deep into my heart. (5) Dear Lord, I do indeed wonder where you are staying today. (6) How glad I am for my Lord's open invitation to "come and see." (7) Andrew has such wonderful concern for others — I want to be like him.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

(1) "You too have found the Messiah — what will you do about it?" (2) "Do the centuries of fulfilled prophecies mean anything to you?" (3) "What word or name could I give you to describe your true potential?"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Malaysia — Population: 12,400,000. Growth rate — 2.9%. People per sq. km. — 94 in P.M., 10 in E.M. Points for prayer: (1) *Pray for interracial peace and harmony* and freedom for the Gospel in the face of increasing unrest and creeping limitations on Christian activities by Malay rulers. (2) *The Malay Muslims* cannot be evangelized by normal means. The few who have trusted the Lord have suffered severely and generally leave the country. Pray for the Christians who have contact with Malays that they may have opportunities to tactfully tell them of Jesus and pass on literature in spite of the hindrances. It is only possible to openly evangelize Malays in S. Thailand and also in Singapore.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Life is offered unto you, Hallelujah!
Eternal life thy soul shall have,
If you'll look to Him, Hallelujah!
Look to Jesus who alone can save.
"Look and live," . . . my brother, live,
Look to Jesus now and live;
'Tis recorded in His word, Hallelujah!
It is only that you "look and live."

WEEK EIGHT

—Tuesday—

“Let the righteous rejoice in the Lord and take refuge in him.’ I want to be that Israelite in whom there is no guile — help me dear Lord!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Let the righteous rejoice in the Lord, and take refuge in him! Let all the upright in heart glory!” (Psa. 64:10). David’s definition of “the righteous” would be somewhat different than ours. David would relate righteousness to the law. Our Lord had not yet come as “our righteousness.” At the same time, we believe David was honest enough to know he and all others failed to obey perfectly the law under which they lived. So the elements of mercy and grace had to be a part of the rejoicing of the righteous even in David’s day. The only universal offer we can make of righteousness is in our Lord. My heart is not upright. I am *not* proud of my track record of obedient righteousness. But our Lord can be and is the one in whom I take refuge — in him I glory. “He who knew no sin was made to be sin for me that I (and all men) might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

Express yourself in adoration to this quality of God. Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

For me. A great deal of what I have said in the above relates to me. I want to lift my heart in praise — at the same time, I want to think of you and praise you from an international perspective. Oh, that all men would take refuge in you and rejoice! I want to affirm every day of my life that you are worthy of all praise of all men. Just now I want to gladly enter the closet of praise. I have found my righteousness and my uprightness *in you*, and not in myself.

How do you personally relate to the righteousness of God, and God who is Righteous? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is easy to confess how far short I am of really being totally righteous, or upright in heart. It actually becomes very discouraging even to think about it.

How shall I improve my conduct? It seems to me the more I worship you out of my entire self the more I want to do what you have commanded. The whole law is fulfilled in love. I freely, fully admit and name my sins before you. It is not that you do not know them, you do — but to get rid of them I must spit them out.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I hear thy welcome voice,
That calls me, Lord, to Thee
For cleansing in Thy precious blood
That flowed on Calvary.
I am coming, Lord!
Coming now to Thee!
Wash me, cleanse me in the blood
That flowed on Calvary!

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

⁴³The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, “Follow me.”

⁴⁴Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote — Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

⁴⁶“Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked.

“Come and see,” said Philip.

⁴⁷When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, “There is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false.”

⁴⁸“How do you know me?” Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.”

⁴⁹Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel."

⁵⁰Jesus said, "You believed because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that." ⁵¹He then added, "I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

—*John 1:43-51, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How very good it is to travel from place to place with my Lord in his ministry. I can become the very first one to join him — I can be the very last one to watch him return to heaven. Oh, bless your name! Since Philip and Andrew and Peter were from Bethsaida we could imagine the three men were talking together about the Messiah when Jesus approached and called Philip. Our Lord knew what was in the hearts of men — hence his words went like an arrow to the heart of Philip. Was there something also in the face and eyes of your dear Son that reached for the heart of Philip? Whatever it was he was reached for he reached out to others. Philip — and Nathanael both knew your word — believed what they knew. Dear Lord, you know me — how do I compare to these men? Not at all! I am myself and you call me — am I as ready to follow?

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Since I have in the last several years studied Moses and the prophets I receive the command of my Lord just as did Philip on that far off day. "Finding Philip" — (Oh, Lord, you have found me, thou Lord seest me.) he said to him, "Follow me." I wish I knew the tone of voice — but I know you are speaking to me right now — for this day — "Follow me." This means leaving all that would hinder such following. If I am motivated to tell others like Philip then I have truly responded to my Lord's call. Dear Lord, I have been so motivated for more than forty years, not like I want to, but I have found a good number to whom I said, "We have found the Son of God." In every case each one of them had to come and see for themselves. I didn't win them — Jesus did.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD FOR THANKSGIVING

It is easy to see so many areas of gratitude here: (1) Thank you for the searching Savior — he has found me! (2) Thank you for friends with whom we can share our faith and excitement. (3) Thank you for men in whom there is no guile — I want to be one of them. (4) Thank you for the good and honest heart of Nathanael who needed personal proof. (6) Thank you for the only answer to skepticism, "come and see." (7) Thank you for my Lord's total knowledge of every man.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... you shall see the heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man."

It would seem that from the first contact our Lord had with Nathanael he compared him with Jacob. Yea, even before he met him. It is a redundancy but our Lord is saying of Nathanael: "Behold an Israelite in whom there is no Jacob." Now Jesus again compares Nathanael's experience and attitude with Jacob. What a startling promise it was! As this transparently sincere man followed Jesus throughout his ministry when did he see the heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon our Lord? Isn't Jesus saying that Nathanael would find Jesus to be the ladder to heaven?

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

(1) I want to hear your Son say to me as he did to Philip, "Follow me." (2) Help me to make the great discovery all over again. (3) I want to see *your good* coming out of many Nazareths. (4) How I do want to be a Christian in whom there is no guile. (5) Lord, find me under my fig tree — you know me better than I know myself.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

(1) "Jesus is still calling: 'Follow Me.!'!" (2) "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, . . ." (3) "Truly, truly . . . you will see heaven opened, and the messengers of God ascending through your prayers and descending through my word all through my Son."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Malaysia — Point for prayer: (1) *The state-aided Muslim missionary outreach* to the tribal peoples has had some success — through bribery and subtle coercion — among the interior tribes of Malaya and also in Sabah and Sarawak. Pray that Christians may not give way to intimidation but rather be strong and alert to forestall this effort by winning the uncommitted to Christ.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Does sadness fill my mind,
A solace here I find:
May Jesus Christ be praised;
Or fades my earthly bliss, . . .
My comfort still is this: . . .
May Jesus Christ be praised.

WEEK EIGHT

—Wednesday—

“When our heart is in our praise — even a noise is acceptable! Jesus wants us joyful — he attended a wedding — ate and drank with those who also attended. So he does today!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth, sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise!” (Psa. 66:1,2). This is indeed a true expression of what should happen. If rocks and trees and the physical world had a voice it would be raised in adoration of your glorious person. The stars would shout for joy and all the trees would clap their hands. To describe all the “glory” or “character” that belongs to your name would result in an endless chorus of praise throughout eternity. We are not suggesting unintelligent noise — the “noise” produced from an understanding of your essential being will have more meaning than anything else we will ever express. Oh, that all men as well as nature would praise you!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. There is one infinitesimal speck in your great creation who will gladly lift up his voice and total being in praise. I want to sing of your glory and to your glory for the rest of my life. It is good to know someone — *the* Someone is listening when such “noise” is made. If all we did was to impress man it would become tedious and old. But when absolute love and knowledge is listening it draws the very best from us every time. I like the term “glorious praise.” We could as well say “praise that describes the character of the One to whom we lift our voices.” This refers to *character describing* praise. This is my attempt each day — I shall run out of days but not praise.

How do you personally relate to praising God, and God who is worthy of praise? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

That I should for whatever reason not want to praise

you would of itself be a very fundamental sin. There are various contributing sins to this one basic sin: (1) A failure to spend time in your word to acquire a knowledge of all your attributes. (2) Caught away by other tasks that seem important at the time but are robbing me of my time with you. (3) Allowing my mind to be bombarded by the imagery of T.V. which is a diet of sex, food and money. (4) Ill will and resentment toward others in the family. All these and others dampen and quench my desire to glorify your name. Forgive me — discipline my priorities!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I am trust Thee, Lord Jesus!
Trusting only Thee!
Trusting Thee for full salvation,
Great and free.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

2 On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there, ²and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³When the wine was gone, Jesus’ mother said to him, “They have no more wine.”

⁴“Dear woman, why do you involve me?” Jesus replied, “My time has not yet come.”

⁵His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”

⁶Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial wasing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.

⁷Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water”; so they filled them to the brim.

⁸Then he told them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.”

They did so, ⁹and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside ¹⁰and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

¹¹This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him. —*John 2:1-11, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Of all the texts to read in your presence this seems most appropriate! The beginning of miracles and ministry of my Lord! Three days after Jesus decided to leave Galilee he arrived in Cana for a wedding feast. I want to attend this wedding, but my eyes will be on Jesus and not the bride or the groom. I want to watch him as I know you must have. I will not see as you do, or even what you do, but I have the greatest of interest. Jesus and Peter and John and Andrew and Philip and Nathanael had all been invited.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Why did Mary ask our Lord about the wine? How kind and thoughtful was our Lord with the interruption and demands of those who really did not understand. Dear Lord, I am not so kind. Forgive me! That dear woman Mary! How thoughtful she was! I wonder what she thought when she heard our Lord's words: "My time is not yet come"? She was perfectly willing to leave the decision in our Lord's hands. If he says anything, do it! If he says nothing, there is nothing to do. I need to be as patient as Mary and as obedient as the servants.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Yea, verily: (1) Thank you for our Lord's mother, always so interested and thoughtful. (2) Thank you for the learners. I want to count myself among them. (3) Thank you that your time did come and I have beheld your glory. (4) Thank you for the clear miracle of creation. (5) Thank you that there were many who saw it. (6) Thank you that there were many who tasted it. (7) Thank you that there was never a doubt about the signs of my Lord.

Give yourself to your own expression of praise — write it or speak it.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... his disciples put their faith in him." Jesus revealed in his miracles his true nature. Something of the majesty of deity was seen in each one of them. In this particular miracle it was the creative power of God seen in changing the chemical elements of water

into wine. None of the chemical elements of wine were in the water — it was truly a miracle of creation. The characteristics of our Lord's signs are such that there is no question as to the total supernatural character of what was done. Notice: (1) It was done in daylight so what was done could be clearly observed. (2) It was done with what was present — he didn't bring in a "rigged" prop. The jars and water were the most common of items. (3) It was observed by several who could not possibly have had knowledge beforehand. (4) It was tested by a large crowd. "These things are written that we might believe," and indeed I do!

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

(1) I want to be as interested and disinterested in the affairs of this life as my Lord. (2) Help me to learn as much as I can from the mother of my Lord. (3) I want to relate to eating and drinking just as my Lord did. (4) How I want to appreciate "the hour" of my Lord. (5) Whatever he says to me I do indeed want to do it. (6) Open my heart to see the quantity and quality of this miracle. (7) May I be as unobtrusive in my work as my Lord was in his.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

(1) "I still save the best till the last." (2) "I am still in the business of turning water into wine." (3) "My glory is ever manifest that men may believe in me."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Malaysia — Point for prayer: (1) *There are increasing limitations* on mission work, and the number of missionaries is dropping rapidly. There are still 60 missionaries in P.M., but it is now impossible for any missionary to remain in the country for more than 10 years. Pray that needed missionaries may be allowed to enter and that the national believers may be able to take over and maintain the evangelistic, teaching and missionary impetus.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Praise ye the Lord,
who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth,
Shelters thee under His wings,
yea, so gently sustaineth!
Hast thou not seen
How thy desires e'er have been
Granted in what He ordaineth?

WEEK EIGHT

—Thursday—

“Make thy way known upon this earth — in my home — my job — with my friends — and do it through me. He trusts those who trust him.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us; that thy way be known upon the earth, thy saving power among all nations” (Psa. 67:1,2). What a beautiful description of your very self is in this reference! Consider: (1) You are God! Elohim. The all powerful, all knowing One. (2) You are gracious, i.e., full of concern for the needs of man and ready to meet those needs. (3) You are ready to grant gifts to men — to reach out with good things. (4) You are like a father or grandfather who leans over the family as he puts his arms around them and looks longingly into their faces — there is a smile of approval and happiness upon his face. (5) Such a beautiful picture! It is the deep desire of your heart (and of mine) that such a way of life be known in all the earth.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I have tried to hold up your blessed qualities in the above words. In this time I want to hold up my heart and ask you to speak to me: to paraphrase these verses: “May you be gracious to me and bless me, and make your face to shine upon me, that your way may be known in every area of my life. I want your saving power for my life today.” This is a selfish request — but nonetheless needed. I am just as concerned that you may be known throughout the earth and your saving power among all nations. Dear Lord, I want to be shown just how I can help. Just how can I do my little part in fulfilling these blessed words? Even in a song over 2,900 years old I see your heart interest in all men of all nations. There are surely many more men alive upon the earth today than were alive when David wrote this song!

How do you personally relate to the saving power of God, and God who is our Savior? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

It does seem horribly selfish to be constantly heaping upon myself your benefits! Such as: “be gracious to me” — “bless me” — “make your face to shine on me.” — “That I might know your way.” You are the Lord of all! — of all men in every nation. Break me out of my little selfish mold! However, if I am not ready to talk to the man across the street or next door I am not ready for the fulfillment of your international concern. Work a work of grace in my own life that you might fulfill it in the lives of all.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Lead on, O King Eternal,
Till sin's fierce war shall cease,
And holiness shall whisper
The sweet Amen of peace;
For not with swords' loud clashing,
Nor roll of stirring drums;
With deeds of love and mercy,
The heav'nly kingdom comes.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹²After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There he stayed for a few days.

¹³When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. ¹⁵So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶To those who sold doves he said, “Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a

market!”

¹⁷His disciples remembered that it is written: “Zeal for your house will consume me.”

¹⁸Then the Jews demanded of him, “What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?”

¹⁹Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.”

²⁰The Jews replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?” ²¹But the temple he had spoken of was his body. ²²After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. — *John 2:12-22, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I do hesitate to read this word and relate it to your perspective. I have such a limited capacity of seeing events as you see them. Most especially is this true of such an event as cleansing the temple! It all happened at the time of a feast that should have reminded everyone of your power and goodness. As our Lord walked into the bedlam of noise, confusion and stench he was ignited like a firebrand from your presence. I see so many indications of your presence in these verses: (1) This cleansing probably occurred in the Gentile quarter — non-Jews could not worship you in this chaos! Neither can this non-Jew when my mind is cluttered with the sights and sounds and smell of this world. (2) Money means little to you when it is a competitor to yourself. Overturn it! Lose it! Out with it!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I try to enter with my Lord into the temple precincts. If there were only half as many people as Josephus says were present there would be 1½ million people in Jerusalem on that day. Hundreds of thousands in and around the temple. If every family present needed a sacrificial animal or at least a dove — how many thousand upon thousands would have greeted the gaze of our Lord and his disciples? Who could pray in a place like this?

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you that my Lord does not excuse, apologize or rationalize sin — he rebukes and cleanses. (2) Thank you that God’s house — even our bodies, are never to be used as a marketplace, i.e., a means of getting and buying, but as a place of worship. (3) Thank you that the disciples related all events of life to your word. (4) Thank you that Jesus was not impressed with men’s demands for authority. (5) Thank you that he did raise up the destroyed temple — even as he said. (6) Thank you that our Lord did credential his words with many miracles. (7)

Thank you that my Lord, even today, knows what is in the mind and heart of every man (beginning with the writer!).

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men.” Was this an absolute kind of knowledge? i.e., could our Lord read the purposes and intents of the minds of all men? From what we know of his nature and what we read of his record we would have to say “yes.” There were those to whom he did entrust himself. Consider the very close association of Jesus and the twelve. In just the next chapter Nicodemus seems to be an exception — or the woman at the well, although his ability to know what was in this poor woman was surely evident.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

(1) I want to be as disturbed as my Lord with the defilement of his temple today — even our bodies. (2) How can I balance the overturning of the money tables with the loss of personal property? (3) Against what was the anger of my Lord directed? (I do expect answers to these questions as I study your word.) (4) How I do want much more zeal for your work. (5) If our Lord told them who gave him the authority to cleanse the temple would they have believed him? (6) I want the resurrection to ever be fresh and real to me.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

(1) “I am still choosing the men to whom I will trust myself.” (2) “I still see and know what men think and do.” (3) “Love me more than money.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Peninsular Malaya — Point for prayer: (1) *The churches* are almost entirely Chinese and Indian in composition. Growth is slow, and rate of backsliding high, due to the hostile environment for all races with many social and family pressures on young Christians. Revival is needed and a greater willingness to suffer shame for Jesus and to witness to the unsaved. There is a lack of well trained church leaders and good Bible teaching, so many congregations are weak and spiritually shallow.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

WEEK EIGHT

—Friday—

“Blessed be the Lord who daily bears us up! — We have a door right through death! Cut right across our traditions and speak to my heart!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears us up; God is our salvation. Our God is a God of salvation; and to God, the Lord, belongs escape from death” (Psa. 68:19,20). To turn my heart and voice up to you in adoration seems a natural consequence of a recognition of yourself! It is always good for me to list the qualities of your dear self I see in your word: (1) You are Lord — total, absolute ruler — I accept you as such for the whole earth and for myself. (2) Every day you lift me out of myself and the ordinary pursuits of life. (3) You are salvation — in every situation for every man. (4) You offer the only escape from death. To list these four qualities of yourself is enough to keep me before you longer than this little time of worship. My heart does long to see you accepted by all men — even as I say it I know many, many men are only awaiting the goodness to accept it. How the very thought of your power and love as seen in your Son does bear me up above the limitations of this body.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

For me. I am sorry to mix my approach to you in this time of worship. I started out to praise you just for yourself as related to all men, but I was soon relating all of your words to just myself. I want to praise you for just one wonderful blessing. Without “escape from death” there would be no hope in life. I want to express the details of this escape: (1) You are the escape from the uncertainty of death. I will one day lose consciousness here with the total confidence that I will regain it in the world to come which is called “at home” with you. (2) You are the escape from the finality of death. Death is a door — not the end but the beginning. Praise your glorious name!

How do you personally relate to the salvation of God, and God who is Savior? Speak it out or write

it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

How is it you offer to bear me up and I prefer to be down? Can it be that you are salvation and I want to be lost? When I know death is certain how can I ignore it so often? I am not habitual in these sins. I want complete deliverance from them. Give me the calm assurance that you are at work holding me up by the word of your power even as you do the physical universe. Dear Lord, I do want to be saved — I am saved and I will be saved. I do not believe I have ever totally forgotten that you alone are the escape from the “pangs” or “powers” of death. At the same time I have not rejoiced nearly as much or as often as I should in “the resurrection and the life.” Forgive me.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest.

HIS WORD

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. ²He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him.” ³In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”
“How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!”

⁵Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. ⁷You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' ⁸The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."⁹"How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.

¹⁰"You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? ¹¹I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. ¹²I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? ¹³No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven — the Son of Man. ¹⁴Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. — *John 3:1-16, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I do feel like I am walking on holy ground as I approach these blessed eternal words. Oh, so often I have identified with Nicodemus. I too have accepted the evident purpose of your miracles — such power and wisdom and control is not from man. The words of my Lord burn like fire in my mind and conscience: ". . . unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." I take the "Kingdom of God" to refer to your rule in my life. Your control of my heart is therefore contingent on my being "born again."

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I am trying: The supernatural nature of this transaction called the new birth is evident again and again. It has become among so many of us an argument over words until the birth of the Spirit is eclipsed. If the *water* in our Lord's words does not refer to the water used on Pentecost then I am at a total loss to what he does mean. The sad, sorry fact is that multitudes have gone through the form — with and without water and have never been born again. My dear Lord just meant only one thing and therefore conclusions drawn from his words *must* be based on the one thing meant by him.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Oh, what a privilege to thank you for the new birth: (1) Thank you for the quiet personal time our Lord spent with Nicodemus. (2) Thank you for the honesty and interest this ruler had as he talked with our Lord. (3) Thank you for the soul-penetrating words of Jesus — ". . . a man *must* be born again." (4) Thank you for the willingness of Nicodemus to admit the limita-

tions of humanism. (5) Thank you for the clear explanation of the new birth, i.e., in light of its fulfillment on Pentecost. (6) Thank you for the miraculous nature of the new birth. (7) Thank you that no teacher in the New Israel need be ignorant of this wonderful truth.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

" . . . that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life." This is one verse so old it has become new all over again. We do need to remember the gospel of John was written after the book of Acts. John was present at Pentecost, he was in Jerusalem in the spread of the word. John knew what men and women did to be saved and have the promise of eternal life. What I am saying in a somewhat extended manner is that John knew just what was involved in the word "believers."

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Jesus moves all us religious people to new requests in prayer: (1) Cut across my tradition to speak to my heart need. (2) Dear Lord, be indeed my "Rabbi" or "teacher." (3) I want to read all over again the record of the signs you did — may I see in them what you want me to see. (4) How I do want your rule in my life — I want to reaffirm my new birth each day. (5) Somehow sensitize my heart to be able to respond to the new Spirit within my body. (6) May my new birth be as evident as the effect of wind — its sound and its work.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

How clearly you do speak to me in these verses: (1) "My Son must be 'lifted up' in preaching to save those who believe." (2) "Eternal life is either received or rejected." (3) "Please think again! Do you know the meaning of the word 'perish'?"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Peninsular Malaysia — Point for prayer: (1) *Unreached peoples* — not only have many of the Chinese and Indians never heard the Gospel, but great sections of the population are untouched — especially the poorer and older people. The *Malays* are totally unreached. The *13 small tribes* are considered to be Muslim, but are actually animists and open to the Gospel.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing,
He chastens and hastens His will to make known;
The wicked oppressing cease them from distressing,
Sing praises to His name, He forgets not His own.

WEEK EIGHT

—Saturday—

“Upon the basis of your steadfast love I ask for your immediate help — we so need your abundant mercy! The Father has loved his Son and has placed everything — I mean EVERYTHING in his hands — trust him!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Answer me, O Lord, for thy steadfast love is good; according to thy abundant mercy, turn to me. Hide not thy face from thy servant, for I am in distress, make haste to answer me” (Psa. 69:16,17). How wonderfully good it is to come before you on this day! I am so glad to lift up my praise for the lovely qualities I see in these verses of yourself! (1) You are listening to me. That I have a conscious intelligent, all-wise and all-powerful God to hear me as I pray is one gigantic *a priori* in all my praying. Amen! (2) I can say with the psalmist “Thy steadfast love is good,” i.e., I have found you to be more than good in your directions and gifts in my life. Good is too weak a word as related to all you constantly do for me! (3) I must ask even as David: “answer according to thy abundant mercy” for if you should answer according to justice I would not even be heard.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. How often do I imagine that something has gone wrong in heaven. Your face seems to be turned away from me and my prayers are not getting through. Such stupidity! If I cannot see your face it is not because you have turned away! How very frequent must my cry come up before you? Each day I could say, and do say, “Make haste to answer me, for I am in distress”! My distress is so often of my own making.

How do you personally relate to the mercy of God, and God who is Mercy? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

In contrast to all your qualities are mine: (1) Whereas you are ready to answer me I am not at all ready to ask — forgive me. (2) When your love is steadfast

and good my love is terribly fluctuating and weak — have mercy. (3) Your mercy is abundant and constant, mine is small and soon runs out — cleanse me. (4) Your face is always toward me — you are always ready to smile upon me — (not my sins). There are times when I simply do not want to look up to you — increasingly less are such times as you know, but there *are* times — forgive me. What I am saying in essence is, “I am in distress, make haste to answer me.” I thank you from my whole heart for your mercy!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

So precious is Jesus, my Savior, my King,
His praise all the day long with rapture I sing;
To Him in my weakness for strength I can cling,
For He is so precious to me.
For He is so precious to me, . . .
For he is so precious to me, . . .
'Tis heaven below my Redeemer to know,
For He is so precious to me.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

²²After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and baptized. ²³Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were constantly coming to be baptized.

²⁴(This was before John was put in prison.) ²⁵An argument developed between some of John's disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing.

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

²⁷To this John replied, “A man can receive only what

is given him from heaven. ²⁸You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Christ but am sent ahead of him.' ²⁹The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and he is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. ³⁰He must become greater; I must become less.

³¹"The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. ³²He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony.

³³The man who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. ³⁴For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God; to him God gives the Spirit without limit. ³⁵The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. ³⁶Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

—John 3:22-36, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

In this section of scripture I find so much for which I can express joy, sorrow, hope, and wonder. I know from reading John 4:2 that Jesus himself baptized no one. The baptism was one of repentance and for the same purpose as John's baptism — indeed it was a repeating of the baptism of John. It is rather obvious that this whole section is a discussion of how John and our Lord handled the problem of jealousy among their followers. I am moved to exclaim with your son: "that of those born of women there has not arisen a greater than John the Baptist!"

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How very easy it is to be caught up in the vortex of jealousy. Even when leaders are not jealous of each other their followers are! We all have followers if we are leaders. The only solution to envy and jealousy is to let our Lord become all and in all.

John was delighted to tell what he had received from heaven — and he was just as glad to allow anyone else the same privilege. If God wanted to eclipse his ministry by that of Jesus John was ready to receive such a message. It was God in heaven who was calling the shots not the preachers. For me this means I must be constantly meditating upon your word, day and night.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for being so clear about who is important. (2) Thank you for the obvious fact that baptism was done with "much water." (3) Thank you for the bridegroom, my glorious Lord. (4) Thank you that we are his bride! (5) Thank you that we can help the bridegroom and the bride to get ready for the mar-

riage supper in heaven. (6) Thank you for the "one above all." (7) Thank you that we can read in the words of the gospels what you told your Son in the chambers of heaven!

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands." Just how inclusive is this charming statement. Are we to conclude that the human family is a small replica of heaven? Even as an earthly father loves his child and is glad to turn all he has over to the son, so the heavenly parent loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. God just had one plan and all of it centered in his Son. All the Father hopes to accomplish on this earth begins and ends with his Son and the body of his Son, the church.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What a wonderful witness was John. His example leads me to prayer: (1) How important baptism was to these men! I want the baptism Jesus commanded to be important to me. (2) Why was it necessary to have "plenty of water" in order to baptize? (3) Teach me again that influence is inseparably associated with character. (4) There was no jealousy in John — keep me as humble. (5) Become greater and greater that I might be less and less. (6) May my highest joy be in listening for the bridegroom's voice. (7) I want to set your Son above all in my life. (8) I want to hear and obey your Son in the "little things" of my life today.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I do want to heed what you say to me from this text: (1) "The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands." (2) "Who ever believes in the Son has eternal life." (3) "Who ever rejects the son will not see life."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Sarawak (East Malaysia) — Point for prayer: (1) *Sarawak* has been the scene of one of the most wonderful people movements this century. The movement began in the 1930s among the Marut people and has spread over much of *Sarawak*. Pray for the continued maturing of these believers as they come more and more into contact with the outside world — many of these believers are from primitive and illiterate backgrounds.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Then let our songs abound,
And every tear be dry;
We're marching thro' Emmanuel's ground
To fairer worlds on high.

WEEK NINE

—Sunday—

“Praise and thanksgiving is our offering to you now — these have always been the best of sacrifices. Jesus speaks to me now: ‘I am still the living water.’ Keep on drinking!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving. This will please the Lord more than an ox or a bull with horns and hoofs” (Psa. 69:30,31). These are encouraging words. Several rather obvious things appear as I come before you: (1) That man should want to praise you. Oh, how true this is, but only because I know you and have reasons for my praise. So the knowledge of yourself is essential to praise. (2) That you want men to praise you. This is a completion of your nature. A fulfillment of man’s purpose for being. (3) That your whole being — represented by the term “name” should be the object of our praise. (4) That a song is an appropriate vehicle for our expression of praise. Having said these things, how utterly natural does it seem to lift our voice to you in a song of joy and wonder about yourself!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. The little phrase “magnify him” is most interesting to me. God becomes God by thanksgiving. The more we thank him the greater he becomes! This I have found to be so wondrously true. I like the time of thanksgiving because it separates me from myself and lifts me up to see the Giver of all I have, to consider the value of what was given and the love of the Giver.

I am totally amazed that you would find pleasure in our praise and thanksgiving. But I do believe I can bring happiness to you! You do seek our adoration and gratitude even as we reach out for your love and greatness. How fulfilling! Praise your wonderful name!

How do you personally relate to the praise of God, and God who is worthy of praise? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Why is there always the dark side of life? I have not found a real satisfying answer. I know it is sin and Satan — but why man has a continuing interest is my problem. I say this most especially in the face of these beautiful verses. Forgive me for not praising you! Forgive me for my utter selfishness, Oh, lift me up into the realm of reality that I might see your purpose of goodness for all men. I have a strong tendency to minimize or ignore my sin. Show me just how important is your law of life. To transgress the law of life is to ask for death — or separation.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Thou art the bread of life,
O Lord, to me,
Thy holy Word the truth that saveth me;
Give me to eat and live
With Thee above;
Teach me to love Thy truth, for Thou art love.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even another prayer song.

HIS WORD

4 The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John, ²although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. ³When the Lord heard of this, he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

⁴Now he had to go through Samaria. ⁵So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

⁷When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink? ⁸His disciples

had gone into the town to buy food.)

⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

¹⁰Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”

¹¹“Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? ¹²Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?”

¹³Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

¹⁵The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.” — *John 4:1-15, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What a blessed encounter! How representative! How all men and women can relate to these blessed words. Just briefly I want to list them. Dear Lord, all of us can identify. (1) We are all thirsty; deep within us we are thirsty. (2) We know people are not talkative nor do they communicate well when they are hungry and tired — our Lord did — blessed be his name. (3) Jacob (or Israel) cannot give us an answer — it is Jacob’s son by the Spirit who does. (4) We meet a need in the life of our Lord — how can it be? — but we do. (5) Jesus came to give us the gift of God.

Please express yourself in response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Lord, how eager I am to do this! (1) Deep down within me is a thirst that I have quenched from time to time at the well of living water! But I know my Lord was using a continuing action verb when he said “he that drinketh” — he meant I must continue to drink if I want to continue to be satisfied. My own experience would teach me this if I knew nothing about the Greek verb tense. (2) Must not my Lord be very tired of my feeble efforts? Have I not left my Lord unfulfilled from the standpoint of communion with me? And yet I see him reaching out to me — and saying ever so tenderly, “Will you give me a drink?”

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

How appropriate is thanksgiving to this text: (1) Thank you for Jesus’ unwillingness to contribute to jealousy. (2) Thank you Jesus was willing to go through Samaria. (3) Thank you for the human limitations of my Lord — an example of how to deal with these same limitations in me. (4) Thank you

Jesus was ready to make the first move. (5) Thank you for the honesty of the woman as to prejudice and bigotry. (6) Thank you that Jesus is still in the living water business. (7) Thank you that we need never thirst again.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” We are much like the woman: “Sir, give me this water . . .” I do hope we have a little more perception. Our Lord didn’t promise H₂O. The promise of a spring of water or what we would think of as an artesian well, is based on the condition that we keep on drinking. I have surely found the promise to be true.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

(1) Our Lord avoided prideful popularity — give me the same courage. (2) May I be willing to go through the Samaritans that arise today in my experience. (3) I want to remember that being tired in your work is so different than being tired of it. (4) Open my heart and my mouth to communicate to those who would seemingly be not interested. (5) Break down any barrier of race or sex I might have as related to other people. (6) I do want to know better than ever “the gift of God.” (7) Lord, I purpose right now to keep on drinking of the living water.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

How poignantly you can speak to me out of this text: (1) “I am still giving ‘living water.’” (2) “Whoever keeps on drinking will never thirst.” (3) “You can be my own source of living water for others.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Sarawak (East Malaysia) — Point for prayer: (1) Missionary work seems to be drawing to a close but, praise God, the churches are rapidly reaching the position of being able to manage. Pray for the missionaries that they may use their time strategically. Bible translation and evangelistic outreach in 10 unreached peoples. Bible translation work is in progress in 7 languages. Pray for this ministry.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

The Church’s one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is His new creation
By water and the word:
From Heav’n he came and sought her
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died.

WEEK NINE

—Monday—

“God is great — God is good — God is at work! I am poor and needy and welcome such blessed words. I hear my Savior say: ‘I am still seeking men to worship me.’ ”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“May all who seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee! May those who love thy salvation say evermore, ‘God is Great’ ” (Psa. 70:4). How I do enjoy this fellowship with you! It is a real privilege to praise you for all the attributes of yourself I see in each of these verses. (1) Praise you for being someone we (all men) can want to seek. All who know you have a strong desire to be with you. There is no hesitancy in being with you. I *want* to seek your presence. Love and sacred respect combine to draw me to yourself. (2) When once we understand your essential nature of love and power there arises a great expression of praise and gladness there cannot be found anywhere else or from anyone else. (3) Who would not love to be saved? There are those who do not know they are lost. Once we catch just a glimpse of the greatness of your interest in man we shall all exclaim from the depth of our hearts “God is great!”

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Dear Lord, I do seek you! Just what is involved in this little word “seek”? You are not lost that I should find you to lead me out of my confusion. For every day, and several times during the day, I want to seek your face for direction and approval. When I open up the guide book and look up to the guide I find joy.

How do you relate to the gladness of God, and God who is Salvation? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

As David said just after this verse of praise: “But I am poor and needy; hasten to me, O God! Thou art my help and my deliverer; O Lord, do not tarry” (Psa. 70:5). How can we hold both of these verses in

the same heart? But we can, and do. I am poor and needy even in my expression of praise. My total sufficiency is in you.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

For the wonder of each hour
Of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale and tree and flower,
Sun and moon and stars of light:
Christ our God, to Thee we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹⁶He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.”

¹⁷“I have no husband,” she replied.

Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸The fact is you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.

¹⁹“Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

²¹Jesus declared, “Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²²You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”

²⁵The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain

everything to us.”

²⁶Then Jesus declared, “I who speak to you am he.”

²⁷Just then the disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”

²⁸Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ²⁹“Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” ³⁰They came from the town and made their way toward him. —*John 4:16-30, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It is always good to participate in a grand discovery. Surely this is the grandest! To this one woman our Lord opened up his heart. It would seem almost like an accident. Why was she at the well at noon? Why was Jesus alone? Dear Lord, we know the answer to these questions. Such an encounter was planned by you. As many times as I have read these words they always embarrass me. I am always the sinner — and Jesus knows I am.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Father, I want to take the place of the woman. (1) I know I am a sinner. (2) I have made the wonderful discovery that Jesus is the Messiah. (3) I want to be able to express my worship in confidence that I am doing it in the right place and manner. (4) I now see real worship is of the total inward being. (5) How delighted I am to learn God is “seeking” men and women to worship him. (6) Even when men come and could interrupt my relationship with you I can be — (and I am) — so absorbed in my discovery of your Son that I do not even notice it. (7) I want to tell everyone! “Come and see.” Here is One who knows me better than I will ever know myself. Wonder of all wonder I have found the Savior of the world!

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

I am sure the woman of Samaria never ceased thanking you. (1) Thank you for the deep conviction of personal sin. (2) Thank you that I want to repent of such sin — even as the woman. (3) Thank you for my Lord who sees and knows and meets my deepest needs. (4) Thank you for the desire of all men to be right in their worship of you. (5) Thank you for my Lord’s words that let me know my heart is the place for worship and my spirit is the means of worship. (6) Thank you that even now God yearns for me to lift my spirit in worship to him. (7) Thank you I can leave all and tell others of the One I have found.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Come, see a man who told me everything I ever

did.” Let us go at the woman’s bidding and see the one who has produced such excitement in her heart. When we do we will find one who speaks as no other man ever spoke. He seems to know just how we hurt and has words to not only explain but to heal. We will find one who seems to know the scriptures and their meaning like no other teacher we have ever heard. But the quality that most attracts us is that we meet a man who lives as no other man. His whole attitude is different than anyone else. He has a softer manner, or perhaps we could say more compassionate. At the same time, there is a pureness of speech and thought that fills us with wonder. We agree with the woman, we wouldn’t be at all surprised if he told us just what we were thinking or just what we had been doing.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

(1) How I do need the bold humility to confront people in their sin. (2) Open my heart to the suffering of those who continue in adultery. (3) How I do long to worship you everywhere every day. (4) Thank you for the present of knowledge of salvation through my Lord. (5) I want to lift my heart up to you as directed by the example of my Lord. (6) Give me the perception and humility necessary to accept Jesus as my King. (7) I want to “leave my water jar” and tell of him.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What a powerful example in this woman — you can speak to me through her: (1) “I am still seeking men to worship me.” (2) “Men will never be saved until they find out they are lost.” (3) “You have more to tell and more reason to tell it.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Sarawak (East Malaysia) — Point for prayer: (1) *Unreached peoples* — many of the smaller and more inaccessible groups must still be contacted and evangelized. Pray that missionaries may be successful in this. Pray for a growing missionary vision among believers for these people. Also the larger Iban and Bidayuh tribes have proved unresponsive. Pray for their evangelization.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

The name of Jesus is so sweet,
I love its music to repeat;
It makes my joy full and complete,
The precious name of Jesus.
“Jesus,” oh, how sweet the name!
“Jesus,” ev’ry day the same;
“Jesus,” let all saints proclaim
Its worthy praise forever.

WEEK NINE

—Tuesday—

“May the day soon come when the character of God is known to all men of the earth. Open my eyes to see the harvest fields NOW!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. Blessed be his glorious name forever; may his glory fill the whole earth! Amen and Amen” (Psa. 72:18,19). What the psalmist sang and prayed to you in the long ago I want to repeat today: (1) I want to set you apart and admire your greatness and goodness. Who, O Lord, is like you? No one! (2) You alone have done those things worthy of praise — accomplishments of eternal value. There is nothing done in this whole world that will outlast the world in which it exists if it does not have your nature in it. (3) May your very self be the object of my adoration throughout eternity.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

I have tried to hold an objective view in the above praise — just now I want to relate all my words to the desires of my heart. Words indeed fail me to tell of the “blessedness” of your name! When I attempt to praise man I am always reminded of some human quality that indicates he is much less than perfect. But such will never be found in you. Such has never been found in you. No one at any time in any place has found one flaw in your character. If you alone do “wondrous things” then what praise is left for man?

How do you personally relate to the works of God, and God who is at work? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is so easy to be carried away in adoration and pause and forget, at least momentarily, how terribly far short I fall in fulfilling this concept on a daily basis. It is one thing to praise you in private devotion or worship — and I am delighted to do it — but it is another thing to raise that praise in the marketplace.

To tell of your goodness in the office. If I want all the earth to be filled with your glory, it is up to me to fill my little earth with it.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Lord Jesus, for this I most humbly entreat,
I wait, blessed Lord, at Thy crucified feet;
By faith, for my cleansing, I see the blood flow,
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Whiter than snow, yes, whiter than snow;
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

³¹Meanwhile his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.”

³²But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.”

³³Then the disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?”

³⁴“My food,” Jesus said, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. ³⁵Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. ³⁶Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. ³⁷Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. ³⁸I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.”

³⁹Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹And because of his words many

more became believers.

⁴²They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.” —*John 4:31-42, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What a blessed wonderful section of your word! I gladly worship before you in praise and thanksgiving. Your Son’s attitude toward his work is such an example for me! Seldom have I ever been so caught up in what I have been doing I have forgotten to eat — if I have there have always been those around like the disciples of my Lord to remind me. Dear Lord, even if I have not lost my appetite for physical food I purpose to fulfill your Son’s words in my experience: to do the will of yourself and finish the work you have given me to do.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Lord, I want to hear more clearly than I ever have the words of your Son . . . “The sower and the reaper may be glad together.” Right here in this town I am entering into the labors of others. For more than 100 years someone has been telling the good news of my Lord in this place. I rejoice they have planted and I can water, or that I can plant. The teaching of your word, the announcement of the good news. What a joy it is to all who do it! If I had to wait for some man or group to send me I guess I would never be sent (and I do not minimize their part in evangelism), but Jesus said: “I sent you to reap . . .” Dear Lord, I hear you! If the disciples could win the Samaritans to the acceptance of a Jewish Messiah then there is hope for all our efforts.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Indeed I will. (1) Thank you for the patience of my Lord with the non-spiritual attitude of the disciples. (2) Thank you that Jesus kept right on teaching — he knew they would understand by and by. (3) Thank you that Jesus finished his work and I enter into his labors. (4) Thank you that today is harvest day. (5) Thank you there need be no jealousy at all in your work. (6) Thank you that some believed the woman — believed her new lifestyle. (7) Thank you that many more believed because they had heard personally. Their faith also came from hearing, but from hearing our Lord.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . Now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”

Ultimately this is what *must* happen to all who

discover the Savior. The hearing of the inner ear must be involved. Hearing with a real personal understanding. We cannot imagine that there were not questions asked by the Samaritans and answered by our Lord. It must also have been true that Jesus repeated with emphasis some of the points he wanted remembered. The examples of his teachings in other parts of the word will bear this out. How unlike some of our efforts to make converts! How refreshing it would be to assemble today interested persons who had not found the Savior and let him speak to them through his word.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

(1) How I do want my Savior’s hunger and thirst for your will in my life. (2) Give me also my Lord’s patience with those who do not share my concern. (3) Help me my Lord, to indeed complete the work you have given me to do. (4) Open my eyes to see the harvest fields — *now*. (5) Praise your name for every person won to you. I want to truly rejoice with the reaper and the sower. (6) I want to be like the Samaritans who believed *because* of his words. (7) Keep on saving me from all that loses your presence.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

How clearly you speak to me in these verses! (1) “You have two men to feed —” (2) “The harvest is still for ‘eternal life.’” (3) “I can tell you everything you ever did or said or thought, but I have forgotten all your sins!”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Sarawak (East Malaysia) — Point for prayer: (1) *The coastal churches* are predominantly Chinese, with some indigenous believers as well. Revival is needed among these Christians, for outreach is not their strong point. There are growing churches also in the towns on the coast.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

His name above all names shall stand,
Exalted more and more,
At God the Father’s own right hand,
Where angel hosts adore.
Blessed be the name, blessed be the name,
Blessed be the name of the Lord;
Blessed be the name, blessed be the name,
Blessed be the name of the Lord.

WEEK NINE

—Wednesday—

“The best action and attitude we can take is to be consciously near God. Open my eyes to see the lost of the world who even now want to be saved.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“But as for me it is good to be near God; I have made the Lord God my refuge, that I may tell of all thy works” (Psa 73:28). Indeed it is good that I draw near to you, that you might draw near to me. There are several beautiful qualities of yourself found in this verse: (1) We are of the same nature, i.e., spirit that we can draw near to each other. I have no fellowship with beasts or even with other fellow creatures as I do with you. You are the original source of myself. (2) I have needs that cannot be satisfied by anyone else, but this is true of all men; only in you can these deepest of needs be satisfied. Bless your glorious name!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Too much of the above has me in it. I always intend to praise you just for yourself as you relate to all men, but I am such a part of all men I forget. It is when I draw near to you and lift up my heart to you that I want to tell of all your works. How very good it is to recite just a few of your “works” in my life: (1) You sent a proclaimer of the good news to tell me of your love and my need. (2) You moved me to commit my life to your service. (3) You gave me a wife of price far above rubies. (4) You gave us three dear children. (5) Most of all you saved me from hell to heaven. Oh, blessed be your name forever!

How do you personally relate to the protection of God, and God who is our refuge? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

How I would like to always feel the way I do at this time of worship. But I do not. There are times, as you well know, when I must make a real effort to

draw near to you. I always *want* to but there are barriers to be removed. Why? It is my own predisposition to setting my mind upon the things of the flesh, and not upon the things of the Spirit — forgive me! I am sincerely sorry, but there are times when I run away from my refuge and seek to find fulfillment in the broad expanse of my own way. It never works! What a fool! I am learning.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

My heart has no desire to stay
Where doubts arise and fears dismay;
Tho’ some may dwell where these abound,
My prayer, my aim, is higher ground.
Lord, lift me up and let me stand,
By faith, on Heaven’s tableland.
A higher plane than I have found;
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

⁴³After the two days he left for Galilee. ⁴⁴(Now Jesus himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honor in his own country.) ⁴⁵When he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him. They had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, for they also had been there.

⁴⁶Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum.

⁴⁷When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death.

⁴⁸“Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders,” Jesus told him, “you will never believe.”

⁴⁹The royal official said, “Sir, come down before my

child dies.”

⁵⁰Jesus replied, “You may go. Your son will live.” The man took Jesus at his word and departed. ⁵¹While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. ⁵²When he inquired as to the time when his boy got better, they said to him, “The fever left him yesterday at the seventh hour.” ⁵³Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” So he and all his household believed. —*John 4:43-53, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, I do so want to express my appreciation of each verse in your book! I can identify with your Son as he prepared to return to an area where those who knew him lived. But of late they had been to Jerusalem and had watched his miracles at the passover feast. Am I right in assuming they were far more interested in the miracle than in its meaning? What a tragedy to be more interested in the advertising than the product. But I meet people like this every day. There have been times when I saw one in the mirror. Dear Lord, forgive! How I want to be like the noble man from Capernaum!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Oh, there is so much I can say in the application of this living word to my heart! (1) The nobleman had come to a full realization of his own helplessness. He had run out of all resources. Not only so — he must *act* upon his need. (2) Perhaps he had been to Jerusalem to see our Lord’s miracles — or someone in his household had been there. (3) He did not allow pride or position to hinder him. In all these areas I want to relate myself! (4) How surprised he must have been at our Lord’s response to his request. Jesus was testing the nobleman’s faith. Even as he does mine.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

There was one man who never could thank you enough for your Son and his love and power, (1) Thank you for the friends Jesus had in Cana that made his visit pleasant. (2) Thank you that the nobleman was willing to walk eight hours to reach Jesus, i.e., from Capernaum to Cana. (3) Thank you that our Lord knows our hearts better than we know ourselves. (4) Thank you that Jesus motivates us to act on our faith. (5) Thank you Jesus always gives us an option — we can choose to disbelieve if we want to. (6) Thank you that no word of our Lord ever failed. (7) Thank you that faith, real faith, is contagious.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“This was the second miraculous sign that Jesus per-

*formed.” This sign, like the “certain royal official” has convinced me. It is most important that we notice the official believed *before* the sign. The miracle only confirmed what he believed. There are several other important aspects of this healing to consider: (1) As near as we know there was no faith exercised by the sick child. (2) The miracle was accomplished over a space of miles that separated the healed from the healer. (3) It was instantaneous and permanent. The little son did not improve, he was well. We never read of a retrogression in the healings of Jesus. (4) The time element was important to the father — when our Lord said it, it happened.*

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Such a beautiful compact account of my Lord’s concern. (1) Keep me as undisappointed as my Lord was with those who refused to believe. (2) There are those even among disbelievers who will believe; help me to find them. (3) There are so many qualities in the life of the royal official — I want the total confidence in the miraculous nature of your Son. (4) Give me the beseeching humility of this man. (5) Give me the urgency that breaks through barriers to life. (6) How I do want to “take you at your word” on all subjects.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

How penetrating will be your words out of the experience of this man: (1) “There are men today who want to believe — find them and tell them.” (2) “Every hour there are those who are sick unto death — it could be the hour of their healing.” (3) “Review again all the signs of my son as written here by John.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Nepal — Population: 12,900,000. Growth rate — 2.3%. People per sq. km. — 92.

Point for prayer: (1) *This long-closed land* opened up a little for the Gospel in 1951, but the conversion of people is illegal and those seeking the conversion of others are liable to punishment. Some workers were expelled from the land in 1976, probably from complaints about infringing this law. Pray for complete freedom of religion.

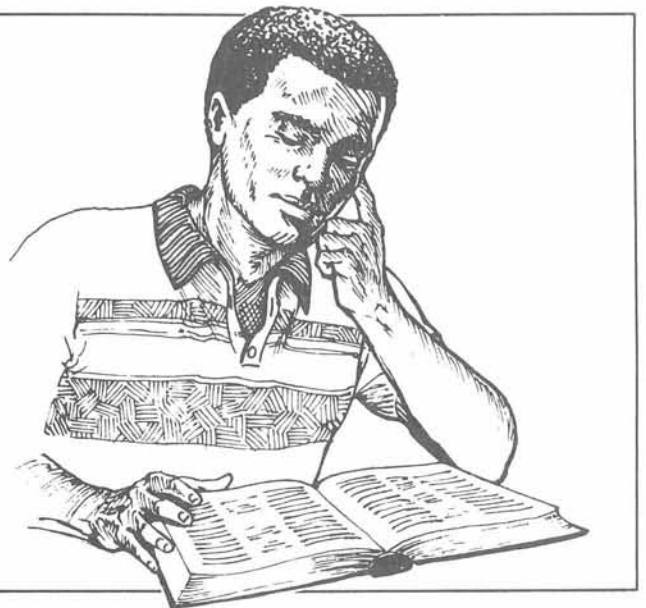
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

We would see Jesus, for the shadows lengthen
Across this little landscape of our life;
We would see Jesus, our weak faith to strengthen
For the last weariness, the final strife.

WEEK NINE

—Thursday—

“How lovely are your dwelling places — even the bodies of men and women. We do NOT go to the temple; we are your temple! People still live in darkness and await the great light!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs, yea, faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God” (Psa. 84:1,2). This no doubt first referred to the temple of Solomon. Today your dwelling place is the body of man. To consider man as a body apart from your purpose and your Son he is not lovely at all. To contemplate the complexity and precision with which man is made does call forth expressions of wonder. Man as a machine or an animal, quite apart from your image is amazing! However it is the assembly inside your temple for which the heart of the psalmist yearns. There *is* something about the expanse of the pillared ceiling — a view of the long colonades of the temple that impressed the worshiper. The environment was surely conducive to worship, but it was in the meaning of the words of the songs that worship arose.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I want to review again each word in these beautiful verses: (1) Make the place of worship as beautiful and meaningful as the worship itself. Such should be our bodies. The lovely dwelling place of yourself in the Spirit. (2) You are the Lord of the whole host of heaven. All the angels are at this moment bowing before you in wonder and admiration. Can I do less? (3) My total inmost being, my life reaches out for you. A great void and emptiness that no one else and nothing else can fill is within me! (4) If I do not find completion in my praise and thanksgiving I will become very, very discouraged. (5) In contrast I can find the power of new life in my worship of you.

How do you personally relate to the dwelling place of God, and God who lives in us? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

There is nothing hidden from you and we only deceive ourselves if we attempt to deceive you. Dear Lord, my body is my largest problem. I want it to be a lovely dwelling place for you, but I find it a burden instead of a joy. I would indeed enjoy the Old Testament concept of a habitation for yourself — transfer the responsibility to a building! But I live in this day when I know your house is my house — my body! I can identify with the psalmist as he reaches out for the beauty of Solomon’s temple. I reach out — my soul longs, yea faints for a house under constant control and prepared as a lovely place for you to live.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Jesus is all the world to me,
And true to Him I’ll be;
Oh, how could I this Friend deny,
When He’s so true to me?
Following Him I know I’m right,
He watches o’er me day and night;
Following Him, by day and night,
He’s my Friend.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹²When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee. ¹³Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali — ¹⁴to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:

¹⁵“Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles —

¹⁶the people living in darkness have seen a great light;

on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.”

¹⁷From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near.” —*Matt. 4:12-17, NIV*

¹⁴After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!” —*Mark 1:14,15, NIV*

¹⁹But when John rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of Herodias, his brother’s wife, and all the other evil things he had done, ²⁰Herod added this to them all: He locked John up in prison. —*Luke 3:19,20, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It is with genuine joy I take up a most careful word-by-word reading of these verses. In each of these sections or periods of worship I want to praise you, thank you, repent, make requests. All of such expressions come as a natural expression of my response to what you have written. It would seem there was a close relationship between John and your Son. Did our Lord want to call John’s disciples from Judea to Galilee? Nazareth was left behind — what a poignant thought: if we like those of his home reject and refuse he will move on and we will be left in our self-imposed darkness.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I have been to the location where Capernaum used to be. It is a lovely spot. This was to be the headquarters for our Lord’s campaign of Galilee — he would be here for sixteen months. I want to say that I believe my town, my community, yea, my home can be his headquarters today for the evangelizing of every man and woman. Oh, how full of meaning are the words of my Lord: “the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.” How many in the population of Galilee heard the good news? We believe everyone was given an opportunity. There is no community today in which Christians live that could not be given the same opportunity.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for John’s courage in rebuking those who sin in high places. (2) Thank you for my Lord’s deep sympathy for John the Baptist. (3) Thank you for the beautiful fulfillment of prophecy in the life of our Lord. (4) Thank you that the “great light” is still shining in the darkness of the world. (5) Thank you for the preaching of Jesus — what an example! (6) Thank you that there is a whole way of life offered by Jesus to which I can conform. (7) Thank you that I can presently be a citizen of the kingdom of heaven.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“The kingdom of heaven (of God) is near. Repent and believe the good news.” This statement by Mark is in itself good news. The rule and reign of God in our lives is indeed good news. The change of mind (repentance) necessary was simply that the Messiah had come and it was now possible to see him and hear him. Life *can* take on new meanings. Light and hope and peace have come in the person of God’s Son. Our voluntary submission to his words and rule can now become a reality. There is *nothing quite so important as allowing him to dominate each day.*

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Move me to love good works — but first to prayer: (1) Keep me aware that evil men are as free to choose as are your children. (2) Lift my heart to always know we have “good news”. (3) Embolden my faith to believe your rule in my heart is as near as my own choice. (4) Use all the means necessary to move me to repentance. (5) Tune my inner ear to hear you say again and again: “Come, follow me.” (6) Make of me a fisher of men.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak Lord, thy servant heareth: (1) “People still live in darkness and need ‘the great light.’ ” (2) “There are those dead in trespasses and sins who could be raised if they could but hear.” (3) “My kingdom is here and hereafter — lead men into it.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Nepal — Point for prayer: (1) *Missions* in Nepal need great tact and wisdom in their very delicate relationship with the Government, which carefully watches their activities. Pray that these brethren may be a vital witness in their limiting circumstances, and also a real strength to the national brethren as they fellowship in the little congregations around the country.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Holy, Holy, Holy! Tho’ the darkness hide Thee,
Tho’ the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see,
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee
Perfect in pow’r in love, and purity.

WEEK NINE

—Friday—

“Make my heart a highway for your travel to those about me! This is the year of my Lord’s favor — the poor and the sick are ever with us.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Blessed are the men whose strength is in thee, in whose heart are the highways of Zion. As they go through the valley of Baca they make it a place of springs; the early rain also covers it with pools. They go from strength to strength; the God of gods will be seen in Zion” (Psa. 84:5-7). Bless the Lord, oh my soul! What beautiful expressions of yourself are seen in what you can do in man. Let us notice: (1) You are my total source of strength. How disappointing and frustrating are the men who trust in their own strength — it fails — runs out and does not produce. (2) You make known your ways through the hearts of men. If the way to heaven is in your heart it will also come from our mouth. It is good to know the way; it is better to share it.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Praise for what you mean to me! I want to be that man whose strength is in you, and not in myself. I have found how very weak and inadequate is all my strength. My meditation on your word, my time of prayer with you, my teaching and preaching of your word — in all these I find strength. Most of all, it is in *you* and *you* alone — expression of strength is one thing, the *source* of strength is another — it is my intimacy with you, it is in oneness or abiding! Men must travel through my heart to you! It could be painful. I can lead men through the dark, tough places of life; such can be places of beauty and not of hurt. “. . . from strength to strength” is such a beautiful description — open my heart to its meaning.

How do you personally relate to the strength of God, and God who is our strength? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

I want to be specific in the confession of my sins — I know the more specific I am in confession the more specific will be my forgiveness and cleansing. (1) I have tried to find strength in human companionship. It is not there — my heart is still lonesome and sad. In you I find true fellowship and in you I find joy! (2) I have tried to find strength in entertainment — there is nothing there — it runs out with the action. My fulfillment, my relaxation is only in you. Why do I go to the broken cisterns when the everlasting fountain is so near? (3) Forgive me for expecting strength from education on a human level. I am bored and frustrated. In your word and the pursuit of your truth I can and do go “from strength to strength.”

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

What have I to dread, what have I to fear,
Leaning on the everlasting arms?
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.
Leaning, leaning,
Safe and secure from all alarms;
Leaning, leaning,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹⁴Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news of him spread through the whole countryside. ¹⁵He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

¹⁶He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. ¹⁷The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to

him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

¹⁸“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to release the oppressed,
¹⁹to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” —Luke
4:14-19, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, there could be no more appropriate text than this for my need today! It would seem that Luke is showing a contrast in the response my Lord received in the synagogues of Galilee and the response those of Nazareth gave him. Did it “just happen” that the text for that particular Sabbath was this beautiful Messianic prophecy? It is wonderfully remarkable how many beautiful things “just happen” when we want your will to be fulfilled in our lives. I do want to attend the synagogue service and hear your Son read the word of the “gospel prophet.”

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

It is easy to listen to “the words of grace” that fall from his lips. The good tidings are for me for I am poor — the freedom is mine for I am the prisoner! The new sight is mine for I have been blind. The release is mine for I have been the oppressed. All of this could be another reading of the scripture, or just an interesting message if we do not *truly* identify with him!

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the wonderful power of the Holy Spirit in the life of our Lord. (2) Thank you for the praiseworthiness of my Lord. I want to praise him too. (3) Thank you for a routine that carries meaning and purpose. (4) Thank you for your word — the same today as when my Lord read from it. (5) Thank you for the presence of the Holy Spirit in us right now. (6) Thank you for the wonder of being poor in spirit and rich in mercy. (7) Thank you that I am free from sin but a prisoner of my Lord.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... recovery of sight to the blind.” This expression has so much to offer us a description of our Lord’s work in all our lives: A blind man must live from his own imagination as to how the world about him really looks. He must listen to others describe it — he can exercise the marvelous sense of touch, but at the best he really never knows how the world looks until or

unless he sees it. We can say we see things as they really are, but until we have the eyes of our heart and understanding opened by our Lord we have at best a distorted concept of reality.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How the message of our Lord should move us to prayer: (1) How I need the power of your Holy Spirit to help me spread your word! (2) Grant me the wisdom I so much need in teaching your word. (3) Thank you for all the good customs related to worship — may I use them even as my Lord did. (4) I want to praise my Lord as my King. (5) May his message of good news be found on my lips today. (6) Deliver me that I might deliver others.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

How I want these words to be fulfilled in my experience: (1) “I want to release the oppressed today as in the days of my Son.” (2) “This is the year of the Lord’s favor.” (3) “The poor you still have with you and they await the good news.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Nepal — Point for prayer: (1) *The Church is small*, but steadily growing. Nepali Christian workers itinerate much, and every Christian home is used as a point of contact with the people around. Pray for these believers who have suffered many difficulties and inconveniences for their faith, and some have been imprisoned for infringing the conversion law. Pray for the growth in grace of the few believers and their witness under difficult circumstances.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

What rejoicing in His presence,
When are banished grief and pain;
When the crooked ways are straightened,
And the dark things shall be plain.
Face to face shall I behold Him,
Far beyond the starry sky;
Face to face in all His glory,
I shall see Him by and by!

WEEK NINE

—Saturday—

“No good thing does the Lord withhold from those who walk uprightly . . . blessed indeed is the man who trusts in thee.” Men mock and misunderstand but you abide forever.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“For the Lord God is a sun and a shield; he bestows favor and honor. No good thing does the Lord withhold from those who walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in thee” Psa. 84:11,12). Blessed be your name! I gladly list the qualities of yourself found in this lovely text: (1) You are a sun. I want to hold this quality up and admire it. It is even yourself in powerful perspective! The sun is the world’s total source of light. Oh, that men would acknowledge you as the sum source of all understanding of all kinds. The sun offers the essential warmth for all plant and animal life. Indeed, man himself would die without the warmth of the sun. The application is obvious.

At the same time, there is the contrasting quality — you are a shield. Because there is another power or person present in the world we sorely need such protection.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I want to enter into the other qualities in this text from a personal viewpoint: (1) You do indeed bestow favor — not earned or many times not deserved — but nonetheless freely given. It is a wonder as well as a favor that we should be called your children. Favor of all favors — it does not yet appear what we shall be! The favor of fellowship with those who love you and love us is such a blessing! (2) Honor is given to man by right of creation. He is the sole intelligent creation from the hand of yourself. The high honor of reasoning capacity is the supreme privilege of man. Of course, we can prostitute this honor, but honor it is! (3) What a promise is mine! I plan on claiming it today! “No good thing will you withhold from those who walk uprightly.” Of course, I do not imagine I will turn in a flawless performance, but I will attempt to work without stopping.

How do you personally relate to the light of God, and God who is our Sun? Speak it out or write it out.

CONFESSION OF SIN

If you are a sun, how is it that I am so content to live in the darkness of the cave of complacency? If you are a shield, why do I expose myself to the fiery darts of the evil one? If you are ready to give favors, why do I turn my back upon you and busy myself about things that do not matter at all? If you want to honor me, how is it I raise a clenched fist in your face? Walk — do I walk like an animal when I was created to walk upright? Dear God, it is because in all these ways and more I sin against you and myself! How will you ever forgive such ignorance? I know you will — I claim your blessed, needed promise!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Consecrate me now to Thy service, Lord,
By the pow’r of grace divine;
Let the soul look up with a steadfast hope,
And my will be lost in Thine.
Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To the cross where Thou hast died;
Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To Thy precious, bleeding side.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

²⁰Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, ²¹and he said to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

²²All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. “Isn’t this

Joseph's son?" they asked.

²²Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself! Do here in your home town what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'"

²⁴"I tell you the truth," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his home town. ²⁵I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. ²⁶Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. ²⁷And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed — only Naaman the Syrian." —*Luke 4:20-27, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How I do want to enter the synagogue at Nazareth and listen to my Lord speak. How I would much prefer my Lord's explanation of just how he freed the captives and gave sight to the blind. Luke says his words were full of grace. His words produced amazement. I know he was much more than "Joseph's son" — indeed he was not Joseph's son at all. Except in the loving care our Lord received from Joseph. Dear Lord, teach me the power of the point Jesus was making in his reference to the widow of Zarephath and Naaman the leper. How could it be that those who knew him best appreciated him the least? This is a shocking revelation!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

It is not that our Lord could not perform a miracle, or several of them in Nazareth, he simply refused to do so. In the two examples cited by our Lord faith was present before the miracle was performed — the miracle confirmed what was already present — miracles did not produce faith — that comes from hearing the word — miracles deepened what was already there. Why did Nazarenes fail to believe in him? There are several possibilities and all of them my own possibility — dear Lord give me eyes to see and ears to hear: (1) He had not gone to their schools or studied from their teachers — do I treat any members of his body like they treated our Lord, like the Nazarenes treated our Lord? (2) Those who were his blood brothers — Joseph, Simon, James and Judas did not believe him. Have I followed the dull, dead example of those who are supposed to know him and do not?

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the powerful reality of Isaiah's prophecy in my own ears. (2) Thank you that Jesus set the example of explaining the scripture and applying it to life. (3) Thank you for the clear humanness of this incident — we all can relate it to someone who has been made a new creation in our community — will

we accept the greater works? (4) Thank you for the clear teaching here on the purpose of miracles.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... not one of them was cleansed — only Naaman the Syrian." We have such a strong tendency to emphasize the physical that it would seem we could imagine our Lord's purpose in coming into the world was to bring good health. If he did come for this purpose he was a colossal failure in his own land. The prophets also healed, but that was not their purpose. Even in the use of miracles to establish the truthfulness of their mission both our Lord and the prophets had problems. Jesus gave voice to it, he said: "A wicked and an adulterous generation seeks after a sign," i.e., when the sign becomes the end instead of the means it is clear evidence your heart is not right.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What an awful indictment our Lord gave to the people of Nazareth! It should indeed move us to prayer: (1) Fasten the eyes of my heart forever on your Son! (2) I know that my Lord could say all over again "Today has this scripture been fulfilled in your ears" — make it so with me! (3) Give me heaven's humility that I might look beneath the familiar and obvious and see *yourself!* (4) Deliver me from any desire to see the bizarre or sensational in order to confirm my faith which should be based on your word.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

The messages you have for me could be a shock! (1) "Men still mock and misunderstand — what I said to Nazareth I say to them." (2) "There are many Gentiles in other lands who will hear me gladly." (3) "Men's failure to see is their fault, not mine."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Nepal — Point for prayer: (1) *Unreached peoples* — very few of the peoples of this land have any believers among them. The large investment of Wycliffe Bible Translators with 100 workers in 21 languages was suddenly terminated, and it is hard to see how this Bible translation program can be continued. Pray for these many peoples without a witness or the Scriptures.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Beautiful Savior!
Lord of all the nations!
Son of God and Son of Man!
Glory and honor,
Praise, adoration,
Now and forevermore be Thine!

WEEK TEN

—Sunday—

“Teach me thy way, O Lord, that I may walk in thy truth; unite my heart to fear thy name.” Jesus could have said to his neighbors: ‘You can drive me out of town, but not out of your life.’ ”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“For thou art great and doest wondrous things, thou alone art God. Teach me thy way, O Lord, that I may walk in thy truth; unite my heart to fear thy name” (Psa. 86:10,11). There is such comfort and security in praise and adoration. These words can easily lift me — and all men up into your presence. (1) You are great, i.e., in the sense of power or majesty. Far above all that we see about us is your presence above us. (2) Your greatness is expressed in action. The physical world in which we live is a constant testimony to your greatness. The record of your greatness is in your book. At the same time, if any of our lives could be written from the inside, i.e., from your perspective I am persuaded we would exclaim with the psalmist “you can do wondrous things, you alone are God.” (3) You can and do teach man. It is good to know you have that much personal interest. Bless your holy powerful name!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. How will you teach me your way? I can think of several methods — I want all of them to be operative in me: (1) You can chasten me and get my attention through my dependance upon you. Essentially chastening makes me more willing to understand your word. (2) You humble me through your goodness, and I am led to a reevaluation of life. Once again it is a conditioning of my senses to respond to what you are saying to me in your word. (3) You do teach me through your servants — I have come to walk more closely to thy truth because men have enlightened my mind in the teaching of your word. In all of this I praise you for leading me. (4) In answers to prayer you have “united my heart to fear your name.” In definite answer to prayer I have seen the fulfillment of your plan for my life.

How do you personally relate to the greatness

of God, and God who alone is great? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is equally easy to see my shortcomings in the light of this beautiful text: (1) Your greatness needs to be far more impressive and prominent with me. (2) I need to pause again and again to acknowledge the true source of all the wondrous things I see and hear. In the physical world and the world of my own experience. (3) I am so unwilling to be taught, i.e., by anyone but myself — forgive me! (4) Dear Lord, how I do need to activate your truth in my life. There are a number of areas where I *must do and not say!* (5) Oh, Father, I want my heart to be united with your heart — as seen in the life of your Son! Forgive me, help me!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Jesus, Savior, pilot me
Over life's tempestuous sea;
Unknown waves before me roll,
Hiding rock and treacherous shoal;
Chart and compass came from Thee:
Jesus, Savior, pilot me.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

²⁸All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. ²⁹They got up, drove him out of town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff. ³⁰But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way. —Luke 4:28-30, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How, oh, how could it be that those who knew him hated him? Or was it hatred for yourself? As I see it (and I want to bring this concept to you in prayer), the worshipers that sabbath day in Nazareth were saying: They could not see the scriptures of the Messiah fulfilled in a local-town boy! This was blasphemy. When was our Lord conscious that he was the Messiah? It is not a question that needs an answer. A much larger question is: "When will he declare his Messiahship?" He chose the synagogue in his home town! Of course there was the declaration of God to John the Baptist and earlier indications of his deity, but here in words that could not be ignored he declared himself! Our Lord wants action, response, decision. Dear Lord, I believe.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Oh, how I want to listen to him again, and again! What a wonderful teacher and preacher was my Lord. Those who heard him could not and did not escape the direct personal application of what he said. "They were furious when they heard this." But there was something else in the hearts of these same people. On the way to the brow of the hill did some of them have second thoughts? When they were ready to push him over and he turned around and faced them — there was something strange, different, about this carpenter's son. Jesus shook free of those who were pushing him and began to walk toward them — they parted, they paused, he walked right through the crowd! No one laid a hand on him. My dear Lord, walk right into my heart and rule there! I love you, I worship you.

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the fact that all men can see the meaning of your word. (2) Thank you that we cannot be neutral with your Son. (3) Thank you that Jesus let men think for themselves. (4) Thank you for his non-resistance to violence. (5) Thank you for the beautiful, powerful poise of my Lord. (6) Thank you for his patience with those of Nazareth. (7) Thank you for his priority of interest in these stubborn people — he gave them the first chance.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... he walked right through the crowd and went on his way." What supernatural powers did he use to accomplish this amazing feat? One moment the furious mob is about to overpower him and push him over the cliff, the next he has overpowered the mob and they fall back and let him escape. It reminds us of the

soldiers who came out to arrest him. Not once but twice they fell back and were unable to capture him. The gospel writers really do not tell us why. There is a definite hint of something much more than they were able to explain. To stay in the presence of Jesus for long one would know there was an awesomeness and heavenly strangeness about him that really defied description. How I do love to try to imagine all he was and is! Bless his holy name!

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What a wealth of meaning in these three verses: (1) How I need the same calmness in facing the fury of men. (2) I wonder what my Lord heard from these men as they drove him through the streets? — none of it true or deserved — what an example for me! (3) Jesus let them lead him so far and no more — give me wisdom to know how far. (4) How did Jesus separate the crowd for his escape? I need his wisdom here. (5) How sad that "his way" was not that of those who knew him — how is it with me? (6) Where were our Lord's brothers in this mob scene? Where are his brothers today? (7) What a sword for his mother's heart.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Without a word Jesus spoke to these men: (1) "Anger or not what I said is true." (2) "You can drive me out of town, but not out of your life." (3) "The wrath of men never has worked the righteousness of God."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Nepal — Points for prayer: (1) *Pray for the radio broadcasts* in Nepali. Pray that this may lead to conversions and the building up of the Church. (2) *Literature* has been much used of God — through books sold in the several little bookstores. Bible correspondence courses to Nepalis inside Nepal and in surrounding lands. Pray also for wide distribution of the Scriptures.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I am so wondrously saved from sin,
 Jesus so sweetly abides within,
 There at the cross where he took me in;
 Glory to His name.
 Glory to His name, . . .
 Glory to His name, . . .
 There to my heart was the blood applied;
 Glory to His name.

WEEK TEN

—Monday—

“I want to abide in you — as the Psalmist has said: ‘You have been our dwelling place in all generations.’ I am expecting you to share my home — my job — my purposes for today. Help me!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hast formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting thou art God” (Psa. 90:1,2). How wonderfully good it is to come again and find our refuge or dwelling place in you! I want to just now attempt to relate these beautiful concepts to every part of life. You want man to live in you. Not only have you made us in your likeness, but you want to be the center and circumference of our living.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. These verses are saying to me from the beginning of creation it has been your desire for us to live in you and for you to live in us. Your creative genius and everlasting power are the source of this truth. Dear Lord, I do accept this relationship. I am learning every day how better to apply it. Just for today I want to look around this house in which I find myself, i.e., the four-walled domicile in which I live — and remember that all of my inward being, all of my thought processes, all of my energy for moving, all of my purpose for existence are in and of you.

How do you personally relate to the eternalness of God, and God who is Eternal? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, it has been most difficult to express in even a small way the greatness and goodness of yourself. I feel I have so tragically neglected you. Like those who move into a house and do nothing to indicate their responsibility to the place where they live. A “dwelling place” offers protection and I have lived outside until I was forced in. Forgive me! A “dwell-

ing place” is prepared especially for man’s enjoyment. You are the original prototype for all men — and I choose to live in a shack of my own invention — how stupid! Forgive me. A “dwelling place” will be there long after I have come and gone — how absurd that I should not come in and make yourself my home!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

When sore trials came upon you,
Did you think to pray?
When your soul was bowed in sorrow,
Balm of Gilead did you borrow,
At the gates of day?
Oh, how praying rests the weary!
Prayer will change the night to day;
So in sorrow and in gladness,
Don’t forget to pray.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹⁸As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.” ²⁰At once they left their nets and followed him. —Matt. 4:18-20, NIV

¹⁶As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.”

¹⁸At once they left their nets and followed him. —Mark 1:16-18, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I am trying to absorb the meaning of every one of

these burning words, but I feel so very inadequate! I realize our Lord had been known by these brothers for at least 8 months — they had heard him and doubtless saw some of his miracles in Capernaum. It could have been that the miraculous draught of fish occurred before this call. But all of that being so, it is one amazing record. What did Jesus see in Peter and John? They were mature men with families, or at least with wives. They were unlearned by the standards of men. They were very much occupied in a business they had pursued all their lives. But there was something in the invitation: to be with him, to follow him, to worship him. I have very poorly described the content of these verses from your viewpoint. Forgive me!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me! It is like hearing all over again the call of the Lord to leave all and follow him. I am so glad for three facts in this encounter — (for it is indeed just that): (1) That you, Lord, *see me*. I know from sad, sorry experiences just how fallible I am. But then you knew (and know) before you called me just who it was to whom you spoke. (2) That you called me to *follow you*. I really and truly do not know where I am going — I *must* have a guide. Since you have left me an imperishable full account of just where and when and how you want me to follow you I am ready to answer the call. (3) Most of all I am glad you have said, “I will *make you* fishers of men.” I could never, never do it on my own. You can and you will! With fresh expectancy I arise to follow you this day.

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you that my dear Lord yet walks by the sea in my life. (2) Thank you that Jesus sees me even now with compassion and concern. (3) Thank you that Jesus calls each of us to salvation and service. (4) Thank you that in following him we will learn all we need to know. (5) Thank you that in his own wonderful way he is making me a fisher of men. (6) Thank for those who have been willing all down through the centuries to leave all and follow you. (7) Thank you that nets have lost their appeal in the presence of the call of my Lord.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“*At once they left their nets and followed him.*” Commentators are divided over just how much association these men had with our Lord before they reached this decision. The facts of the matter are that they did at this time immediately act upon the call of our Lord. We would like to attempt a reconstruction of their decision. (1) They followed him because they

were disciples of John and believed what John had said about him. (2) They followed him because they were either in Jerusalem or Capernaum and saw the signs he did — they were convinced that no mere man could do these things. (3) They followed him because they had just participated in the miraculous draught of fish (i.e., if we reverse the time sequence). (4) Most of all they followed him just to be with this One who had such a “presence” and “poise” about him. They wanted to see if they could not imbibe a part of his personality. Dear Lord, we have all these reasons and more to leave all and follow you.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the calling of Peter and Andrew there is also a call to prayer: (1) Walk beside my place of work today — may I be looking and listening. (2) Jesus called both men, but each man — speak to my heart. (3) Jesus didn’t call some of them, but all of each one — I want to so respond. (4) I am so glad I am first, last and always a “follower” of yourself — keep me aware. (5) Make me, break me, educate me, use me, as your fisherman. (6) Fishing is a smelly, dirty business — does this relate? (7) How I need that impulsive total response I see in Peter and Andrew!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Somehow I know you are speaking and calling again: (1) “Leave your nets and follow me.” (2) “Leave yourself and follow me.” (3) “Leave others and follow me.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Nepal — Point for prayer: (1) *Nepalis outside Nepal* number about 8,000,000. A number of Indian and Western Christians have prayed and worked for a harvest among these people, and now there are many Nepali Christian Fellowships all over N. India, and some in Sikkim and Bhutan. There is a Bible School in Darjeeling in India where Nepali believers are trained for pastoral work. Pray for this ministry and for the men who go out from it to evangelize the Nepali people.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

He stood at my heart’s door ’mid sunshine and rain,
And patiently waited an entrance to gain;
What shame that so long He entreated in vain,
For He is so precious to me.
For He is so precious to me, . . .
For He is so precious to me, . . .
'Tis Heaven below my Redeemer to know,
For He is so precious to me.

WEEK TEN

—Tuesday—

“ ‘A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past.’ Is anything quite so final as yesterday? Teach me the urgency of the good news!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or a watch in the night” (Psa. 90:4). Oh, bless your name throughout eternity. What a joy to lift before you my adoration for several attributes of yourself in this verse: (1) The passing of men and events is all known to you, but do not impress you as it does man. (2) We can remember a few things about yesterday; you can remember all. (3) We cannot relive the events of yesterday, but you have total instant recall. (4) Most especially is our feebleness and your greatness compared and contrasted by what we can remember about “a watch in the night.” That we had a watch that we kept is all we remember, but you are on watch with eternal vigilance and total knowledge! O dear Lord, how great thou art!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

I have praised you for yourself, and as much apart from myself as possible. Now I want to absorb these words and your attributes into my inmost being! What is so important to you is sometimes not appreciated by me, but there is nothing important to me that is not appreciated by you. All that I say and am and do are important to you. Every event of every day for a thousand years can be replayed by you. However, this is not to be considered so important; it is only one of your many capacities. Yesterday happened — the watch is over and gone, so are the events of a thousand years, and another thousand years. Time is no factor with you! Dear Lord, I am overwhelmed with the immensity of such a thought! Such understanding (as limited as it is) gives me great calmness and assurance. Bless your holy name!

How do you personally relate to the timelessness of God, and God who is timeless? Speak it out or write it out.

CONFESSION OF SIN

The words of the one who lived in the light of eternity strike me with a jarring blow! *“Be not anxious about your life. . . .”* In the perspective of eternity the source of our anxiety will be put in balance; it will appear absurd. As absurd as a bird meditating all night over whether it could find adequate food for the morning. What I need is more concentration on your power and goodness — of your interest in every little event — but also a long look at life as you see it.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

All the way my Savior leads me;
Cheers each winding path I tread,
Gives me grace for ev’ry trial,
Feeds me with the living bread.
Though my weary steps may falter,
And my soul athirst may be,
Gushing from the Rock before me,
Lo! a spring of joy I see;
Gushing from the Rock before me,
Lo! a spring of joy I see.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

²¹Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, ²²and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

—Matt. 4:21,22, NIV

¹⁹When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. ²⁰Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him. —Mark 1:19,20, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Perhaps I am to read Luke 5:1-11 in connection with this incident. Perhaps I am not. At whatever juncture I want to read these precious verses just for themselves. How I want to know James and John, and their father Zebedee. They are all fishermen, but each of them is a different type of fisherman — Zebedee will tell anyone who wants to listen just how different James is from John or vice versa. But I need not mention this to you. You know the slightest detail in the lives of each of these men. Such knowledge was shared to some extent by my Lord when he so casually (?) walked by their boat and called them. Perhaps they had been ready for days and only awaited his word. Dear Lord, I want to be so prepared.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

In a very real sense my Lord only calls me as he called James and John: (1) Jesus called them from where they were. There was no convenient time or place. In the midst of a busy day of work he said: "leave all and follow me." It must be this way; there is no other way. (2) He called them in the presence of others. Their lives touched the lives of their father, the servants who worked for them and all others who were soon to hear about their decision. There is no avoiding or ignoring the fact that our example speaks to many others. (3) Jesus called them to do just *one thing*: to follow him. This meant listening to his words, watching his life, eating with him, living all day with him. It wasn't what James and John had to give to Jesus; it was what they would receive from following him.

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the definite choices of my Lord — he knows whom he wants for what. (2) Thank you that Jesus doesn't wait for a convenient time to call us. (3) Thank you that my Lord put worship into the fishing boat. (4) Thank you that work clothes and the smell of fish didn't hinder our Lord. (5) Thank you for James and John who were ready to keep their priorities straight. (6) Thank you for Zebedee who offered no objection. (7) Thank you for the excitement of expectation that must have filled their heads as they made the break and followed him.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Without delay he called them." There seems to be an urgency about all the gospel record. The disciples immediately leave all and follow him. Our Lord is intent on fulfilling the task his father gave him. We know that nothing our Savior did was out of

haste nor was it ill-planned. The record tells us he spent all night in prayer before he selected his apostles. We are to learn that he got up a great while before day and went to a solitary place where he prayed. Did a season of prayer precede the calling of these four men? We are sure that it did. The account here is just the conclusion of that preparation. Because he had prayed and because his father had answered his prayer, "without delay he called them." Dear Lord, may such an example burn its way into my subconsciousness.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Our Lord was interested in family units — he called two sets of brothers to be his first disciples — what interpersonal needs for prayer: (1) Keep me aware I could be interrupted by you in the midst of any work to hear your call to follow you. (2) These men were prepared for your call — prepare me. (3) Just when should I leave close family ties to follow you? (4) How can I relate personal responsibility to yourself? (5) How did Zebedee and the servants relate to your work? (6) Did James and John ever have second thoughts about their decision? (7) Did Jesus thank these men for making their decision?

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Ever and always there will be the calling of our Lord: "Follow me only after you trust me." (2) "Follow me because you love me." (3) "Follow me because you do not know your way."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Pakistan — Population: 72,500,000. Growth rate — 2%. People per sq. km. — 90.

Points for prayer: (1) *This needy Muslim land is no longer wide open for evangelism* and the entry of missionaries. Pray for God's direction despite pressures from the Islamic World Conference in 1976 recommending the ending of all Christian missions. Pray that Asian and Western churches may use these opportunities to send more workers.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Glory, glory to the Father!
 Glory, glory to the Son!
 Glory, glory to the Spirit!
 Glory to the Three in One!
 I will praise Him! I will praise Him!
 Praise the Lamb for sinners slain;
 Give him glory, all ye people,
 For His blood can wash away each stain.

WEEK TEN

—Wednesday—

“I do want to declare your steadfast love in the morning — and your faithfulness by night — Lord, I am captive to your charm! How beautiful is the calling of your servants by the shore of Galilee!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to thy name, O Most High; to declare thy steadfast love in the morning, and thy faithfulness by night, to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre. For thou, O Lord, hast made me glad by thy works; at the works of thy hands I sing for joy” (Psa. 92:1-4). There are several attributes of yourself in these divine words. (1) It is a genuine benefit to man to acknowledge your goodness and express it in gratitude. It is natural and right to honor the One from whom all goodness comes. (2) There could never be enough songs of praise and adoration — throughout all eternity all men and angels will praise you and never exhaust the superlatives! As I begin the day it is more than good to lift up my heart and voice in songs of prayer and praise!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Whereas the above is written or expressed in the first person it but represents what I believe should come from the heart of all men. It is at night when we most need to lift up our praises to you. Perhaps the work schedule of men has been different in other times and places. I’m sure it has, but for us the night is the time of relaxation and too often means a lack of the discipline necessary to spend time before you in worship. In this we ask your forgiveness. It is a lack of the integration of yourself into all of life, all the time. I want to do much better in declaring your steadfast love and thy faithfulness at night.

How much help I can get for this expression of worship from the lute and the harp and the lyre. Dear Lord, I lift my heart with the words accompanied with the music. I praise you and love you.

All the above expression of joy and praise arises because of your work for me, through me, and much of it in spite of me! Oh, bless your name!

How do you personally relate to the goodness of God, and God who is praiseworthy? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is good to give thanks to you; indeed it makes sense to do so. There are times when I do not, will not, and forget. Why? Why? Forgive me. It is my unfathomable selfishness! To sing praises to your name is indeed the most natural expression of a soul set free. But there are times when my heart is cold and my lips are mute! When I am tired I can understand — when I am not I do not. I am a sinner — forgive me. There have been many mornings when my voice was not raised, when no words appeared on paper to declare your steadfast love — dear, dear Lord, I was the loser. Your love will remain steadfast for a million mornings after I am gone (if Jesus should tarry). Forgive me! I do not plan to miss one more morning!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

All to Jesus I surrender,
Humbly at His feet I bow,
Worldly pleasures all forsaken,
Take me, Jesus, take me now.
I surrender all,
I surrender all.
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,
I surrender all.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

5 One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, ²he saw at the

water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. ³He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

⁴When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

⁵Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

⁶When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. —Luke 5:1-6, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I am always at a loss to know just how to read this word in such a manner as to honor you and express my wonder and appreciation for all it means. What a glad day it was in the experience of Peter and John — James and Andrew when our Lord appeared on the shore of the lake and began to teach. These few men had been up all night working hard at the job of fishing. How well could Simon and Andrew concentrate on the teaching of Jesus? I have been up all night and I have tried to listen to someone teach — I could with effort keep my eyes open, but not my mind — it drifted off to sleep. But then I was not listening to your Son.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I try to put myself in the crowd by the lake on the day of teaching by my Lord. I know I have some of the teaching in the records of his four biographers. I can read and reread all he said, but even so I so easily forget. How long did the crowd remember? There is a young man listening to Jesus — beside him is an old man — how many of his words remained in their mind? I know they must have been impressed, and to summarize, they could say "never a man so spake," but just specifically what did he say? Dear Lord, how glad I am that I have the imperishable specific record I can memorize and integrate into my life.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the lovely specific report of Luke. (2) Thank you that every day of the year Jesus can walk again by the Lake of Gennesaret and teach me! (3) Thank you for Luke's definition of Jesus' words: "the word of God." (4) Thank you for the perfect naturalness of my Lord's manner among men — he used what was near at hand — did not ignore the need to speak to all — asked for help. (5) Thank you for the example of teaching given by Jesus — my Lord was a teacher! (6) Thank you that Jesus was full of surprises to open the eyes of the heart.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break." It is more than curious that Peter and John were to have this experience twice: here at the beginning of their experience with our Lord, and then after he was raised from the dead, at the very close of their relationship. There was something wonderfully impressive about this miracle. It was first of all related to the work of these men. If anyone knew the habits of fish, they did. At the same time, the control of the laws of nature presupposed far more than the miracle itself. Jesus was in charge of the movement and number of fish.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

My dear Lord, I am captive to your charm! How beyond poignancy is the scene on the shore of the Lake of Galilee! (1) How I want to hear him speak to my heart now as he spoke to Peter on that far off day. (2) Jesus never asked Simon Peter if he could use his boat — why should I think he needs me to ask him if he wants to use anything related to me to teach others — dear Lord, this could be dangerous. (3) Thank you for your impossible demands on my faith. (4) How I want the kind of unqualified obedience found in Peter.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

He has much to teach me here — I *want* to listen: (1) "My words are still 'the word of God.'" (2) "Put out into the deep water of your own unprofitableness and let down my net." (3) "I helped Simon catch the fish and also to pull them in — I am interested in *all* that relates to your work for me."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Pakistan — Point for prayer: (1) *Response among the Muslims* is slow, but growing markedly. Few are prepared to take the costly step of open discipleship and associate with the Christians, who are usually socially poorer and basically of low-caste Hindu origin. Possibly only one tenth of the missionary force give much time to this 97% of the population. Pray for more missionaries well equipped for Muslim work, and for the winning of Muslims.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I was lost, but Jesus found me,
Found the sheep that went astray,
Threw his loving arms around me,
Drew me back into His way.
Yes, I'll sing . . . the wondrous story
Of the Christ . . . who died for me, . . .
Sing it with . . . the saints in glory,
Gathered by . . . the crystal sea.

were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." ¹¹So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

—Luke 5:7-11, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What shall I say dear Lord that has not been said ten thousand times before? But, on second thought, I have not said any one of such expressions. It is *my* praise, *my* confession, *my* thanksgiving you wait to hear. It would seem these fishermen were so busy fishing that they had no time to think of you. But such was not the case. As their hands were busy with the net and fish their minds were busy with wonder and praise. What Peter knew of your holiness and his sinfulness created a deep sense of unworthiness — even abject fear in the presence of such a one who could control creation. I am free to say I feel the same way! The words of your dear Son speak peace to the troubled waters of my heart!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

What a poignant lesson is in this text for me! It opens my mind as to just how someone can be employed eight hours per day and yet meditate upon your word and yourself. There are millions of jobs that do not require more than physical concentration and even as the fishermen were thinking about our Lord and his power so men today while doing a good job are yet worshipping you. The mind of man is such an amazing instrument it can perform at a capacity of which we have not even dreamed! I am glad to honor and praise you for this fact. May I so allow you to use me! Most of all I want to fall at your feet — even as Peter.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the overpowering nature of this miracle. No one could doubt it. (2) Thank you for the wisdom of it — only the men you wanted to follow were in it. (3) Thank you that anyone could see the families of Peter and Andrew would have provisions for some time to come from the miracle as the bread-winners left all to follow him. (4) Thank you that no doubt someone thought that if he could provide once, he could provide always. (5) Thank you for astonishment — a form of worship — it is such a blessed quality. (6) Thank you for my Lord's desire to be with me. (7) Thank you for my desire to follow him.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"So they pulled their boats up on the shore, left

everything and followed him." Over how many years have these blessed words of Luke spoken to our hearts. We like to remind ourselves that Luke was written before Acts. The reason should be obvious: The conversions in the Acts account would not mean much to Theophilus unless he knew the one to whom the persons were converted. In a most practical personal sense I want to say that some of us have been converted (?) and have really never absorbed the message of the gospels. When will we "pull our boats" up on the shore of time and leave all and follow him?

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What an exciting text as a basis for prayer: (1) I really cannot do near as much by myself as I could while working with others — lead me to just the ones with whom I should work. (2) Impress me anew with your control of all the world in which we live. (3) I want to remain aware of the super abundance you use in all you create. (4) To be so close to God incarnate should impress us with our unworthiness, even as Peter. (5) It would seem all four fishermen worked together and worshiped together — what a good example.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In so many ways you can speak to me: (1) "You are partners with me in the man-fishing business." (2) "You *are* a sinful man — but forgiven." (3) "Depart with me — not from me."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Pakistan — Point for prayer: (1) *The greatest response* in the land now is among the scheduled caste Hindu tribes of the Sindh where there has been a considerable turning to the Lord of late. There are about 30 tribes, each with its own dialect, and most are semi-nomadic. Pray especially for the Mawaris, Kohlis, etc. More national and missionary workers are urgently needed. Pray for the development of a strong, well-led Church.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I love Thy Kingdom, Lord,
The house of Thine abode,
The Church our blest Redeemer saved
With His own precious blood.

WEEK TEN

—Friday—

“Singing is such a beautiful way to worship you! I have a new song to sing — I can adore your very person — all you are — and all you mean to me — to all men! Teach me how to love you.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth! Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!” (Psa. 96:1-3). Dear Lord, I am so glad to express my joy and delight before you! I need each day “a new song.” All men need a new song each day. I want to go on record as saying you can and do give me a new song each day. How many thousands of days have come and gone in my life and not one in which there could not have been a new song of praise and joy before you. Every inhabitant of this little cosmic speck could say the same thing, i.e., if they loved you. Gladly, gladly do I lift my heart with the psalmist. I am embarrassed with the multitude of reasons for which to praise you! Most of all it is for salvation! Bless your name forever!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

For me: Most of the above has been subjective, but I hope I only represent a multitude who will sing before your eternal throne. I want to enlarge on the concept of a *new song*. How deeply grateful I am to begin a new day with you! (1) I have a *new page for today — new, clean, clear*. I claim the cleansing of every sin on every page of the past. All the pages preceding this one contain only the gold and silver of what you have done. I have such a lovely new start! Bless your name! (2) A new opportunity full of fresh and interesting people and events and thoughts. Dear Lord, may I so approach it. You are all and in all so why should I see anything or anyone in any other light? When I am able to enter into such an attitude it seems but one step into your eternal presence! How joyous and good is all of life!

How do you personally relate to the song of God, and God who causes us to sing? Speak it out or

write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

It would be easy to be remorseful and depressed most of the time, i.e., if one believed the lie of Satan — “damn you, Satan!” But I do not believe him. I know the truth and he (who is the truth) has set me free from all sense of condemnation. This does not mean that I am ignoring my sins — my tragic failures. I am ashamed of them and I do not hide even one of them. I lay them all out before you — having done so I claim their total disappearance! Dear Lord, you know if I did not have such an assurance I would not make it. I could not live! But I do claim your cleansing. I am washed in the blood — “There is power, wonder working power in the blood of your Lamb!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Christ, the blessed One, gives to all,
Wonderful words of Life;
Sinner, list to the loving call,
Wonderful words of Life.
All so freely given,
Wooing us to heaven:
Beautiful words, wonderful words,
Wonderful words of Life.
Beautiful words, wonderful words,
Wonderful words of Life.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

²¹They went to Capernaum, and when the sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. ²²The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not

as the teachers of the law. ²³Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, ²⁴“What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are — the Holy One of God.”

²⁵“Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!”

²⁶The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

²⁷The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching — and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him.” ²⁸News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee. —*Mark 1:21-28, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It is a blessed experience to read your word back to the One who caused it to be written. I always wish I could express my joy more adequately. So many wonderful things happened at Capernaum — I want to be present for each one of them. Even while some were thinking of the meaning your son gave to your word there was one who was sorely hindered in his hearing. However, the same authority by which my Lord explained and applied your word was going to be used to open this man’s mind that he might receive your word. But this was accomplished by the action of the command to the evil or unclean spirit to come out of this man.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Lord, I want your word to enter my heart with all authority in heaven and on earth. In a very real sense I want you to teach me. I have read many books of men, but in opening your book I want to face directly what you are saying in each verse and let you speak to me with all authority. If I will allow you to make as personal an application as I know you want to, I too will be “astonished.” It is such a powerful consolation to read: “greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world” (I John 4:4). Was John present that day in the synagogue of Capernaum? When our Lord commands demons *must* obey — men can choose — demons cannot choose when our Lord speaks.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the living Christ who is yet teaching with the same authority today. (2) Thank you we can over and over again be delightedly astonished at the meaning and power of his word. (3) Thank you that all that is evil and unclean can be removed by his authority. (4) Thank you that I can *know* demons do not live in me. (5) Thank you that right now Satan can be bound and have no power.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Indeed this incident teaches us several powerful lessons. Dear Lord, I want to learn them. (1) Only my Lord has power and authority over demons. It would seem people are almost the pawns of demons without our Lord. We cannot say as to why demons possessed certain men and did not possess others. In the attack of demons today only Jesus has the power to defeat them. (2) It was with his word he took authority over Satan. If Jesus is going to exert his power over men today it will be by his word. I am so glad he is alive and his word is with us.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How good it is to pray through Someone who has power over the evil one: (1) Since our Lord was a teacher I want to be the very best student possible. (2) Grant me the wisdom to follow his example in teaching. (3) Open my conscience to receive the full impact of his authority. (4) Are we blind today to the work of the demons? (5) Do we have definitions for maladies now that are really demon’s work? (6) How I do need heaven’s wisdom in answering the above two questions. (7) How I need his authority over evil spirits *right now!*

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

(1) “I am still teaching through those who love me.” (2) “I have not lost any of my authority.” (3) “I can destroy the works of Satan in your life.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Pakistan — Point for prayer: (1) *Unevangelized areas* and peoples abound. Pray for Baluchistan with its very small Church, and the many warlike Muslim tribes of the North West Frontier with Afghanistan. Pray also for the many peoples living in the isolated valleys of the north that have begun now to open up for the Gospel. Several national evangelists and the Afghan Border Crusade have made occasional visits to these northern regions, but there is no permanent work and the people remain in darkness. Medical work may provide the key to these areas.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

All praise to Him who reigns above
 In majesty supreme,
 Who gave His Son for man to die,
 That He might man redeem!
 Blessed be the name, blessed be the name,
 Blessed be the name of the Lord;
 Blessed be the name, blessed be the name,
 Blessed be the name of the Lord.

WEEK TEN

—Saturday—

“... the Lord made the heavens. Honor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary’ — I am so glad to love him from my whole heart! He is very personally concerned about all who are sick!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are idols; but the Lord made the heavens. Honor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary” (Psa. 96:4-6). Dear Lord, how refreshing it is to worship in your presence. I know I am in your presence at all times. This indeed is a part of your greatness, but just now I come to praise you and remind myself once again. As I contemplate the many attributes found in yourself, I feel as all men should feel — overcome with amazement! Like a giant ocean wave that sweeps all in its path so does your greatness and goodness sweep over me. In such a simile there is no thought of harm in the figure; joyous refreshment is man’s response! You are to be feared only in the sense of wonder, i.e., if we love you.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I know there is indeed a “hell to be feared,” and I do, but I adore and praise and rejoice before you and have no dread of that place of torment. I know sin will be punished and I do not at all in any sense propose to continue in any sin — so I simply am full of delight and happiness not guilt and fear. How beautifully good it is to separate just one quality of yourself and hold it up for worship! You have made “the heavens” — when I look at man’s photographs of the expanse of your creation, I am dumb with amazement. As far as man’s exploration has indicated, this little speck of terra firma is the only planet around our star (sun) on which you have placed life.

How do you personally relate to the greatness of God, and God who is above all? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

If there is one basic sin, one fundamental flaw in man, it must be that he forgets. We forget who we are and why we are and most of all we forget who you are! How easily I am caught up in the maelstrom of life. Dear God, as you know such comments can be but a smokescreen for my willful sin! Indeed sometimes this is true. Forgive me! At the same time, it does represent my dilemma. Since I know what it is to hurt, I do feel pain. Since I know what it is to be lonesome, I fear eternal isolation. Since I know what it is to be able to see nothing but what my imagination will envision, I fear the eternal darkness. At the same time, I know what unalloyed joy is in your presence.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

“Almost persuaded,” come, come today;
 “Almost persuaded,” turn not away;
 Jesus invites you here,
 Angels are ling’ring near,
 Prayers rise from hearts so dear,
 O wand’rer, come.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹⁴When Jesus came into Peter’s house, he saw Peter’s mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. —*Matt. 8:14, NIV*

²⁹As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew.

³⁰Simon’s mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her. —*Mark 1:29,30, NIV*

³⁸Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon’s mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. —*Luke 4:38, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Simon Peter had a house, a wife and a mother-in-law. Did he have any children? Of course, we do not know, but you do! How I want to step inside his house there at Capernaum and see his wife and his wife's mother. Matthew and Mark say she had a fever, but Dr. Luke says it was "a high fever." My blessed Lord was asked to come to Simon's house to help his mother-in-law. Just what help they expected is not told. It would seem all three accounts are guarded at just what help was expected — it was our Lord's decision. And so it is in every need we have.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Savior, come into my house. My dear mother-in-law lay sick for some long time and died and is with you. If human virtues would command healing, she would have been healed. I have only met one woman who could exceed her in unselfish service — her daughter! If prayers lifted in love and faith would have healed her she would be with us today. Praise your name, dear Lord, it was enough to invite you into our house — and to know that you came. There are so many ways of helping us — we have so many areas of need. From your record we learn that your help usually comes as a wonderful surprise. Dear Savior, we only await the time when we can unwrap your next gift of love.

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you that worship came first in order of need. (2) Thank you that worship leads to meeting human needs. (3) Thank you that the family is such a real part of all our Savior's work with man. (4) Thank you that marriage is assumed to be the life style of your followers. (5) Thank you for friends who care and will share our burdens. (6) Thank you that Jesus always had time to meet individual human needs. (7) Thank you for a professional, personal observation on a physical healing.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... and they asked Jesus to help her." It should be noted that the disciples, Peter, John, James and Andrew, never made any demands on our Lord. In every situation they knew Jesus could help — that was enough. Of course his healing of many, both in Capernaum and Jerusalem, could not be forgotten and perhaps this would be just the help he would offer them. But it could have been that he would not have healed Peter's mother-in-law. There were many sick he did not heal — there was a whole cemetery full of dead bodies he did not raise. The miracles were

signs — the sign is always a means not an end. The point here seems to be that regardless of the need, Jesus can help — indeed he can! To bring our Savior into any situation is to bring God's answer.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the healing of Peter's mother-in-law there is much I can learn for prayer: (1) I want to be as concerned with human need as my Lord. (2) May I be as involved with families as Jesus. (3) Even though we know nothing of Peter's wife Peter must have loved her much or he wouldn't have been so concerned about her mother — what a good example for me. (4) Help me to remember that good people also get sick. (5) I want to look at people and their needs through the eyes of Jesus. (6) Open my mind to know that Jesus never considered helping as an interruption.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in these few verses: (1) "I see all who are sick — but Jesus did not heal every sick person." (2) "Public worship that does not lead you to meet human need is of no value." (3) "Jesus would not have gone to Peter's home if he was not asked."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Pakistan — Points for prayer: (1) *The Protestant Church* has some outstanding leaders and fine congregations but, generally, there is a dead orthodoxy in most of the older churches. Pray for: *A greater openness and concern* for the evangelization of Muslims and their reception in the churches. The cultural and social barriers are high and make it hard for the believers to be bold with their low social standing. (2) *Illiteracy* is higher among the Christians than the national average. Hence the churches are often weak and spiritually immature. (3) *Nominalism* is the greatest hindrance to growth, due to the large people movements of the last century and succeeding generations remaining unconverted. Much of the Christian work is aimed at evangelizing "Christians" and building them up through the various means of literature, teaching and discipleship training. The greatest need is for revival that liberates, emboldens and mobilizes the Church.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

WEEK ELEVEN

—Sunday—

“Worship the Lord in holy array; tremble before him all the earth.” ‘He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him.’ God is present in both references.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts! Worship the Lord in holy array; tremble before him, all the earth!” (Psa. 96:7-9). I do want to follow the psalmist’s directions! I, with all the families of the earth, want to ascribe or offer up my recognition of your glory and strength. I take the term “glory” to refer to your essential nature — to your effulgent brightness as represented in the Shekinah presence. To describe your strength is beyond my poor capacity of words. At the same time, I am greatly encouraged at the attempt. I want to tell you all I can of my response to your majesty and beauty. It would be much easier (and more natural?) to fall down before you in silence.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Dear Father, I do want to say something in this time of praise that will represent my deepest feelings before you. There are separate areas here involved. (1) I believe all the families of the earth should right now recognize your glory and strength and come before you in open free worship. (2) I believe all men (beginning with myself) should describe each and every attribute of yourself represented in the true “name” — each quality of yourself should be held up and admired and praised. (3) All the peoples of earth should, and one day will, appear before you in trembling wonder! If all of this is true, and I surely believe it is, then I want to be the first to ascribe such praise to yourself.

How do you personally relate to the strength of God, and God who is all power? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

A strain of confession runs all through my attempts to praise you. Dear Lord, how could it be otherwise? I have not (and do not) credit you with the qualities you so obviously deserve. How easy it is to accept the praise of men when I know, I know it belongs to you! Dear Lord, forgive! What offering shall I bring to you? With what sacrifice shall I appear before you today? To ask is to answer “Present your bodies a living sacrifice”; “Come before me with a renewed mind.” Dear Father, as you know my intentions do not at all match my practice. That I still retain my intention is my only hope. I do now accept your cleansing and clear new record. Such forgiveness deepens my desire to please you.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I’m constrained to be!
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter,
Bind my wand’ring heart to Thee:
Prone to wander, Lord I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here’s my heart, O take and seal it;
Seal it for Thy courts above.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹⁵He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him. —Matt. 8:15, NIV

³¹So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them. —Mark 1:31, NIV

³⁹So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them.

⁴⁰When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness. —Luke 4:39,40a, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Oh, what wonderful words! I feel awkward in an attempt to assume anything like your viewpoint. At the same time I am eager to try. The biographers of your Son were surely careful (though independent) observers. "He touched her hand" or "took her hand and helped her up." What happened in the body and mind of this dear woman? It is obvious that she felt responsible for this house full of guests. Her joy simply shined out of her face and eyes. No doubt there were exclamations of joy and astonishment but they are not recorded. The immediacy of this healing is a strong evidence of its supernatural character.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Jesus could have spoken to Peter's mother-in-law and she would have been healed. He could have spoken to the large crowd *en masse* and they would have been healed. But he touched her and he laid hands upon each one of the others who were sick to make them well. How wonderfully personal and interested is my Lord in every need of every man. But of course I am not every man; I am only one man, and like Peter's wife's mother he sees me in my sickness and lays his hand upon me! The service in the home that day was easier, more full of meaning and joy than it had ever been! Could I not remember that in today's tasks?

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the living personal Savior and Lord. (2) Thank you that he is touching me in every need of life right now! (3) Thank you that you heal me of sin, of any infirmity for the purpose of serving. (4) Thank you that even in healing Jesus supplies help for my weakness. (5) Thank you that Jesus can rebuke wind and wave and sickness and there is calm and sunlight! (6) Thank you that we have the record of a whole day in the life of our Lord. (7) Thank you that Jesus healed people when he knew some of them would forget.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

" . . . the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness." The pressing physical needs of people led them to someone who could meet those needs. How many of them stayed to become his devoted disciples? No doubt some of them did. But even as today there are many who come to either be entertained or helped in some physical way. Even when our Lord was the teacher there were some who

did not want to learn. Why, then did he heal them? The simple answer is that he had compassion upon them. He loved them and reached out to help them in every way he could. The same Savior is alive right now and wants to help us. Jesus came as a teacher — if we miss his words we miss his purpose. Of course, his primary purpose was to die for our sins, but even his death must be understood by what he taught. Dear Lord, speak, I am listening.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Luke's account of this miracle is full of points for prayer: (1) Come into my home Lord Jesus. (2) Look on and into the needs of my loved ones. (3) Help me in ways I do not know but gladly accept — I attribute every good thing to you. (4) Lean over me and my need just now. (5) Through ways better known to you than to me, rebuke the fever of my desires to do wrong. (6) I want to remember that I am healed to help. (7) Give me the commitment to your service I see in Jesus.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In this personal healing speak to me: (1) "I am waiting for someone to ask for my help." (2) "My patience with human suffering is one of my most static attributes." (3) "Peter's mother-in-law is a grand example of the response all should give to my goodness."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Pakistan — Points for prayer: (1) *Leadership training* — both at preacher and lay-worker level is vital. Pray for the developing program into which a number of missions have entered. This is a valuable tool for leadership training in the context of Pakistan's many small, scattered groups of Christians. The development is hindered by lack of personnel and time to prepare the teaching materials in local scripts. (2) *The potential of the Pakistani Church* for world evangelization is great. Large numbers of Pakistanis (including many Christians) now work in lands right across the Middle East, some totally closed to the Gospel, such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Libya, etc. Pray that they may truly be tent-maker missionaries.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Thro' the gates to the city in a robe of spotless white,
He will lead me where no tears will ever fall;
In the glad song of ages I shall mingle with delight;
But I long to see my Savior first of all.
I shall know . . . Him, I shall know Him,
And redeemed by His side I shall stand,
I shall know . . . Him, I shall know Him
By the print of the nails in His hand.

WEEK ELEVEN

—Monday—

“God is often described as a great victorious warrior — we are to sing the continual song of victory — I am so glad to serve under such a commander — who has never lost a battle!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“O sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things! His right hand and his holy arm have gotten him victory” (Psa. 98:1). Blessed Father, I can indeed sing with the psalmist “a new song.” It is so good to know you enjoy singing. In reality this is but another form of praise, at the same time such expression does indicate your involvement with the feelings of man. Each day should produce a new song from our hearts to you. Each day there is some marvelous thing for which we should thank you. The motif of battle and all that is associated are very prominent in these psalms. All men can relate inasmuch as they are competitors in this warfare called “life.” I am so glad to serve under a commander who has never lost a battle. “Victory” is the word to describe your record!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. What a blessed “new song” I have to sing. I want to sing three new songs just now: (1) A new song of victory over pain. It is *not* necessary to allow pain to dominate your whole mind — in the midst of it you can lift your heart to the presence of the Father — I know I just did it! (2) A new song of victory over debts. Obligations for which we are responsible and cannot pay. It is possible to ask for your provisions to pay such debts, and leave them in your hands. I know — I just did it! (3) A new song of victory over a humanly impossible disease, i.e., one that has no cure. When I give this burden to you, you care for me — this is enough. I know — I just did it! Bless your powerful right hand and holy arm. When I know you get the credit and the praise, then I know the victory is yours — it is enough!

How do you personally relate to the conquests of God, and God who is our victory? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, you know I do not always sing in the midst of the problems of life. Sometimes I complain and most of the time I forget and simply endure. Bless you for your wonderful mercy and patience. At the same time, I am so much in need just here. Forgive me and remind me of my total dependence upon you. If you do not obtain victory in the hearts of your people, there really is no victory at all. My dear Father, I do openly lay before you the sins of my heart and life. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow! Singing is not always done because of joy and gladness — sometimes I sing because it is the very best way to express the deep needs of my heart. Some of my songs are surely in a minor note.

“Light dawns for the righteous, and joy for the upright of heart” (Psalm 97:11).

Forgive me that I might sing this song!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

’Tis Jesus calls me on
To perfect faith and love,
To perfect hope, and peace, and trust,
For earth and heav’n above.
I am coming, Lord!
Coming now to Thee!
Wash me, cleanse me in the blood
That flowed on Calvary!

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹⁶When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. ¹⁷This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

“He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases.” —*Matt. 8:16,17, NIV*
 32That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. 33The whole town gathered at the door. —*Mark 1:32,33, NIV*
 . . . and laying his hands on each one, he healed them. 41Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ. —*Luke 4:40b,41, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It is so good to be able to enter into the house of Peter and Andrew and watch our Lord as he heals the sick and casts out demons. It surely must have been a time of amazement for Peter, his wife and his mother-in-law. What did James and John think of what they saw that night? Luke is so careful in all his expressions — “laying his hands on *each one*.” Matthew adds that “he drove out the spirits with a word.” What shouts of joy and of distress — one from the healed and the other from the demons. How I would like to hear the testimony of both. Perhaps one day I shall. Did our Lord intersperse his healing with teaching — or was it teaching and healing?

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

It had been a long and a very tiring day for my Lord, and yet he found time to minister to the sick and the possessed. The multitudes had waited until the Sabbath was over to bring their sick and possessed to him. How many, many times have I wanted to be left alone so I could rest. And if I was disturbed from this purpose I was not at all happy about it. What was the difference in the fatigue of my Lord and my own? Could it be that he was tired *in* his work and I was tired *of* it? His work was his life and my life is somewhat apart from my work. Frustration is a result of interrupted purpose. If my purpose is to serve, to help, to heal, then I am not interrupted when opportunity is given to do it.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the individual treatment given by the great physician. (2) Thank you for his 100% success. (3) Thank you for his power over demons. (4) Thank you that all the spirit world knows who he is even if we do not. (5) Thank you for the “whole town” interest in my Lord. (6) Thank you for Matthew’s careful observation of Isaiah’s prophecy and fulfillment. (7) Thank you that one day all men will be delivered from all sickness, demons and death — his death and resurrection made it so.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . he took up our infirmities and carried our diseases.” This text has caused or is the source of no end of discussion. It is truly a shame that what was given to show the Savior’s identification with human need has become the center of the argument. The point is: do we have the healing of our bodies in the same act that healed our souls? (I Peter 2:24 needs to be read in this connection.) The forgiveness of our sins is accomplished by our faith (which is far more than mere mental assent) in what our Lord did at Calvary. Can we also have the healing of our sickness, infirmities, diseases by trusting in what he did at Calvary?

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What a remarkable account of the power or authority of our Lord. How shall I learn to pray from this text? (1) I want to bring the sin-sick to my Lord — help me! (2) I want to know far more about how to deal with demons today. (3) May my house be the door of his house. (4) Teach me more and more of the power and purpose in the healings of my Lord. (5) How is it demons know him and men do not? (6) Give me an answer to the above question. (7) Dear Lord, I do believe and know you are the Son of God.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Impress upon my conscience the meaning of these words: (1) “I am yet touched and sympathetic with the infirmities of men.” (2) “The diseases of men of body and spirit are a real concern to me.” (3) “I healed so I could help the spirit and heart not just the body.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Pakistan — Point for prayer: (1) *Christian literature* — much excellent material of all kinds is produced in Lahore — problems are: a dearth of good national writers, distribution and the high level of illiteracy among the Christians. Pray for the ministry of occasional Gospel advertisements in the secular press — which has led to an unusual response.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

There is never a day so dreary,
 There is never a night so long,
 But the soul that is trusting Jesus
 Will somewhere find a song.
 Wonderful, wonderful Jesus,
 In the heart he implanteth a song:
 A song of deliv’rance, of courage, of strength,
 In the heart he implanteth a song.

WEEK ELEVEN

—Tuesday—

“Today I enter into his presence with praise — I approach his throne in thanksgiving. There is nothing I need more than such a relationship with you!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him, bless his name” (Psa. 100:4). How blessed and refreshed I am as I come before you in worship. I enter the gates of praise with the most meaningful thanksgiving I can give you. There are so many peoples who live in a country where there is not enough to eat. You have given us an abundance of daily bread. Dear Lord, thank you! There are so many right in our land who have no appetite for the bread available. They are sick and I am well. Not because I am better than anyone else — I could truly say there are many, many sick people who are closer to you than I am. For good health — I thank you! There are thousands and thousands who do not have the right use of their mind. This is such a tragic loss. I can use the mental faculties you have given — I thank you. Most of all: there are millions who have never one time had opportunity to hear of my dear Lord and his salvation. How could I ever say thank you adequately? I thank you and bless your holy name. I want this to be representative of all men.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. It is indeed a joy to apply again this verse to my heart and lift my words before you in thanksgiving. Through what gates should I pass to express my gratitude? As I enter the gate of justification (that I am judged not guilty), I do so with praise so deep and continual I cannot stop! As I walk through the blood-marked gate of redemption, I do so with a shout of joy and gratitude. There is a gate that sets me apart from all men who are not saved — the gate of *sanctification*. All these are entrances into but one place: *“the courts of praise.”* I could speak of other gates all of which open into your presence and into the sanctuary of praise. We enter the gates of: salva-

tion, adoption, hope. Bless your holy name! We have found the temple of thanksgiving!

How do you personally relate to the generosity of God, and God who is worthy of thanksgiving? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, as you know I am not always grateful. I have every reason to be — I repent! I confess my sin. If I am not thankful I shut out ten thousand other blessings. I remember my grandfather who came to America from Europe — he remained so humbly grateful for this land throughout all his life. I have left Egypt for Canaan — Am I grateful? Dear Father, forgive my selfish, hard heart! What was the one largest and dominant expression of the prodigal when he sat down at the table of his father? What was the constant thought of the merchant with the pearl of great price? What filled the heart and the mouth of the man who bought the field with the treasure in it?

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

With numberless blessings each moment He crowns,
And filled with His fullness divine,
I sing in my rapture, oh, glory to God
For such a Redeemer as mine!
He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock
That shadows a dry, thirsty land;
He hideth my life in the depths of His love,
And covers me there with His hand,
And covers me there with His hand.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

³⁵Very early in the morning, while it was still dark,

Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. ³⁶Simon and his companions went to look for him, ³⁷and when they found him, they exclaimed, "Everyone is looking for you!"

³⁸Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else — to the nearby villages — so I can preach there also. That is why I have come," —*Mark 1:35-38, NIV*

⁴²At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. ⁴³But he said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." —*Luke 4:42,43, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

These verses could be the proof text for this whole blessed endeavor. This was very early on Sunday morning! I leave with him. Indeed, I want to try to imagine why he arose so early when he had had such an exhausting day on Saturday. I can imagine several possibilities: (1) He was concerned about all those who had just come to be healed; he could see their faces and look into their lives and see their deep needs. (2) He wanted to be ready to preach to the villages of Galilee — there were so many with so much to learn. (3) He wanted to pray for Peter, John, James, and Andrew. Oh, how much these men needed to understand. (4) Most of all it was because it was his habit to prepare for every day and its needs with prayer.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

In these few verses there are volumes of truth for me! As my Lord found the press of the day would catch him up and carry along on the tide of the day, so with me. If I do not get up (sometimes when necessary a great deal before sunrise), I do not find time for the closet of prayer. I also must find a solitary, separate place, where I cannot be disturbed. Praise God, there is always such a place in the early morning. The place is solitary because only men are not there. It is alive with yourself! Over an extended period of time and experience I have not been in a circumstance where I could not find a solitary place.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the wonderful example of prayer in my Lord. (2) Thank you for the need our Lord felt for prayer — if he needed it what about me? (3) Thank you that Jesus did not let any circumstance hinder him in fulfilling the time of prayer. (4) Thank you that there always is a solitary place for prayer. (5) Thank you that Jesus was not worried about the concern of people for his safety. (6) Thank you for our Lord's firmly established purpose that was not side tracked by men's ideas. (7) Thank you Jesus came to preach.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... so I can preach there also. That is why I have come." If my Lord came for the express purpose of being a preacher then it ill behooves me to minimize in any way this highest of all efforts. It would appear from what we can read right on the surface of the text that Jesus attracted people by his preaching and then held their attention by his teaching. We must not in any way discount his miracles. How we do wish we had a sermon recorded on video tape, so we could see and hear his delivery. It is in the delivery of the sermon we succeed or fail in communication. We do have what has been called his "sermon on the mount."

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

If I cannot learn about prayer — and how to pray from my Lord's example I will never learn: (1) Keep me committed to never begin a day without you. (2) Give me a loneliness for yourself that cannot be satisfied except in prayer. (3) Deepen my understanding of the prayer-life of my Lord. (4) Keep me away from distracting interruptions — i.e. those sent by Satan. (5) Keep me open to your interrupting distractions. (6) If Jesus needed prayer before he preached, how much more do I need it!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In the prayer time of my Lord what do you say to me? (1) "There is nothing you need more than prayer." (2) "If you do not *take* time for prayer you will never find it." (3) "Jesus, my Son was a preacher — is there anything better or more important than preaching?"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Pakistan — Point for prayer: (1) *Missions have been working in the land since 1833.* There are many opportunities in evangelism, church planting, Bible teaching and in various service ministries such as literature, health services, etc. Pray much for more laborers — especially from Britain and Canada, for these nations need no visas. Pray also for a more concerted, prayer-covered assault on the need of the Muslim majority, and the unevangelized majority, and the unevangelized Muslim peoples.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

WEEK ELEVEN

—Wednesday—

“You are interested in my TV fare, for you have asked me not to set before my eyes anything that is base or degrading! You want to make me clean inside!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I will sing of loyalty and of justice; to thee, O Lord, I will sing. I will give heed to the way that is blameless. Oh when wilt thou come to me? I will walk with integrity of heart within my house; I will not set before my eyes anything that is base” (Psa. 101:1-3).

It is a real joy to me to set aside this time just to focus my whole attention on yourself. To lift my heart in adoration for the characteristics of yourself I see in your word. In these three verses there are several qualities: (1) You have been loyal to me (do you expect reciprocal action?) (2) You are just in every transaction. (3) You are blameless in all your ways. (4) You want to have a close personal relationship with man (me).

It would seem the psalmist, so representative of all of us, has an identity problem — he cannot establish a closeness and intimacy with you. I believe he reveals the source of the estrangement in his words, “I will not set before my eyes anything that is base.”

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Turn on the TV and it is almost certain you will set something base before your eyes! Continue to look at it, or switch the channel to something equally base and look at it and the following spiritual estrangement will take place: (1) A sense of your loyalty to the Holy God is broken. (2) It seems justice has been violated, i.e., on your part; you are not treating God in a fair manner. (3) You blame yourself for not rejecting immediately what is base. (4) Most of all, the nearness and fellowship with our Lord has left you.

As any reader could easily see I am talking about myself! If we want the song of loyalty and justice — if we want the way of blamelessness then we must mean what we say about our promise: “I will not set before my eyes anything that is base.” Dear God, I praise you that such can and will happen in my home!

How do you personally relate to the loyalty of God, and God who is loyal? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

I have in the above areas of praise allowed confession to become a large part of the expression. It is due to the nature of the word you have spoken to me. At the same time, I have not at all confessed all of my willfulness. On second thought, I have been through this before! Introspection from a negative viewpoint only results in depression. It becomes apparent to us that somehow we do not have the power to do much more than describe the details of our sin. To do that which is good is not present in confession. To accept cleansing and begin to praise you develops the motivation for “that which is good.” How true it is that: “The joy of the Lord is our strength.” It is on the other side of open confession of our sin we find the strength and joy of forgiveness!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Savior, more than life to me,
I am clinging, clinging close to Thee;
Let Thy precious blood applied,
Keep me ever, ever near Thy side.
Ev’ry day, ev’ry hour,
Let me feel Thy cleansing pow’r;
Let Thy precious blood applied,
Keep me ever, ever near Thy side.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

8 When he came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. ²A man with leprosy came

and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

³Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cured of his leprosy. ⁴Then Jesus said to him, "See that you don't tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." —*Matthew 8:1-4, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, how all of us can identify with the leper! I believe that was the purpose in the minds of Matthew and Luke when they recorded this blessed event. We are daily pressed with our need of cleansing. The deity of our Lord is so fully demonstrated here. The whole incident seems to be out of order: (1) The leper should not have been in the city. (2) He should not fall down and worship a man. (3) Jesus should not touch a leper lest he be defiled. (4) Jesus must have known the leper would not, could not, be quiet. But in these very exceptions we see the glory of our Lord!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

As an unclean person I surely have no right to appear before you. But my need presses upon me to such an extent that any word of help pushes me beyond hesitancy and human regulation. I fall down before you, because you are not a man — in Jesus I see the fulness of God. He who took charge of your temple in Jerusalem and cleansed it can surely cleanse me of my uncleanness. The one who needed no sacrifices offered for his sin has become the sacrifice for my sin and can make me clean. Jesus can but speak the word and the problem will be solved. When the hand of our Lord reached the head (or whatever portion of his body he touched) the leprosy was gone. Jesus touched a man cleaner than any who looked on the scene. Bless the Lord, I claim and advertise my cleansing!

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the three records to let me know Jesus has compassion on all us lepers. (2) Thank you that it is my privilege to daily bow before you and worship. (3) Thank you that you are always able and are always willing to make me whole. (4) Thank you that the hand of my Lord is always stretched out toward me and my need. (5) Thank you that I can tell it today — men need to hear of your power to heal the human heart. (6) Thank you that I can and must obey your laws today — for others if not for myself. (7) Thank you for the privilege of testimony to all who need to hear it.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Don't tell anyone, . . . See that you don't tell this to

anyone." The gospel writers are quite clear that our Lord did not want a premature announcement of his Messiahship to hinder his work. We can excuse the enthusiasm of this man, but his action nonetheless was disobedience and it did pose a real problem for our Lord.

Our Lord was just as plain in his instruction of what he wanted the leper to do. "Go show yourself to the priests." It was one long walk to Jerusalem. Did he go? We do not know. If he did it was sometime later. There was a real purpose in everything Jesus commanded. Zeal without knowledge seldom accomplishes as much good as harm. At times it can be altogether negative. We are full of admiration for the compassion and power present. We only wish the healed man would have respected such compassion and power by obeying him.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What does this man and our Lord's healing say to me? (1) This man seemed like a hopeless case — but he had hope in our Lord's power — he is much like all of us at one time or another. (2) Teach me from this leper true obedience. (3) I see in this man a definition of the sovereignty of Jesus — teach me well. (4) Jesus dared to touch the leper — or was he well when Jesus said: "I am willing"? (5) I want to be willing to obey you even when it appears contradictory. (6) Give me a testimony to the religious leaders of my day.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me through this man: (1) "If you will I can make you clean." (2) "Your only cleanliness is from me." (3) "What offering do you make to me as a testimony for your cleansing?"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Pakistan — Point for prayer: (1) *Bible correspondence courses* are very useful for the evangelization of Muslims and nominal Christians and building up converts. Pray especially for the follow-up of students.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Guilty, vile and helpless we;
Spotless Lamb of God was He;
"Full atonement!" can it be?
Hallelujah! what a Savior!

WEEK ELEVEN

—Thursday—

“You are concerned about my whole life — all of my life, all the time! You have given me so much — I owe you all! I am in your service — I serve with you as well as for you.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul and forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, . . .” (Psa.

103:1-3). I take this word “bless” to mean “praise” or “adoration” — give expression to your admiration. Indeed I do! The word “soul” in reference to the whole person, intellect, will, emotions and conscience is such an encouragement to me! It is easy for me to allow this to become my expression of praise. What you want, and what I want is for *all men* to thus lift their whole being up to you in wonder and praise. Most men have not forgotten your benefits. They do not even know you have given them. Our Lord’s ministry could be well described as forgiving and healing. The one great benefit from whom all others flow was offered to all men on the cross and in the open tomb!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. These verses can become the paean of praise — the epitome of adoration in description of my whole desire to praise you! Dear Lord, I want to think your thoughts after you — to do this I will need to memorize your word. I want to will to do your will as revealed in your word. If I think your thoughts and will your will I know I will feel your emotions! My conscience will strongly approve of all such relationship. Dear Lord, I do not have a greater need than this! How easy it is to forget! How fleeting all the feelings and joys of men! Right now I want to practice these verses: (1) I will right here list some of your benefits as seen in your word. (2) I will open my willingness to receive them. (3) I will express my happiness in such a possession. (4) My conscience will give a strong affirmation! Bless the Lord, O my soul!

How do you personally relate to the benefits of

God, and God who is the Giver? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, you know better than I do that there are so many times I *do* forget your benefits. How glad I am to be reminded every day of my standing in the Beloved! I would surely faint and fall out if I did not have this blessed time of prayer. What a joy to come and lay all my cares and burdens and sins down and claim your promise of forgiveness! I take the term “diseases” to refer in context to the sickness and infirmity of the soul. I know you can heal man’s body in answer to prayer. But of what benefit is that if his life is lost? If we are not redeemed from the pit it will be of no benefit to be physically well. Dear Lord, forgive my sin — my transgression of your law. Bless the Lord, I *do* claim your promise of release from condemnation!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I’ve found a friend who is all to me, . . .
His love is ever true; . . .
I love to tell how He lifted me . . .
And what His grace can do for you. . . .
Saved . . . by His pow’r divine,
Saved . . . to new life sublime!
Life now is sweet and my joy is complete,
For I’m saved, saved, saved!

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

²³Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the peo-

ple. ²⁴News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, the epileptics and the paralytics, and he healed them. ²⁵Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him. —*Matthew 4:23-25, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

The wonder and beauty of the healing ministry of my Lord impresses upon me as never before! At the same time, I want to assimilate the true purpose of my Lord's ministry — it was not to heal that he came! He came to preach the good news of the rule of God in the hearts of men. Our Lord chose the synagogue as the best beginning place to accomplish his purpose. The extent and influence of my Lord's preaching is here summarized by Matthew. How many synagogues were there in Galilee? What was the population of this whole province? How many people are included in the expression "large crowds from Galilee"? We do not know the answer to such questions, but our estimate of his influences grows by the minute.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How shall I relate to this tremendous summary of my Lord's work? Jesus is always a surprise and wonder to me: (1) I wonder at his energy in being able to travel so far and expend so much of his "virtue" in healing and teaching. (2) I wonder at his mercy in healing many "nobodies" who really didn't know what happened, i.e., as to eternal meaning. (3) I wonder at the variety of healings performed: (a) various diseases (what diseases were current in the first century Palestine?); (b) severe pain; (c) paralytics — and then the many who were demon possessed. The simple all-inclusive word of Matthew is that "he healed them." Instantaneous, permanent, no failures. No waiting and no regrets! Oh, dear Lord, it simply staggers my imagination!

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the preparation Jesus made for this tremendous tour — he prayed. (2) Thank you that during the tour he prayed (Luke 5:15,16). (3) Thank you that my Lord's power over evil (demons) is very prominent. (4) Thank you Jesus chose a human institution (the synagogue) to accomplish his divine purpose. (5) Thank you that Jesus always had, does always have and will always have "good news." (6) Thank you it is possible to have your rule in my heart. (7) Thank you that crowds did not impress Jesus — may your purpose be my purpose too.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him." Large crowds followed him when he healed them. At the same time, it was to the same crowd he preached. It was our Lord who told us of the expected response to his preaching — we refer to the parable of the soils. How did Jesus relate to the large crowds? We could say several things about this: (1) When a large crowd gathered in the synagogue in Capernaum he retired to a solitary place and prayed. Jesus was not impressed with the crowd. (2) He saw them as no man could see them — as a sheep without a shepherd — scattered, harassed.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Surely the miracles of my Lord can lead me to prayer: (1) I want to learn more and more about the teaching methods of my Lord. (2) If my Lord was a preacher — and we know he was — then I too want to be most like him. (3) Jesus healed *every* disease and *every* infirmity — how unlike present day efforts — why? (4) Gentiles from Syria came to him — he did not turn them away — keep me open to everyone's need. (5) Once again I am forced to face demoniacs — I know there is more to learn here than I know — teach me!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Jesus taught and preached to others — I want to hear him speak to me: (1) "I speak to men again every time you preach my word." (2) "I teach again every time you teach my word." (3) "The 'greater works' of spiritual healing is yours because I have gone to my Father."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Pakistan — Points for prayer: (1) *Bible translation* — most of the major languages have the Bible or New Testament, but many languages have yet to be reduced to writing and translation work begun. Work has been initiated in four languages — pray for those involved. (2) *Christian Radio* has not had a great impact due to the lack of short wave receivers in the country. Pray for the recording studios in Rawalpindi, and also the stations transmitting to Pakistan.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Living for me, living for me,
Up in the skies He is living for me;
Daily He's pleading and praying for me,
All because Jesus is living for me.

WEEK ELEVEN

—Friday—

“As far as the east is from the west, so far have you removed my sins — you know how weak and ignorant we are — you pity us — you do not criticize us. You are even now planning good things for us.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“. . . as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust” (Psa. 103:12-14). How delightfully good it is to lift my heart to you in praise. Let me mark out the qualities in the verses of your wonderful character: (1) Total forgiveness, which includes forgetfulness. How good to be able to look into your face and know you do not even remember my sin. If I have been forgiven (and I have) then to remind you of my sin is actually an embarrassment to you! You cannot and do not remember any of my sins, or the sins of any of your repentant children. You look with pity, or mercy, or understanding and love upon the stumbling efforts of your children. This does *not* mean you are encouraging their mistakes — any more than a loving father would with his children. He remembers we are limited and forgives us. Bless your holy name forever!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Whereas all the above is true and I gladly embrace it to my heart, I am troubled by the little phrase in Hebrews 5:12; “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you.” For how long are we to be taught? For how long are we to be children? Is the answer as long as God is our Father we are children and in need of pity and care? As long as God is our teacher we are his disciples and need to be taught by him. As related to others we do not remain children long; we grow up and have our own children. We do not remain disciples with others; we learn and teach others. But with God we are his forever children and disciples. Bless your eternal self! He will not need to look far to remember that I am dust!

How do you personally relate to the forgiveness of God, and God who forgets? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

I am in a constant dilemma, i.e., how do I know when I am using your grace as a license to sin? Does the very fact that I am worried about it negate the thought that I am doing it? When will it be that I simply will not entertain the thought that if I sin I can obtain forgiveness, *therefore*, I will go ahead and sin. Grace in this circumstance becomes an ally to sin. Such was never the purpose of your mercy or goodness. If I knew that if I committed a sin one more time I would never be forgiven and would end up in eternal torment, would I commit that sin? Why is the fear motivation stronger than the love motivation? Or is it? I need to see the disappointment on your face when I sin. I won't do it because it hurts you; it hurts me too.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

May Thy rich grace impart
Strength to my fainting heart,
My zeal inspire;
As Thou hast died for me
O may my love to Thee
Pure, warm, and changeless be, a living fire!

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

⁴⁵Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from

everywhere. —*Mark 1:45, NIV*

¹⁵Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. ¹⁶But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. —*Luke 5:15,16, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

My dear Father, you know how difficult I find this effort: it is not that I do not want to read this word (your word) to you, but I know not how. I want to walk amid the crowd — I want to kneel before your Son. I want to personally examine each healing! I want the wonder and tingling excitement of every miracle to fill my heart. Most of all, dear Father, I want to withdraw with my Lord to the wilderness, to a solitary place, to a quiet place and watch him pray today!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

My loving Father, you know how very feeble I feel these efforts are, but I gladly lift them to you. Why did Jesus pray? (1) Because without it he could not maintain a balance between the demands of the daily routine and his communion with you. If ever I have found any reason for prayer this is it! (2) Because he was lonesome to talk to someone who cared and understood and who could help. Even in the action of pronouncing words to others, I cry out to you — the nearest and dearest cannot help like you. (3) Because he needed instruction or directions for the day just ahead of him. Of course, I know my dear Lord received direct intuitive direction. I find mine in your all-sufficient word. Praise your name you have never failed one day to speak to my deepest need!

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for a good report concerning my Lord (however alloyed with selfishness). (2) Thank you for those who came to hear. (3) Thank you for those who came to be healed — no doubt this spoke to some of them too. (4) Thank you that you are always “touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” (5) Thank you for our Lord’s choice to withdraw and pray. (6) Thank you for Jesus’ willingness to “put up” with the disobedience of the leper who was healed. (7) Thank you that my Lord is patient and kind with my failures — “He looked beyond my fault and saw my need.”

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter.” The popularity of Jesus was

an advantage: (a) More people could hear him when he preached to them. (b) More people could be healed and thus help their physical needs. (c) More people would accept him as their Messiah — they would be prepared hopefully for the time when he would publicly declare his purpose. Disadvantages: (a) Even while the multitude listened they were restless. They had come to be healed and they simply put up with “the commercial.” (b) Many who were healed soon forgot. Their physical infirmity hindered what they wanted to do and it wasn’t to worship God.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

We can understand the exuberance of this man, but we cannot excuse his disobedience. How shall I pray about this? (1) If my Lord says “wait” it is wrong to move — how can I know the difference? (2) When our Lord cannot fulfill his purpose in the lives of people perhaps it is because I have moved when I should have waited. (3) It is easy to get in my own way — or in his way — give me wisdom. (4) Help me to take the larger opportunity — the one Jesus directs. (5) Something good did work out from this — may I believe that about mistakes in my life.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You have been speaking to me out of this incident: (1) “Some joys are better kept to yourself.” (2) “There is a right time for all things — ask me about it.” (3) “More can always be done in planned effort — i.e. when I direct the plan.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Philippines — Population: 45,000,000. Growth rate — 3%. People per sq. km. — 150.

Points for prayer: (1) *The Philippines* is now one of the most open and also receptive countries in Asia. Pray that this opportunity may be fully used by nationals and missionaries. (2) *Roman Catholics* are more tolerant, desirous of reading and studying the Bible and open to the Bible than ever before. Pray that believers may be open to help these seeking people to know the Lord Jesus.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

There is a name I love to hear,
I love to sing its worth;
It sounds like music in mine ear,
The sweetest name on earth.
Oh, how I love Jesus,
Oh, how I love Jesus,
Oh, how I love Jesus,
Because He first loved me!

WEEK ELEVEN

—Saturday—

“Your character — your plans — your resources are all established — there is no need to worry — you are even now on the throne! You can always work around people if you can’t work through them.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all. Bless the Lord, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, hearkening to the voice of his word” (Psa. 103:19,20). I am full of wonder and curiosity! Just where in the heavens is your throne? I know that Paul went into “the third heaven” (II Cor. 12:2ff.), but just where is that? I am acquainted with the explanation of the heaven where the clouds are and the heaven of the stars. Just to contemplate the grandeur and immensity of the Milky Way galaxy of which our earth is an infinitesimal speck overwhelms my thinking! I know you rule and reign over all the ten million galaxies but this does not describe your greatness at all! The physical facts of your creative power carry me away into amazement! The nearest star to our star called the sun is so far away it would take 80,000 years to arrive if we travelled at the fastest speed known to man!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

If only all men knew who created all we have. If only all men could say with the psalmist, “You made them all.” I want to add my little voice to that of the angels and the mighty ones (probably the same as angels). What missions will you fulfill today? What project has the Creator-Father whose name is power and wisdom sent you on today? To speak presupposes intelligence and purpose. What a record it would make for an angel to tell us of just one of the smaller (?) works he had been sent to do. I know I am fantasizing, but it is based upon real possibilities. Bless and praise your holy name. O, my soul!

How do you personally relate to the rule of God, and God who is Ruler?

CONFESSION OF SIN

Why is it I do not always have such an exalted at-

titude, or word to express my estimate of your greatness? Of course the answer is sin, but it is the particular sin of dullness and blindness, of insensitivity that comes from too close exposure to the stupidity of this world and the one who runs it. Dear God, I want to hide in you. I want to escape into the heaven of the heavens and be forever in your presence. At the same time I say this, I know your answer. The example of man and for man is the “Son of man,” who lived and hurt and gave to save. In the quietness of a summer night did your son ever feel lonesome for you? Dear Lord, I’m truly glad I only have a few more years to give before I can enter into the life that will be life indeed. While I’m here I do renew my commitment to being the light of my little world! Forgive me for complaining!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I know not how this saving faith
To me He did impart,
Nor how believing in His Word
Wrought peace within my heart.
But “I know whom I have believed,
And am persuaded that He is able
To keep that which I’ve committed
Unto Him against that day.”

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

⁴⁵Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.
—Mark 1:45, NIV

¹⁵Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed

of their sicknesses. ¹⁶But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. — Luke 5:15,16, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How excusable and inexcusable are the actions and attitudes of the leper who was healed. He was going to bring in the reign of the Messiah whether Jesus wanted such an action or not. How like him we are! We act in such presumptuous ways so often. We are going to have it our way come what may! No doubt the leper thought Jesus was just being modest — Jesus really wanted him to tell the good news of the Messiah, but was just using reverse psychology on him. Dear Lord, how man tries to second guess your desires.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I want to find direct application of these three verses to my life. (1) How presumptuous I am in assuming the way you deal with me is the way you deal with everyone. I can testify that you healed me, but to assume you are going to act in exactly the same way with everyone is a sad presumption. How I need to let you work *in* people instead of my working *on* them. (2) How presumptuous I am in making my methods your methods in calling on the lost and teaching the saved. I decided you wanted me to call one every house in this town. I decided that I knew the time you wanted it done. You gave me a tumor on my foot that made it impossible, or at least permitted me to have such a tumor. I have been calling, but as a much wiser servant.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the opportunity to speak freely; help me to do it wisely. (2) Thank you for the attitude of my Lord; he didn't complain about his restrictions. (3) Thank you for the divine interest in people which will hurtle all barriers. (4) Thank you for the unlimited power of Jesus to heal. (5) Thank you for the lovely place for prayer. (6) Thank you for the need of Jesus for prayer — what an example. (7) Thank you for the example of priority for prayer seen in my Lord.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.” I want to underline the words *often* and *withdrew*. Just how “often” is “often”? Was this once a day? If so it must have been at a time when no one knew about it. If others followed him it would not be a lonely place. Perhaps the reference to a “great while before day” was typical of my dear Lord. In the routine of my life there just is no other time for prayer. As I begin a new day I do want to start it

with you. At the close of the day I need you for the kind of rest my body needs.

How is it that Jesus *often withdrew*? It was unobtrusive — he did not call attention to it. But he did pull out of the stream of life for a quiet place near to the heart of God. Dear Lord, there is *nothing* I need more!

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the presumptuous zeal of this man we can see ourselves and our need for prayer: (1) How easy it is to speak when I should be quiet — shut my mouth! (2) How silent I am when I should speak — open my mouth! (3) How often has the work of my Lord been hindered by my hasty words? (4) Forgive me Lord for not spending more time in prayer — I would know better what to say. (5) Keep me aware that crowds alone are not an indication of success. (6) Thank you for the example of my Lord as he found a solitary place to pray — I want to follow him.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

When men did not understand and would not follow your words your Son sought your face in prayer. What can you say to me through this example? (1) “I can work around people if I can't work through them.” (2) “Some good can come out of this unfortunate situation.” (3) If Jesus *often* withdrew to lonely places to pray — how is it you do not do so?

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Philippines — Points for prayer: (1) *Unreached peoples* — the Philippines has been patchily covered with the Gospel, pray for the needy Muslims, many unreached little tribes and large lowland areas that have little Bible believing witness. (2) *The Protestant Church* is emerging as a significant force in the life of the country: (a) *Growth through evangelism* has been stimulated by various conferences on evangelism. The younger Bible believing groups started since World War II are increasingly important. (b) *Some of the older and larger denominations* have stagnated through an overemphasis on institutions and dialogue with Roman Catholics, rather than on evangelism, though many of the congregations are unhappy about these developments. Revival is needed.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

We praise Thee, O God! for Thy Spirit of light,
Who has shown us our Savior, and scattered our
night,
Hallelujah! Thine the glory;
Hallelujah! Amen!
Hallelujah! Thine the glory;
Revive us again.

WEEK TWELVE

—Sunday—

“I want to even now acknowledge your greatness — your honor — your majesty! Your signature is written in all you have made! You are teaching again through men — give me ears to hear!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, thou art very great! Thou art clothed with honor and majesty, who coverest thyself with light as with a garment, who stretched out the heavens like a tent, . . .” (Psa. 104:1,2). The word “bless” means to offer praise and presupposes a focus of attention. In this little expression I am saying I want to fasten my whole attention on you! The term “soul” refers to the whole man. My whole being is involved in this form of praise. You have not only my attention and praise but my service. The word “great” seems weak inasmuch as we apply it to so many things and people. The rest of this psalm will tell of your greatness which will lift you out of the area of comparison. How wonderful it is to worship you in this form of adoration!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I want to turn over every word of the psalmist and make it mine in praise to you. You are “clothed with honor and majesty” as I see a garment upon a king or some great ruler so I am to see honor covering you! Indeed such is not at all difficult! I can begin in the garden of creation and see honor covering you — to create a being in your likeness and then set him free! Honor is a result of an adequate cause. There could be no more adequate cause than your creative act in fashioning man and woman. I could never, never thank you or honor you enough! You clothed yourself in honor when you kept your word and removed man from the garden. Your creative genius and your total integrity clothe you in honor to me! Bless your holy name!

How do you personally relate to the honor of God, and God who is clothed with honor? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

I really am at a loss to know all that is meant in the little expression: “who coverest thyself with light as with a garment.” But what I do know lets me know that standing before your pure white light I feel anything but comfortable. I know some of my sins, your light reveals *all of them!* Somehow they are magnified in your presence. It must be the contrast! And then I remember! O, bless the Lord, I remember your light is not only revealing, it is purifying. As I stand before you hiding nothing I can and do claim your forgiveness — I can and do stand then as pure as you are pure. I too can be covered with light (your light) as with a garment! O wonder of all wonders! Thank you! praise you! bless the Lord O my soul.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I have a Father; to me He has given
A hope for eternity, blessed and true;
And soon He will call me to meet Him in heaven,
But oh, that He'd let me bring you with me, too!
For you I am praying,
For you I am praying,
For you I am praying,
I'm praying for you.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

2 A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. ²So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. —Mark 2:1,2, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It is a joyous experience I have in reading these

beautiful verses in your presence. How much we all want to know what happened in the days that lapsed from the healing of the leper to the incident before us. We know at least that several times Jesus withdrew to a lonely place and prayed. But now he has returned "home." When we pause and think we are shocked to realize Jesus never really owned a house in Capernaum — he did not have money for rent. He lived as a guest in someone's home. "Dear Lord, you can live with me!" Wait a moment! *He is doing that right now!* In the person of "the Other Comforter" he is living in me! and also with me. Is he teaching me? Do I hear his words as a preacher?

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

As always, I have a difficult time separating these two concepts. My blessed Savior, I want you to feel at home in my body. As we do all we can to anticipate the desires of a very important guest in our home I do want to be constantly conscious of your presence in me. What was your task while upon this earth? To teach, to preach, to save. Am I solicitous only for physical comforts? These can soon be satisfied. They are only a means to an end. You want to teach me; preach to me. In every way I have a need you want to save me. "He preached the word to them." What did he say? Whatever it was it did not disagree with what I can read in the gospel accounts. You are speaking to me now in these words — having ears I want to hear.

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the abundance of work you did in Capernaum; somehow I feel America is much like this town. (2) Thank you for Jesus' ability to make his "home" in this unworthy place. (3) Thank you that the report of my Lord's work is spreading today. (4) Thank you for every one who crowded around his door in that far off day. How I do want to talk to some of them. (5) Thank you for the patient love of my Lord. He knew many who came did not understand him, but he preached nonetheless. (6) Thank you for the infinite goodness of Jesus. He knew most of these people came to be healed, but he preached to them nonetheless. (7) Thank you that just the presence of your dear Son did so much for everyone.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... and he was preaching the word to them." It does seem strange to read this expression concerning our Lord. We hear Paul tell Timothy to "preach the word," but here is Mark telling us that Jesus "preached the word." This expression has an ancient antecedent in the prophets. We hear Baruch ask Jeremiah: "Is there any word from the Lord?" Jesus

who himself was God's word made flesh now speaks the message he himself represented. This should teach us a tremendous lesson: Our Lord was the word and has preached the word. So, we are what we preach, but this is no substitute for preaching. The word must be incarnate, but it must also be spoken! Dear Lord, may I find its dual fulfillment in my life and the lives of all those who are preachers of your word.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Could there be two more charming verses? (1) How brief were the days of my Lord — help me to so number my days. (2) Capernaum is gone but the memory of his presence is with us — will we learn any better than they did? (3) Dear Lord, welcome home to my heart! (4) I want to crowd close to you as I read again every word you said — open my conscience! (5) I know there is always room at the cross and at the throne of grace — how I claim both. (6) Somehow help me to follow my Lord in preaching the word.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In the visit of my Lord to Capernaum speak to me: (1) "I will come again to your town every time you see a person in need." (2) "I am preaching the word again through your lips." (3) "You can be as concerned about your heart as these people were about their bodies."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Philippines — Points for prayer: (1) *The Protestant Church: Problems to be prayed over* — Bible believing churches and leaders are often too dependent on funds and initiative from the U.S.A. Although there are some outstanding preachers and leaders in the ministry, there are too few to meet the need, especially in the rural areas. The rapidly growing cities are inadequately covered with the Gospel. A greater spiritual depth is needed in the congregations for more effective outreach. (2) *Leadership training* — over 71 Seminaries and Bible Schools, most being Bible believing. Number of graduates for all levels of the preaching ministry is very inadequate.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Your many sins are all forgiv'n,
Oh, hear the voice of Jesus;
Go on your way in peace to heav'n,
And wear a crown with Jesus.
Sweetest note in seraph song,
Sweetest name on mortal tongue;
Sweetest carol ever sung,
Jesus, blessed Jesus.

WEEK TWELVE

—Monday—

“Not one blade of grass would grow if you did not want it to. There would be no plants to cultivate without you! My faith is seen in my actions or not at all!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Thou dost cause the grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread to strengthen man’s heart” (Psa. 104:14,15).

Blessed Lord I want to enter into the description of your creative power and identify the personal interest you have in the world you have made: (1) You not only made the cattle with an appetite but with an altogether adequate means of satisfying their desire. This is but representative of all your work. (2) There is no desire in man that is not met in your provision. If this is true in the physical world how very much more would it be true in the spiritual world! There is no mental or psychological need that cannot find abundant completion in yourself!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. What is generally true I have found to be personally true! The fact that millions are starving this very moment is not your fault. There is abundant provision of food. It is the heart-breaking fact that man has so utterly failed in the use of what you have provided. We can blame each other and ourselves, and we should, the truth still stands that your provision is adequate. Dear Lord, I refuse to be bogged down in human argument and speculation. I want to simply apply your word to my life. For today, am I willing to appropriate your provisions in my sex life? Or will I look somewhere else? In my domestic life? Are my eyes and ears and heart hungry for the bread of life here? In the economics of today — am I aware of what you have said? Dear Lord, strengthen my heart!

How do you personally relate to the provisions of God, and God who is adequate? Speak it out or write it out.

CONFESSION OF SIN

I have been shocked several times with the statistics of starvation. I have been rebuked in my spirit that I seem to do almost nothing about it. The words of my Lord haunt me: “I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me” (Matthew 25:42,43). And I *know* whom he had in mind; it is the hungry, thirsty, lonesome, naked, sick and prisoners of our day, of any day. Dear Lord, I want to do something — maudlin sentiment will not get it done! Genuine repentance is what I want and need! I can’t do everything, but I can do something! I will.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them.

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!
Thy wings shall my petition bear
To Him whose truth and faithfulness
Engage my waiting soul to bless;
And since He bids me seek His face,
Believe His word and trust His grace,
I’ll cast on Him my ev’ry care,
And wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

³Some men came, bringing him a paralytic, carried by four of them. ⁴Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on.

—Mark 2:3,4, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

This incident must have been important: it was recorded by all three of the biographers you chose to

record the life of your Son. In so many ways this example speaks to me of your concern. (1) Here is a man who cannot at all help himself. If this man is to be healed it will be from you. How often do we find ourselves just like him! (2) He did have friends who would do what they could. They couldn't heal him but they could make it possible. (3) Someone knew about your dear Son; someone knew where he lived. (4) Someone had adventuresome creative ideas as to how to help their friend. (5) They must have known Jesus would not interpret their actions as "out of order." Jesus read their intentions.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Indeed I do! I share the paralytic's condition: (1) Unless you help me I shall not be helped. This is true in several areas of my life. It is because you have healed me and raised me up that I am able to stand at all. (2) I owe more than I could ever repay to dear friends who have "carried" me in a good number of situations. I wish I had the space to detail a number of them. I would begin with the dearest of all to me — my wife. (3) A preacher long ago knew your Son and led me to him. I want to be that "someone" for the important men and women all about me. (4) It is such a challenge to me to be able to be creative and different in my approach to helping men to know my Lord. There is always a new fresh way of letting others know him. (5) Men are critical, men delight in cutting and slashing other men. My dear Lord has no such attitude! Praise his name forever!

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for men who care about the needs of others. (2) Thank you for disease and sickness — without such there would be no healing. (3) Thank you for the classic examples of healing — so unlike others. (3) Thank you for those who do not let "the crowd" hinder them. (4) Thank you for the daring faith of these four men. (5) Thank you for the paralytic who was willing to venture with his friends. (6) Thank you for the man who owned the house — he did not object. (7) Thank you most of all for the One who can deliver the impossible.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay." There must have been a total suspension of teaching while the roof was taken apart and the dust settled on the inside of the room. Our Lord saw a lesson in faith in the presumptuous actions of these men. Someone else would have objected, but our Lord looked beyond the interruption and saw their faith! How we would like to know just who the four

men were who held the ropes while they lowered the paralytic. Stubborn love that would not take no for an answer was back of the bold action. What happened to the man who was healed when once he left the house? We could well imagine, but that really is all we can do. It sounds almost saccharine to say that something more wonderful has happened to every Christian, but it has!

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In this familiar story, just beneath the surface, are requests we can make in prayer: (1) Give me as much concern about the spiritual impotence of my friends as these men were with this man's physical need. (2) How I want such a determination in meeting my Lord in his word. (3) Keep me aware that unless I bring men to you they will never be healed. (4) Make me innovative and creative in my attempts to bring men to you. (5) How I need the boldness of these men in meeting human needs. (6) Any way I can get into the presence of your son I want to do it. (7) How good to learn that cooperation is needed to heal men. Help me with my part.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As Jesus spoke to this man speak to me: (1) "So many men do not care if the sick live or die — how about you?" (2) "Some things will have to be broken up to get through to me." (3) "I am still willing to forgive sins if someone will only ask."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Philippines — Points for prayer: (1) *Missionary vision of the Filipino Church* is growing — now with 13 sending agencies and 170 missionaries serving in other lands or areas. (2) *Missions* — many new groups and missionaries have entered the land of late, and now there are around 1,500. There are more opportunities than there are laborers to use them — in evangelism, church planting, pioneer work, as well as in teaching and helping in the churches. There are many needs in Bible translation work, student outreach and in technical ministries such as radio.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

He all my griefs has taken, and all my sorrows borne;
In temptation He's my strong and mighty tower;
I have all for Him forsaken, and all my idols torn
From my heart, and now He keeps me by His power.
Though all the world forsake me,
and Satan tempt me store,
Through Jesus I shall safely reach the goal;
He's the Lily of the Valley,
the Bright and Morning Star,
He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul.

WEEK TWELVE

—Tuesday—

“Singing has been — and is a major expression of praise — of worship — use it! If you are happy about the Lord others will know about it. If you are not they will know that too. I know the content of every heart of every man.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known his deeds among the peoples! Sing to him, sing praises to him, tell of all his wonderful works!” (Psa. 105:1,2). These verses seem to explain just what I want to do each time I come before you in personal worship. The one quality of yourself that stands out so prominently is that you are worthy of all gratitude. The reasons for such an expression are in what you have done for each man upon this earth. How I would love to stand on a promontory somewhere and make known your deeds among all the peoples of the earth. I am sure every missionary has also felt the same way. At least I can tell you in deepest of feeling how much I appreciate all the uncounted, and sometimes unknown, blessings you have sent into my life. Songs do seem to express more adequately the thanks we have to give you.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. There is no effort here. This seems to be so naturally spontaneous. Let me express thanks for several of your benefits and associate each one with a quality of yourself! (1) Thank you for creating me with your own capacities. What infinite love is in this. (2) Thank you for chastening me when I think and act by Satan’s direction. What care and concern is in this. (3) Thank you for forgiveness each time I sin and each time I repent. I can hardly comprehend such mercy! (4) Thank you for your direction in my service for you — how well you know me and just where I could best serve. (5) Thank you for the means of communication now available to us. What an open door you have given us that your deeds might be made known to all peoples!

How do you personally relate to the deeds of God, and God who is a worker? Speak it out or write it out.

CONFESSION OF SIN

It seems to me there is constantly someone who is ready to deceive me. In every move I make toward you, he offers an option of deception. As an example: (1) If I praise you for creating me, he is ready to explain such on a natural level. He is a liar and speaks nonsense. (2) If I thank you for chastening me, he says I do not deserve it, or there is no hope for such a sinner — both are lies. I am not ignorant of his devices, that liar! (3) If I praise you for forgiveness the deceiver says: “Have you really repented adequately?” — that liar! I could never repent with total knowledge — it is in my Lord’s knowledge and willingness to accept my willingness that I have hope. (4) If I thank you for direction in service he is there to point out that it would have happened in the same way anyway — just a coincidence. Satan, I rebuke you and resist you! I have read his word who is truth. You can call answers to prayer a coincidence if you want to, you know you are wrong — and so do I!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Praise Him! praise Him!
Jesus, our blessed Redeemer!
Sing, O Earth, His wonderful love proclaim!
Hail Him! hail Him! highest archangels in glory;
Strength and honor give to His holy name!

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

“When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’”

“Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, ‘Why does this fellow talk like that? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?’”

⁸Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their heart, and he said to them, “Why are you thinking these things? ⁹Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk?’ ¹⁰But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins . . .” He said to the paralytic, ¹¹“I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” —*Mark 2:5-11, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

The words of our Lord seem so strange. “My son, your sins are forgiven.” What does the forgiveness of sins have to do with palsy? How are the two related? Or are they related? If they were not related before, they are now. Jesus came to forgive sins — he uses any and all occasions to teach this blessed truth. There were two impossibilities happening before their eyes. Only God can forgive sins, and only God can suspend or change his laws and heal. Both are being done in their presence. There could be only one conclusion: *God is in their midst!* What a beautiful condescension and identification to call himself “the son of man.” Jesus is saying: “You can see one prerogative of God — healing — you can accept the other by faith — the forgiveness of sins.” What wonderful credentials were the miracles.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

What a strong encouragement is this text for me! When Jesus saw they accepted his deity he immediately could and did forgive the paralytic. Dear Lord, I know you respond to me in the same way. I do sorely need forgiveness. It is my confidence in your Son as yourself in bodily form that commends me as a candidate for forgiveness. The scribes were students (scholars) of your law. They were right. Only God can forgive sins. But look again dear brother — *Jesus is God!* I believe you see and read the questioning of my heart.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for my Lord’s definition of faith. (2) Thank you for the tender words, “My Son” — (although Jesus could easily have been younger than the paralytic). (3) Thank you that Jesus knows all men feel guilty and he wants to remove their guilt. (4) Thank you for people who think — even as the scribes. (5) Thank you for the omniscient perception of my Lord — even today — even of me. (6) Thank you for our Lord’s definition of the function of the heart, i.e., to question, or reason.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go

home.” It would surely seem that anyone our Lord so restored to health would be his best witness for the rest of his life. But we have been raised from death in trespasses and sins — how do we relate? Can we visualize what happened when this man who had been sick for so long walked into his house? Two reactions would be expected: (1) *Surprise!* The incongruity that one who had been so weak, so unable, was now, well and walking. How could it be? (2) *Disbelief.* Man minus an acceptance of the supernatural is going to work out an explanation that fits his naturalistic presuppositions.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What a wonderful transaction occurs in these verses. It is our desire to enter fully into their meaning through prayer: (1) Open my mouth to sometimes say the totally unexpected — but needed thing. (2) My Lord saw beneath the surface the deep need of this man. I want that capacity. (3) May I receive the obvious conclusion that Jesus was indeed divine. (4) How can I be as sensitive to the thoughts and motives of men as my Lord? (5) Deepen my worship of this One who is obviously worthy. (6) I want to be as obedient, even in impossible situations, as was this man.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

The paralytic never forgot the words of your Son. Impress these words on my heart: (1) “How I would like to speak forgiveness to every son of Adam.” (2) “I still know the contents of the hearts of all men.” (3) “Take home the evidence of the healing of your heart.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Philippines — Points for prayer: (1) *Literature* is extensively used and is largely run by Filipino Christians. Pray for the publishing and distribution ministries. There are several difficulties with the distribution of Bibles, and there is a great lack of Scriptures. Pray for the speedy removal of these difficulties. Government censorship also delays publication of needed literature. (2) *Bible translation* is being undertaken in 54 languages. Most of these languages are fairly small.

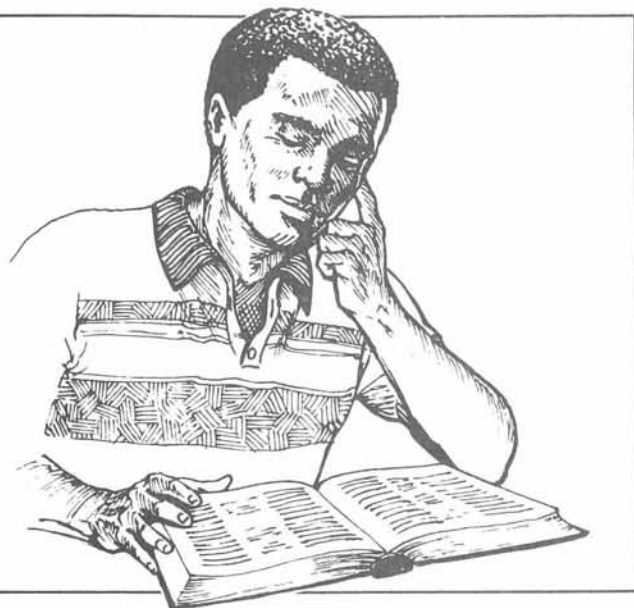
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

That name I fondly love to hear,
It never fails my heart to cheer,
Its music dries the falling tear;
Exalt the name of Jesus.
“Jesus,” oh, how sweet the name!
“Jesus,” ev’ry day the same;
“Jesus,” let all saints proclaim
Its worthy praise forever.

WEEK TWELVE

—Wednesday—

“Seek me because if you do not you will not find me — find your strength in me! You can practice my presence continually! Your sins are forgiven on my merit not yours.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice! Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his presence continually!” (Psa. 105:3,4). This is just what I try to do each day. How I do want to characterize yourself. I want to hold up each attribute and shout it for joy! As much as in me is I want to honor and magnify your name in my mind and heart and life. I seek you in so many ways. I know my feverish efforts to prepare an adequate lesson or sermon is but a reaching out after you. Trying to find fulfillment in those with whom I live and work is another form of seeking (in the wrong place) for the only one who can satisfy. It is your strength, your presence that I need and want. Where shall we find your strength? To where shall we go to find your presence?

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. It is good to answer personally the two questions asked in the above time of praise. I find your strength so well described in the experience of others: Peter was so often without strength. He ran out of all resources several times. In his cry, “Lord, save me,” we are hearing a man seeking you. I wonder why our Lord asked Peter to walk on the water? I wonder why Peter wanted to walk on the water? If such a miracle was to happen it would be by our Lord’s strength and presence. In Peter’s curses and denials we see the total loss of his courage and hope. How could the same man a few weeks later stand before the Sanhedrin and amaze them with his boldness? It was Peter’s practicing the presence of the Lord. It was not that he *had* been with the Lord; the Lord was with him at the time. It is those who seek his presence continually that have the joy and strength of the Lord!

How do you personally relate to the presence of God, and God who is present?

CONFESSION OF SIN

There are 365 sins to confess this year! Our sin is related to our praise — strange! Even as we lift our hearts in adoration we face a need. A need to more adequately and openly praise your name. Much confession is an inverted form of praise. I want to clear away anything that hinders my expression from being totally genuine. Forgive my unwillingness to seek you. I know right where you can be found. There are very definable steps in finding you: (1) You are found first right on the other side of the sin that lost your presence. Right on the other side of the confession and repentance of that sin is yourself! Bless your holy name! (2) You then appear on every page of your book, the Bible. I couldn’t find you anywhere I read, but now you look out from behind every verse. (3) I see you in all the world around me. The colors are brighter, the sun is warm, the water is refreshing, my heart does rejoice!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I stand on the mountain of blessing at last,
No cloud in the heavens a shadow to cast;
His smile is upon me, the valley is past,
For He is so precious to me.
For He is so precious to me, . . .
For He is so precious to me; . . .
’Tis Heaven below My Redeemer to know,
For He is so precious to me.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

9 Jesus stepped into a boat, crossed over and came to his own town. ²Some men brought to him a paralytic, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Take heart, son; your sins are

forgiven.”

³At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, “This fellow is blaspheming!”

⁴Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, “Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? ⁵Which is easier:

to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk?’ ⁶But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . .”

Then he said to the paralytic, “Get up, take your mat and go home.” ⁷And the man got up and went home.

⁸When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to men. —*Matt. 9:1-8, NIV*

¹²He got up, took up his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!” —*Mark 2:12, NIV*

(*Cf. Luke 5:17-26*).

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

If it were not for my joy and desire to worship you and to honor your word as the very expression of yourself, I would have ceased these words long ago. But it is a privilege to pause here before you and absorb the meaning of every word from your book. It is more than interesting that all the records speak of the faith of the four men who brought the man and not the faith of the sick man.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I have applied the general principle to myself in the above section at the same time I have hoped to be representative of all men. I believe what you do for me you do for all. Just now I want to see what he is doing for me: (1) The healing of Jesus — and thus display of his divine credentials was presented in the presence of “Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem” (Luke 5:17a). What was their response to what they saw and heard? “And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, ‘We have seen strange things today.’”

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the power, or authority that was so wonderfully present to heal. (2) Thank you that when we have faith nothing, or no one can hinder us from encountering yourself and your Son. (3) Thank you for the presence of my Lord today — I can accept him *now*! (4) Thank you for innovation and the unusual that focus attention on my Lord. (5) Thank you for the willingness of Jesus to challenge those who questioned him. (6) Thank you that my Lord has not lost his capacity to read my thoughts. (7) Thank you for the praise and thanksgiving expression of the

man who was healed.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“And amazement seized them all, and they glorified Gods and were filled with awe, saying, ‘We have seen strange things today.’” How wonderfully good are these words — they give us a very close insight to the reaction of the persons who were “up close” to our Lord and his miracles. Luke’s expression: “amazement seized them” is such a strong description. Such amazement didn’t happen to just a few, it “seized them all.” How careful our Lord was to transfer the praise from himself to God. At the same time, it soon became apparent to the perceptive observer that Jesus and God were one in the same person. People were not just respectful, they were “filled with awe.” How I do rejoice in these expressions — they say just what I want to about my Lord!

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In these alternate accounts of this wonderful miracle there are points for prayer: (1) How I want to be a part of the unusual that calls attention to the deity of my Lord. (2) How interesting that the forgiveness of the sins of this sick man was contingent on the faith of his friends — so it is today. (3) Since the mind is equated here by our Lord with the heart — how I do need to guard my thoughts. (4) The example of the response of the crowd says much to me — all men are not opposed to our Lord. (5) How widespread was the influence of my Lord — how complete was his answer to those who came. How I long for him to have such influence today.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in my need as you did to this man in his need: (1) “My power to heal the needs of men is still present.” (2) “You can find a way to reach the needs of men if you will.” (3) “Your sins are forgiven on my merit and authority today as then.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Philippines — Point for prayer: (1) Student ministry among the 1,500,000 students in the many universities has developed well despite the strong leftist element. Pray for the development of strong witnessing groups in the universities.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

WEEK TWELVE

—Thursday—

“You could never feel all of my mighty deeds — but you can try. You could never thank me enough — but you can try! Many are called but few are listening.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Praise the Lord! O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures for ever! Who can utter the mighty doings of the Lord, or show forth all his praise?” (Psa. 106:1,2). What an appropriate scripture to express adoration to your holy name! I will indeed give thanks to you and acknowledge your goodness to me. Thank you for matching my needs, and the needs of all men with just those attributes of your character which satisfy our needs. As example: We have an insatiable appetite for discovery. We are like the Athenians; we have a desire to be “always telling or hearing something new.” In the magnificent complex world you have created there is something new and exciting for our discovery every day we live. However, an investigation of the creation without a recognition of the Creator becomes a meaningless pursuit. I see your goodness, wisdom and power in all you have made — praise and thanks be to you.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

I do want to put into words some of your “mighty doings” and tell you just how much I appreciate and praise you: (1) You have created me and all men with the capacity to put into words the deepest thoughts of both our hearts and your heart. Language is an expression and extension of your very self. No animal you have created can express itself in words. Language is the gift of your very nature. It is an expression of intelligence, the essence of your nature. I am just overwhelmed in wonder at such a gift. (2) You have created me with the capacity of enjoyment of the beautiful. Animals have no aesthetic appreciation. And oh how you have satisfied this capacity! The intricate detail, the lovely colors, the satisfying fragrances, the expanse and perspective of all your handiwork is a joy to my heart! Praise you forever.

How do you personally relate to the goodness of God, and God who is Good?

CONFESSION OF SIN

How is it that I do not always feel so glad, so full of joy of the Lord? It is because I believe Satan’s lie that I am some type of an educated, sophisticated animal! Animals have no conscience. I try to live at times as if I had no conscience. I know that man has given this heavenly umpire a wrong set of rules, and like all good umpires he “calls ’em like he sees ’em.” If he doesn’t have your rules he can’t call an infraction of your rules. But I *do* have your rules. I do believe your rules. My conscience reminds me I have violated all that is good and holy and right. I agree; I want to repent! I want to change, and praise your name, I can look back over a record of years and see that I have changed! But I am always in need of adjustment — a daily adjustment — it is no burden to ask for forgiveness; it is a necessity gladly received!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Sweet are the promises,
Kind is the word,
Dearer far than any message man ever heard;
Pure was the mind of Christ,
Sinless I see;
He the great example is, and pattern for me.
Where . . . He leads I’ll follow,
Follow all the way.
Where . . . He leads I’ll follow,
Follow Jesus ev’ry day.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

9As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector’s booth. “Follow me,” he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. —Matt. 9:9, NIV

¹³Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. ¹⁴As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him. 2—Mark 2:13,14, NIV

²⁷After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, ²⁸and Levi got up, left everything and followed him. —Luke 5:27,28, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, how pointed and full of meaning is your calling of Matthew Levi. There could hardly be a more Jewish man than this one. We could think with the commentators of all the possible associations Levi had with you before you confronted him at his place of business. Perhaps all of them are right, or none of them are right. The facts are: Matthew got up, left everything and followed you. Even more important: he continued to follow you. Sometime later our Lord chose him with eleven others to be one of his apostles. The longer Levi followed, the more sure he was that he had made the right choice.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How true it is that we never know who it is that sits behind a desk in any place of business. Matthew was an exceptional student of the Old Testament. He referred to the Old Testament more than ninety times in his gospel. Dear Lord, help me to be your instrument in calling someone today from a place of business to leave all and follow you. There are thousands of men and women who are sick and tired of the useless routine of their job — they are hoping — perhaps only subconsciously, for someone to come and call them out. Could it be that leaving all could also mean leaving all the wrong attitudes that hinder our following him right in the place where we work?

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for Jesus' penetrating look — he looks into the heart. (2) Thank you Jesus does not quibble about what kind of a job we have. (3) Thank you for those all encompassing two words: "Follow me"! (4) Thank you for daring courageous men who will get up and go. (5) Thank you for careful precise students who will get up and go. (6) Thank you for older men who have been in business for several years who will leave all and follow him. (7) Thank you that all these men are the same man — his name is Matthew Levi.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... Matthew got up and followed him." This is recorded by the man who did it. Matthew tries to be

as objective as he can. It is the other writers, Mark and Luke, who call him Matthew *Levi*. Was there something in his life that caused him to withhold the name of the father of the Jewish priesthood? When our Lord spoke, Matthew was ready. The tax collector was a man of decision and resolve. When he committed himself he did not look back. We could pose several possible reasons: (1) Here was an opportunity to clear his conscience once and for all. (2) He had followed the activities of this Nazarene and with Matthew's knowledge of the Old Testament he was convinced Jesus was the Christ. (3) Pressures were so high in his job he was glad for a way out. Perhaps none of these relate to the real reason but they do speak to our own hearts.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Oh, for the joy of decision seen in the example of Levi! (1) Keep me aware of your involvement in my life long before you called me. (2) Keep my heart sensitive enough that I can answer when you call. (3) Break me away from the love of money. (4) May I always remember that the whole Christian life is summed up in following Jesus. (5) Open my heart to these words: "... left everything and followed him." (6) Give me the wisdom I need to apply the scriptures I have learned to following your Son. (7) May the example of Matthew never leave me.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Call me again through these verses: (1) "All men have 'a booth' from which I call them — understand them as my Son did and I will call them through you." (2) "My calling is as continual as the need." (3) "Many are called but only a few hear my voice."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Philippines — Point for prayer: (1) *Minority groups:* *The Chinese* number 500,000 but only 3% are Christian. There are over 40 Chinese churches in the Manila area that are strong with a missionary vision, but many are still in darkness.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Does sadness fill my mind,
A solace here I find:
May Jesus Christ be praised;
Or fades my earthly bliss,
My comfort still is this;
May Jesus Christ be praised.

WEEK TWELVE

—Friday—

“Steadfastness is part of God’s character — but it can also be a quality of your character. Awake my Soul! Spare no expense — people are more important than money.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast! I will sing and make melody! Awake my soul! Awake, O harp and lyre! I will awake the dawn!” (Psa. 108:1,2). How often have I felt even as the psalmist — how more often I have not — you know and you understand better than I. Confidence, assurance and trust; all of these are qualities I want to find in my heart, in my attitude toward you. Steadfastness or confident trust is a result of accepting the full weight of evidence. These words of the psalmist describe the attitude all men should have. Considering all you are and have done, this is but a personable expression of our joy and praise.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Praise you for all you mean to me. The weight of some responsibility holds us down. Why? Is not your greatness and goodness more important than any task we have to perform? Indeed! “Awake thy soul.” Songs and expressions of joy are a natural response to your goodness and mercy! All men and women can be musicians in imagination and lift the harp and lyre to express their melody of adoration. How shall I respond to that beautiful little phrase: “I will awake the dawn”? I could read ten books or more and see what others have said, but I want this to be a personal expression of my praise to you. Is this the dawn of my true awareness of your greatness? Surely this is a dawn that needs awakening. Is this the dawn of the eternal day and my confidence in its appearance? Is this the dawn that even now breaks in the eastern sky to tell me of your faithfulness for the ten thousand days I have enjoyed from your hand? Yea, it is all this, and more!

How do you personally relate to the joy of God, and God who is Joy? Speak it out or write it out.

CONFESSION OF SIN

In the presence of praise I am silent. When I should be shouting for joy, I am sad. Why? Selfishness — a real conflict of interest! Turn me, oh turn me from the absorbing attraction of this world, in whatever form. Praise and wonder not only represent a right attitude — all other attitudes are involved. Is it a sin not to be delighted when someone has died to give you life? Is it wrong to remain aloof when all the riches of heaven have been poured at your feet? It is not wrong; it is monstrously sinful! Of this sin I am guilty! I am *not* discussing emotion; I *am* discussing a fundamental attitude expressed in emotion. If I do not from time to time “make melody and sing,” if I seldom or ever want to “awake the dawn” am I not in the “bond of iniquity,” the worst of sin: ingratitude! Forgive, forgive me! Awake the dawn of unending joy in your presence!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I yielded myself to His tender embrace,
And faith taking hold of the Word,
My fetters fell off, and I anchored my soul;
The “Haven of Rest” is my Lord.
I’ve anchored my soul in the “Haven of Rest,”
I’ll sail the wide seas no more;
The tempest may sweep o’er the wild, stormy deep,
In Jesus I’m safe evermore.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹⁰While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and “sinners” came and ate with him and his disciples. —Matt. 9:10, NIV

¹⁵While Jesus was having dinner at Levi’s house, many tax collectors and “sinners” were eating with

him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. —*Mark 2:15, NIV*

²⁹Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. —*Luke 5:29, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I imagine you were most pleased when Matthew decided to celebrate his decision to follow your Son. It must have been a real joy to your heart to find this man who wanted to share his discovery and decision with his fellow tax collectors. Jesus did indeed become a friend of the poorest people: prostitutes, lepers, tax-collectors, and other sinners not mentioned by profession. Dear Lord, how is it we do not follow him in this practice? Are we just religious — like some others who associated with Jesus? Dear Lord, deliver me! Jesus attended the feast Matthew gave.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

In answer to the above question: I believe I would indeed go! For today — if one of the Mafia was called to follow our Lord and he gave a great feast in his house and there was a large company of other Mafia members and other sinners seated at the table and also mingling in the rooms of his house, would I go? What was the attraction at Matthew's feast? It was Jesus. It was the possibility of meeting the Messiah. Most, if not all, who attended Matthew's feast were Jews. What would be the attraction at the Mafia feast? Of course, it is easy to say that Jesus would be the attraction, but how can we present him in the same attractive way that Matthew did? Dear Lord, you know I am reading these verses into my own experience — help me!

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for Levi who entered a new priesthood. (2) Thank you for the joy that filled Matthew's heart. (3) Thank you this man wanted, indeed he *must* share his joy with others. (4) Thank you his decision included his money. (5) Thank you that he had not talked first to the Pharisees about his decision to give a feast. (6) Thank you that food was a part of fellowship with Jesus. (7) Thank you for our Lord's openness and freedom in making choices — may his choices be mine and I know such openness and freedom will also be mine.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . and there was a large company of tax collectors and others sitting at the table with them.” What a celebration it was! Matthew had found the Messiah and he wanted everyone to know about it! There are several interesting factors in this celebration: (1) He

was willing to spend a good deal of money to let people know about Jesus. We can only estimate the financial outlay involved in the feast. (2) He wanted to “go public” in his expression of discovery. He did just what our Lord recommended: he wanted to shout it from the housetops. (3) He knew the social risks involved. The criticism of the Pharisees was not unexpected. This was just a part of being willing to let everyone know that he was leaving all and following him. (4) Perhaps he knew there were other tax collectors who were as frustrated as he was — they too could make such a decision; he wanted to help them with it.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Did Levi pray before he called the feast for Jesus? What were his requests? (1) I want to invite Jesus again and again to dine with me. (2) Help me to have ears to hear his every word. (3) Open the hearts of the friends I have invited to this feast. (4) May the disciples not misunderstand my motives. (5) May my former sin not hinder my testimony. (6) May many more accept him as Messiah because of what happens tonight. (7) Deepen my commitment to him as a result of what I see and hear at this feast.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me — as you doubtless did to Levi: (1) “Knife and fork evangelism will work today if Jesus is at the dinner.” (2) “Spare no expense — eternal people are more important than money.” (3) “Sinners are attracted to someone who spends his money on them.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Philippines — Points for prayer: (1) *Minority groups: The Muslims* — there has been work among them but with little response, though praise God that there are five or so congregations made up almost entirely of converted Muslims. Much of the thrust has been among the pagan and Roman Catholic people in the area. Work among the Muslims has been greatly hindered by the continuing guerilla war in which the Muslims seek to secede. Pray for peace and open hearts among these Muslim people. Pray also for the new outreach of missionaries to Muslims in Mindanao — there are several translation teams among them.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

There is never a cross so heavy,
There is never a weight of woe,
But that Jesus will help to carry
Because He loveth so.

Wonderful, wonderful Jesus,
In the heart He implanteth a song:
A song of deliv'rance, of courage, of strength,
In the heart He implanteth a song.

WEEK TWELVE

—Saturday—

“I am exalted — but most men do not know it. My very nature is seen in what I have made — but most do not know it. There are many men who are just waiting for someone to say a word for me.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let thy glory be over all the earth! That thy beloved may be delivered, give help by thy right hand, and answer me!” (Psa. 108:5,6). Such beautiful qualities of yourself are seen! Your power and greatness call forth praise and wonder. There is no way we could express your immense greatness; your exaltation could never be put into words. “. . . above the heavens” is much more meaningful now (or is it?) than when written. Did the psalmist know just how extensive that word “heavens” was? We could say, and do say, today “be exalted above ten million galaxies.” In my estimation you are indeed so exalted! When the psalmist asks that “your glory be over all the earth,” I want to shout amen! I do so fully agree with him. When the term glory is used to describe “character,” I agree even more!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. To continue my praise: This is one tremendous thought: that all the attributes of yourself would be seen and appreciated over all the earth. When we remember that you are fully shown to man in the person of your Son, we can more fully agree with the psalmist.

The purpose of the above praise was: “that thy beloved may be delivered, give help by thy right hand, and answer me!” This is no doubt David’s request as he flees from Saul. At the same time there is so much in the expression full of meaning for me. You loved David. David felt free to use this endearing term. David knew he was loved. There is nothing for which I could more fully praise you. That you love me! Time after time you have let me know I am loved.

How do you personally relate to the exaltation of God, and God who is exalted? Speak it out or write it out.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Somehow I fail to remember or I have lost my sight, or I am surely dull of hearing! I am cultivating the habit of seeing your exalted position in this world and in the heaven of heavens. But my perception does need sharpening, my habit needs to go deeper. I want to integrate a God-view, i.e., your view of everything and everyone. As you know I am so far short of this now. Please forgive me! How easy it is to exalt man, or man’s accomplishments. I cry and pray with David, “That thy beloved may be delivered, give help by thy right hand, and answer me!” I am pursued by someone far worse than King Saul. How close Satan has come to overcoming me! Dear God, only you can deliver. Only your might can prevail.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Open my eyes, that I may see
Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me;
Place in my hands the wonderful key
That shall unclasp, and set me free.
Silently now I wait for Thee,
Ready, my God, Thy will to see;
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹¹When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and ‘sinners’?”

¹²On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy that need a doctor, but the sick. ¹³But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

—Matt. 9:11-13, NIV

¹⁶When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the “sinners” and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: “Why does he eat with tax collectors and ‘sinners?’”

¹⁷On hearing this, Jesus said to them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” —Mark 2:16,17, NIV

³⁰But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and ‘sinners?’”

³¹Jesus answered them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ³²I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” —Luke 5:30-32, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It is a real honor to read this word as if, and indeed it is true, you were the silent listener to what I read. Since I am the sinner Jesus came to forgive and I am the sick he came to heal I can read this with real enthusiasm. The Pharisees and their scribes are saying that association is contamination. My Lord says he comes as a doctor to the sick. He comes as a teacher to the ignorant and unenlightened. There could be no healing without a doctor. There could be no learning without a teacher.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How I want to learn in all its depth of significance the meaning of these words: “I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.” Are you saying: “I want you to be more interested in the application of my law than repeating the words of it over and over again”? You are more interested in the meaning of the sacrifice than the sacrifice itself; why did men need to offer the millions of animals upon the thousands of altars? — because they needed mercy — the animal took the place of the worshiper; he was there at the altar to obtain mercy. You want to give man mercy and not to only move him to kill another animal.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you that there was a conflict — we can learn by this experience. (2) Thank you the tax collectors and other sinners thought enough of Matthew to accept his invitation. (3) Thank you for the kindness that filled the heart of Jesus toward the house full of sinners. (4) Thank you for our Lord’s characterization of himself as a physician. (5) Thank you that Jesus called himself a teacher who could change minds (the meaning of the word “repentance”). (6) Thank you my dear Lord is even now calling me to leave all that hinders my following him.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” Such a welcome word! Evidently there were men in the day of the Lord who considered themselves righteous, i.e., they believed their conduct was so exemplary that God had to give them heaven. For those who are honest with themselves no such claim would ever be made. In what way did our Savior “call” men? We can think of at least three ways: (1) He called men to himself by his teachings. In his words there was such light and hope that men wanted to leave all and hear more and more and more. So today, he calls us through what he says to us in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. (2) He called men by his life or his conduct. There was something marvelously magnetic about his presence. (3) He called men by what he did. His miracles attracted a multitude. His death for all us sinners calls us to himself like no other one thing!

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Dear Lord, I am the sick, I am the sinner — I want to attend Matthew’s banquet and petition you for my needs: (1) I have real hearing problems — open my inner ear. (2) How can I make every meal one with you? (3) It is so good to read here of the social relationships of my Lord, I want to imitate him — help me. (4) Heal the wounds of my heart — yea, give me a new heart. (5) Guard me from the infection of the spirit of this world. (6) I am so glad to claim your mercy in my stupid sinfulness. (7) Thank you for the sacrifice that makes me righteous.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me through the words of your Son to the Pharisees: (1) “I am still able to heal the worst of sickness in the soul.” (2) “I am still calling sinners — listen — you can hear me!” (3) “There are men just like Matthew waiting in their booth — yea, we are all so much like him — look up, I am passing by!”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Philippines — Point for prayer: (1) *Minority groups: The animist tribes* — pray for the work in Palawan and Luzon, in the Mangyan tribes of Mindoro and in various tribes in Mindanao. Pray for the tribal churches and their spiritual growth and raising up of mature leaders able to teach their people and prepare them for their ever increasing involvement in national life.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;
Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and Mighty!
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Sunday—

“God is most concerned with the needy — he is their ‘right hand’ — who will communicate this knowledge to them? Fasting can — and does relate to the humbling of your whole life.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“With my mouth I will give great thanks to the Lord; I will praise him in the midst of the throng. For he stands at the right hand of the needy, to save him from those who condemn him to death” (Psa. 109:30,31).

With all my heart I praise you for the following: (1) That I can even put into words the poor expression of praise I lift up to you. (2) That I have a great desire to thank you — over and over again. (3) That I am not at all ashamed to express my joy and love for you in the midst of a crowd, or in the presence of those who do not know you. (4) That I can remember so many times when you have helped the needy — not only myself. (5) When all men were condemned to eternal death you stepped in to die in our place — oh, blessed be forever your wonderful name.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I want to review each of these five points from a purely personal view: (1) There is no point in emphasizing what is more than obvious to you. I have a real problem expressing the true expression of praise due to yourself. Such will it ever be until I awake in his likeness. (2) As you know my heart — and I'm sure you are the only one who does — there is a continual urgency of thanksgiving with me. Not as pure and whole as I would want it, but there nonetheless. (3) I have given a word of praise and recognition of you before strangers to your name — I want to do it so much more effectively. (4) Dear Lord, how many times you have lifted me up and restored my soul! Bless your name. (5) I know I have been under the sentence of eternal death and you saved me from the guilt and power of my own sin! “With my mouth will I give great thanks to you, my Lord!”

How do you personally relate to the deliverance of God, and God who is our Salvation?

CONFESSION OF SIN

It would be easy to review each of the above five points and know how none of them are true, i.e., in any absolute sense: (1) I do not thank you as I should. (2) The urgency of thanksgiving is not as great as you deserve. (3) I have been silent amid some who needed a word of praise about you. (4) My neediness has been because of my own selfishness. (5) I deserve to die the eternal death of hell. In the midst of this sad confession of sins comes the bright truth that you already know it and have sent your Son to forgive me. I hide nothing from you. There is no sin that cannot be removed and forgotten. Bless your wonderful name. I am so glad you are willing to accept me for my intentions and fill in the blank spaces with your mercy. Joy of all joys — I am loved and forgiven.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Tempted and tried I need a great Savior,
One who can help my burdens to bear;
I must tell Jesus, I must tell Jesus;
He all my cares and sorrows will share.
I must tell Jesus! I must tell Jesus!
I cannot bear my burdens alone;
I must tell Jesus! I must tell Jesus!
Jesus can help me, Jesus alone.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹⁴Then John's disciples came and asked him, “How is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?”

¹⁵Jesus answered, “How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from

them; then they will fast.

¹⁶“No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth to an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse. ¹⁷Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.” —*Matthew 9:14-17, NIV* (Cf. *Mark 2:18-22; Luke 5:33-39.*)

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, there is so much in this text! I hardly know where to begin. I know you saw every one of the men who approached our Lord. Was Jesus still at the feast in Matthew's house? Had John's disciples heard about the feast and come to see if the report was true? If John's disciples had adopted the fast days of the Pharisees and the feast of Levi was held on one of those days it would indeed be a cause of concern for these conscientious disciples. Your Son always has the right, and totally convincing answer. The Pharisees fasted by law; they were motivated to fast not by need but by rule. Jesus said both feasting and fasting are a result not a cause — a means not an end. Is your Son saying: “We are as happy as the bridegroom and his guests; how can we fast?”

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

My Lord says to me he came to give me new wine and a new wineskin. He came as the bridegroom. He also said that at appropriate times when he is away we will have reason to fast. Fasting is spontaneous as a result of need. But there *are* needs that move us to fast. At the same time, the joy of the new garment of undeserved righteousness and the new wine of the Holy Spirit's presence in our lives while living in our bodies is such that most of the “time” or “day” will be spent in righteousness and joy. I want to enter fully into the appreciation of this “*newness of life.*” Bless your name!

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the dear sincere followers of John the Baptist. (2) Thank you they came to the one who caused the problem in their heart. (3) Thank you for the mercifully kind manner in which our Lord dealt with them. (4) Thank you for my wonderful bridegroom — most especially since all Christians are the bride. (5) Thank you for the ominous word that we are living in the day when there will be and are occasions for fasting. (6) Thank you for the best robe in my Father's house — the new garment of acceptance. (7) Thank you for the new wine of joy and righteousness in the Holy Spirit.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.” Dear Father, how can I be a new wineskin? Both the new wine and the new wineskin are important. This is saying that both the gospel and those who contain it or carry it must be considered. If I am not fresh and elastic the new wine will cause me no end of problems.

It might be appropriate to also meditate upon the little phrase “. . . no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for he says, ‘The old is better.’ ” This is saying that it is almost impossible to break some people away from the old traditional forms.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the questioning of my Lord about fasting I too have some questions. I will put them in the form of petitions: (1) Open my heart that I might see the practical use of fasting in my life. (2) I do want to learn from the disciples of John the Baptist — such devout good men — teach me. (3) Speak to my heart as the bride awaiting the coming of the bridegroom — I do have areas for fasting. (4) Your Son is indeed taken away from us — does fasting relate to his return? (5) How can I relate my own personal life to the old and new garments?

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I know you have much to say to me about fasting: (1) “Fasting has never been an end in itself — please do not make it one now.” (2) “Fasting can help like nothing else in reaching some goals.” (3) “Fasting can relate directly to the humbling of your heart and whole life.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Philippines — Point for prayer: (1) *Christian Radio* — extensive use has been made of both the radio and T.V. media by denominations and interdenominational groups. The largest work has headquarters in Manila, with a staff of over 200 in radio, printing, programming and follow-up ministries. Pray for these brethren that they may know the blessing of the Lord on their lives as they serve — often behind the scenes. Pray for the smooth running of equipment, the supply of funds and programs, for the spiritual impact in the Philippines and also the closed lands of Asia.

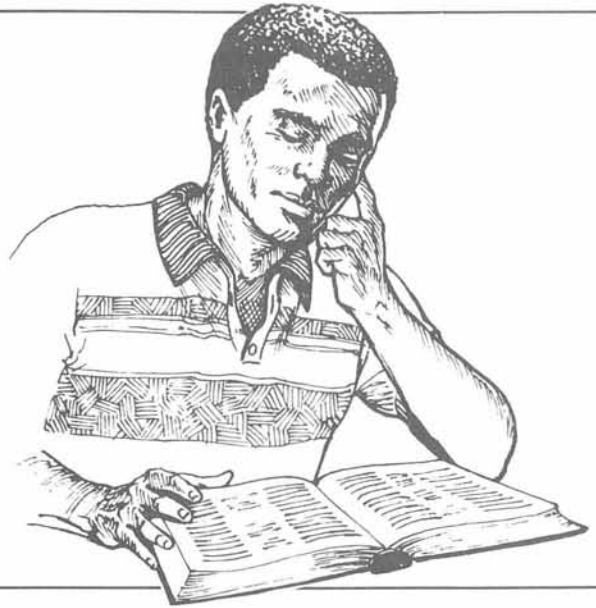
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

O worship the King, all glorious above,
And gratefully sing His wonderful love;
Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of days,
Pavilioned in splendor, and girded with praise.

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Monday—

“Great — oh, so great are my works — but only those who have pleasure in me know it! Study — examine my works — my signature is in all of them. I give no false hope to anyone — any time.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Praise the Lord, I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, in the company of the upright in the congregation. Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who have pleasure in them” (Psa. 111:1,2). Each day there are new attributes for which I can praise you. For the privilege of praise in the “company of the upright.” I am glad you are a gregarious Person, i.e., one who enjoys being with people. You live in us privately, but at the same time you mix and move among the assembly as we sing your people. You live in us privately, but at the same time you mix and move among the assembly as we sing your cup. I realize the text hints at the temple or tabernacle, but you haven’t changed since the places of worship have. Another quality of yourself for which I praise you with my whole heart is that the more I study you the more I love you. You wear so well!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I mix the emphasis and get more of the subjective element in the above than I really intend to. Just now I want to fasten on each of the lovely phrases of these two verses: (1) Thanks with the whole heart. My whole understanding — my whole desire to do what I understand — my whole capacity for affection — my whole sense of evaluation for what is excellent; with my whole heart I thank you. (2) I want to offer this gratitude in the presence of others. May I find occasion for doing this today. (3) I want to study in as much detail as possible your works in this world. I can begin with the creation all about me. I can look beyond to your new creation in the lives of the saved. What a wonder of praise arises even as I begin this investigation.

How do you personally relate to the works of God, and God who is the worker? Speak it out or write it out.

CONFESSION OF SIN

How often should thanksgiving arise from my heart to you? I know there can be no specified number given. It does, however, seem to me that all of my life should be lived in the fundamental attitude of thanksgiving. How calm and poised and cheerful would I be if I was conscious of your goodness moment by moment. Dear Lord, the above description is almost an absurdity — as you know. “For him who knows to do right and does not do it” (James 4:17). It is a sin — but a sin of loss — the loss of good. The emphasis is not on the guilt, but the mixed blessing. “The saddest words of tongue or pen are these words: It might have been.” This is my confession as related to living a life of gratitude. Dear Lord, forgive me, but move me to change.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

“Give me thy heart,” says the Father above,
No gift so precious to Him as our love,
Softly he whispers wherever thou art,
“Gratefully trust me, and give me thy heart.”
“Give me thy heart,
“Give me thy heart,”

Hear the soft whisper, wherever thou art;
From this dark world He would draw thee apart,
Speaking so tenderly, “Give me thy heart.”

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a **5** feast of the Jews. ²Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. ³Here a great number of disabled people used to lie — the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. ⁵One

who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. ⁶When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?" ⁷"Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me." ⁸Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." ⁹At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. — *John 5:1-9a, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How delighted I am to read this word in your presence! It is the essence of your son's work: to make men whole! How well does the pool of Bethesda represent all men. Always so near to help and yet so far away! It is my dear Lord who walks among the disabled, the blind, the lame and the paralyzed. What would it be to have been an invalid for thirty-eight years? Jesus wanted to find out. He didn't need to ask, but he did. When natural means would supply the answer he obtained the answer by natural means.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How good to know Jesus is alive today! He yet mingles among men on the five porches of life. In my life he meets me in the following places: (1) The porch of the morning — I am glad to meet him here. His healing wholeness is ever fresh and ever needed. It is easy to see him and hear him in this porch of prayer. (2) The porch of the 10 a.m. break — there is always a pause in mid-morning. It is easier to miss him here, but how good it is when I meet him. (3) The porch of noon — I want always to have lunch with my Lord. (4) The porch of the 3 p.m. break time — when I am tired, and sometimes sleepy, it is such a blessing to hear him say: "Do you *still* want to be whole?" (5) The porch of the close of the day — to close out the day with him fulfills his words, "I will give you rest for your soul."

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you that Jesus sought out the place of need. (2) Thank you my Lord spiritually opens blind eyes. (3) Thank you there are no crippled people in the presence of Jesus in heaven. (4) Thank you Jesus cares enough to want to know all about our needs (and we can openly tell him). (5) Thank you Jesus still asks all men: "Do you want to get well?"

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked." The qualities of yourself are seen in

your action: (1) You act "at once"; there is no hesitancy or indecision. With one exception, all the healings of my Lord were instantaneous. (The exception is in another class and has its own reasons.) (2) The illness of the man was entirely removed. He did not have faith so he had no lapse of faith and a return to the sickness. Praise your wonderful name that when you remove something, it is gone! (3) Your works all carry with them the ability to do what is commanded. Jesus asked the man to walk.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Surely there is much to learn in the area of prayer in this text: (1) Jesus saw human need in the midst of public worship — open my eyes! (2) How much like the whole world is the porch upon which a great many disabled people lie. Open my eyes to their needs. (3) I can't help everyone, but I can help someone — lead me to him. (4) Give me the grace that filled my Lord's heart as he made inquiry about the man's condition — may I do like wise. (5) Help me to ask the same kind of penetrating question my Lord asked — to those who hurt.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In the midst of this incident we can yet hear the voice of Jesus speaking to us: (1) "Do you really want to be made whole or only to complain about your problems?" (2) "I see everyone but I only speak to those who will hear me." (3) "I will never give a false hope to anyone who wants to be made whole."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Singapore Population 2,400,000. Growth rate — 1.6%. People per sq. km. — 4,200.

Point for prayer: (1) *Singapore* has, proportionately, one of the largest Christian communities in Asia today, with many young people seeking the Lord. Most of the Protestant Churches are Bible believing and evangelistic and now number around 250. House churches are multiplying rapidly to cater for the nearly 60% of the population living in high rise flats. Pray for a continuing harvest among people of many races who are being uprooted and thrust into the modern materialistic age.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine,
For Thee all the follies of sin I resign;
My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Tuesday—

“To reverence me in the depth of your being is indeed the beginning of your discovery of all that I am. I deserve to be praised forever! Remember: sins can be, yea ARE progressive!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who preach it. His praise endures forever” (Psa. 111:10). This has been a favorite verse for a multitude of people for many years. I do want to enter into a deeper appreciation of yourself through this open door. Perhaps I can reason from the result back to the cause. The result of the fear of yourself is that I shall have the best use of the knowledge I possess. I believe wisdom is the best use of knowledge. I am defining the term “fear” as *reverence or awe*. When I fall before you in amazement, as indeed I do, then I shall better be able to evaluate all I know of life. My reverence toward you is something I practice — it becomes a life-style. Such a concept produces a humble-mindedness I surely need. The result in my own life is “good” in the sense that I cannot find such goodness anywhere else!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Dear Lord, I do fear you in the sense of holy reverence and amazement. I could say I fear you in the sense of being afraid if I did not know you love me with an everlasting love, or as the psalmist has said so often, “his love endures forever.” Your power and majesty are not used to impress me. I am impressed because of them. Your incredible wisdom (the application of your knowledge) is not there to show me how little I know — you have shown me and all men what you are as a fact. Our response is a result of our relationship with you. In my case I want to understand all of the characteristics or attributes of yourself I can. I shall really never be able to appreciate you as fully as I want until I arrive in the world to come. While here I want to honor and worship you. Bless your holy name.

How do you personally relate to the majesty of God, and God who is worthy of awe?

CONFESSION OF SIN

Of course, I could say that I do not reverence you as I should, and that would be a vast understatement, But it would at the same time be superficial. Somehow my reverence and respect toward you has not been integrated into my inmost being deeply enough to influence my basic attitude toward all of life. I want to practice my “fear” of yourself far more often and in many more relationships than I have in times past. Please forgive me for what must be one of the most serious of my sins. If reverence and respect for you is the beginning of understanding then not to practice it is stupidity personified! In the eons of eternity all men and angels will praise you — I want to add my voice to them. Cleanse me and open my understanding!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Oh, the pure delight of a single hour
That before Thy throne I spend,
When I kneel in prayer, and with Thee, my God
I commune as friend with friend!
Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To the cross where Thou hast died;
Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To Thy precious, bleeding side.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

The day on which this took place was a Sabbath,¹⁰ and so the Jews said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat.”

¹¹But he replied, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’ ”

¹²So they asked him, “Who was this fellow who told you to pick up and walk?”

¹³The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.

¹⁴Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, “See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.” ¹⁵The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. —*John 5:9b-15, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Whereas I look back upon this incident as I read it in John’s record you do not. It just happened in your frame of reference. Since there is no time with you there is no past, present or future. When I think as you do (how poorly I do it), I do see this sign as a contemporary record for my learning. Only you can know the motives behind the words of the Jews who said: “it is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat.” Their total silence about the fact that the man was healed does indicate something about their hearts. Dear Lord, focus my heart on the needs of people and not on outward form. Your purpose in telling this story through John is to shock all us religious people as to the value of man above the law.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

The primary purpose of this miracle was to point away from the sign to the sign maker — even my wonderful Lord! Why did Jesus choose to walk into the area of the five porches on the Sabbath? It was only one of seven days — he could have waited one more day — the man had been there thirty-eight years already. I want to see it for what it really was: a deliberate choice on my Lord’s part to teach me something. What is it? (1) The day of worship can become more important than what you do on the day. (2) The Lordship and deity of Jesus supersedes any consideration of any day. (3) Conduct has a direct bearing on our response to what Jesus has done for us: “Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.”

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the wonderful “day of rest” when we were raised up to walk in newness of life. (2) Thank you for the bold candid answer of the man who was healed. (3) Thank you that he is not named so all of us can supply our name. (4) Thank you for the obvious supernatural nature of this act. (5) Thank you that Jesus found him — he always does. (6) Thank you that Jesus connected gratitude and living with healing. (7) Thank you the lame man was ready to endanger himself to tell about Jesus.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.” This man felt a responsibility in two directions. He was full of joy at this healing and was drawn to the one who had made him well. At the same time, he knew the Jews had the power to make it very difficult for him socially so he felt he must tell them who it was who healed him. The man had something in his life to which our Lord pointed when he said, “stop sinning.” Perhaps in this man’s early life he sinned in such a manner that he found himself a cripple for life. Evidently this man sustained his wrong attitude all during those long more than thirty-eight years. Jesus is saying, “Give it up; forget about it.”

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

The encounter and testimony of the man made whole contains much to help us to pray: (1) Keep me in the center of spiritual need when I consider the questions of tradition. (2) How often have I emphasized the law and forgotten the purpose of the law? Remind me, dear Lord! (3) Keep me aware that the command of my Lord supersedes all other commands. (4) How could these men totally ignore this obvious miracle? There are lessons in this for me! (5) Jesus linked sin and health — I wish I knew much more about this — help me. (6) “Something worse” has happened to many who have continued to sin — keep me sensitive to this great eternal transaction.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

There seems no way that the persons in this record can ignore your Son. I too want to confront him: (1) “I am in the crowd, but I know where you are, and I love you.” (2) “Remember sin can be progressive.” (3) “Your healing makes you responsible to the healer.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Singapore — Point for prayer: (1) *The Church in Singapore* is largely divided along ethnic lines, but an increasing number of people are using English. There is a need for more full time workers who are able to minister in the many house churches (church buildings are too expensive due to the lack of land) and really give Bible teaching. Some feel that the foreign influence in the churches is still too great and initiative is stifled.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

“Man of Sorrows,” what a name
For the Son of God who came
Ruined sinners to reclaim!
Hallelujah! what a Savior!

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Wednesday—

“If you praised me from the time you opened your eyes in the morning until you closed them at night you would not exhaust my attributes. A time is coming when men shall do this with the angels.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and for evermore! From the rising of the sun to its setting the name of the Lord is to be praised!” (Psa. 113:2,3).

In each of these expressions I want to find a new expression or facet of praise. I want each day to lift up a fresh quality of your value and praise you! I understand the use of the word “blessed” to refer to this very practice. I feel foolish telling all this to you, but it does me good to put it down in words. Your greatness and goodness are such that man need never exhaust the qualities of praise. As the sun begins to rise in the east we can begin our praise; as it sets in the west we are yet expressing our wonder over your divine nature. Man is constantly talking — from the rising of the sun to the setting thereof — what is he saying? He speaks what is in his heart!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Dear Lord, such was said to you because I feel so strongly about it. I want on this day to list a few qualities that arise from my heart to you. I am poorly equipped to continue in this throughout the day, but I want to develop a basic attitude of praise that could prompt pause several times through the hours of this day. (1) I bless your name for your eternal nature. It is such a strength to worship Someone who never changes! (2) Praise you for the balanced arrangement of day and night. The beauty of change in your creation is a lovely contrast to the unchangeableness of yourself. (3) Praise you that we are only living in the vestibule of your eternal temple. Somehow I believe the veil of death will open from this vestibule into the life we could never in our wildest imagination ever conceive! Keep me open and sensitive to you today.

How do you personally relate to the eternalness of God, and God who is eternal?

CONFESSION OF SIN

So often do I confess my oft repeated sin of being taken captive. As I pause here before your throne I know (as I should have known earlier) it was my thoughts that were captivated. How I praise you that I read in your word that “every thought can be taken captive for King Jesus,” or *by my Lord*. It is in the thought life the battle is won or lost. Upon what shall I meditate today? I know what you have said — I agree to it, but *how* shall I do it? This prayer time is a tremendous help, but I want to carry worship into all of life. Help me! At the opening of such a pursuit I need forgiveness and cleansing. I cannot and do not pretend with you. I name and admit each sin. I am lifted up by forgiveness. I want to remember that most growth is imperceptible — most of all by the one who is growing.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Standing on the promises of Christ my King,
Thro’ eternal ages let His praises ring;
Glory in the highest, I will shout and sing,
Standing on the promises of God.
Standing, standing,
Standing on the promises of God my Savior;
Standing, standing,
I’m standing on the promises of God.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹⁶So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him. ¹⁷Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.” ¹⁸For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own

Father, making himself equal with God.

¹⁹Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees the Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. ²⁰For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these. ²¹For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. ²²Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, ²³that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

²⁴"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

²⁵I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. —John 5:16-25, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I am overcome by the power and meaning of these words! The best I can do is to read them over again three times audibly and allow them to become what they really are: your Son and yourself speaking to me!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How shocking is all this section! I want to absorb all the claims of my Lord in these verses: (1) Jesus ignored human claims to authority in divine decisions. (2) Jesus opens their minds to a thought never entertained — "God works on Saturday"! Since God does and he is my Father, I will too. (3) Jesus clearly claimed equality to God. (4) Jesus said he and God were co-equal partners in all Jesus did — at the same time, all the Father did he cleared with the Son. (5) There are much greater works coming than the one you have just seen. (6) God raises the dead and so will the Son. (7) The Father has turned all judgment over to the Son (the amazement was that the Judge of every man who would ever live was standing before them!). (8) Equal honor was to be given to God and Jesus. How wonderful it is to worship you!

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you that right now I have eternal life — my name is already recorded in the roll call of heaven. (2) Thank you that I have passed over from eternal death to eternal life. (3) Thank you that even now the dead in trespasses are hearing his voice and being resurrected. (4) Thank you that Jesus is the judge. I am glad to commit myself to him. (5) Thank you for the promise of the resurrection of all who are in the tombs. (6) Thank you for the total confidence Jesus had in himself — all he said and all he did.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"I can do nothing on my own authority; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own but the will of him who sent me." It seems too bad that we have such a little time and space to consider this tremendous text. My dear Lord spoke such wonderful words. Truly, never man so spoke! I want to separate a few of the jewels here. (1) Jesus did utterly nothing on his own authority. He was in constant contact with you and acted and spoke under your direction. (2) My Lord was "tuned in" on the frequency of heaven and heard from you on every matter of judgment. (3) He was totally submissive to you in all areas of life. In word and in deed it was not his will but yours he sought throughout his life.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Requests I find in these words of my Lord: (1) I want to share with you in the work you have for this day. (2) Open my heart to receive the demands of the deity of Jesus. (3) I want to be able to identify your work in the hearts of people. (4) Keep me aware of the tremendous authority entrusted to your Son. (5) I want to judge myself that I will not be condemned with the world. (6) I claim my possession of eternal life — open the eyes of my heart as I read your word. (7) Prepare me for the hour of resurrection.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

My Lord surely reaches my heart in these words: (1) "My Father is always at his work. . . ." (2) "He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him." (3) ". . . a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Singapore — Point for prayer: (1) *Bible training* is given in seven Seminaries and Bible Schools. Many young people have gone out to serve the Lord in Singapore Churches and also on the mission field.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Risen for me, risen for me,
Up from the grave He has risen for me;
Now evermore from death's sting I am free,
All because Jesus was risen for me.

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Thursday—

“God is listening even if we feel he is not — our feelings do not change his mind nor affect his plans. I want to enjoy all the light I have — not complain about the darkness.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I love the Lord, he has heard my voice and my supplication. Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live” (Psa. 116:1,2). This seems an almost selfish reason for prayer. If I look behind these words to the One to whom they are directed all selfishness disappears. We lift our most personal and intimate requests to you because we know you understand as no one else ever could! Not only do your sheep know *your voice* — you know ours. Supplications are the deep needs of our lives. You are never too busy or too involved with your own thoughts to listen to our ignorant cries. There is a sympathetic personal interest in every need. You are always alertly interested in all we say.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. There are times, many times when our requests are full of ignorance and selfishness. But you listen and do not chide us for asking. There are times when I should have been bolder and kept on asking and kept on knocking. But regardless of how well or how poorly I prayed you always were (and are) ready to give your individual attention to what I say. This quality of yourself — along with the fact that you are able to do all things — moves me to exclaim with the psalmist “I will call on him as long as I live.” I believe you are interested in all I do — the largest help I can have is to keep the communication lines up and in use every day of my life — and many times during each day.

How do you personally relate to the alertness of God, and God who is always listening? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

How often can we use the words of Romans 8:26:

“. . . We know not how to pray as we ought. . . .” How I do wish I knew how to pray for all the financial transactions in my experience. The sin of it is I do not, many times, pray at all! Must I be pushed into a crisis before I pray? I want to mix prayer with my check writing — help me! How I do wish I knew how to pray about family conversation. The fact is we can talk with each other for hours and never get you into the scene. Dear God, forgive me! Somehow help me to lift my heart to you and to encourage others to lift their hearts to you in the midst of our talking to each other. Perhaps I am about to discover the meaning of the little phrase “pray without ceasing.” Praise you. Cleanse me!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Bless Thou the truth, dear Lord,
To me — to me —
As Thou didst bless the bread
By Galilee;
Then shall all bondage cease,
All fetters fall;
And I shall find my peace,
My All in All.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

³¹“If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid.

³²There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is valid.

³³“You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. ³⁴Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved. ³⁵John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light.

³⁶“I have testimony weightier than that of John. For

the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me. ³⁷And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, ³⁸nor does his voice dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. ³⁹You diligently study the Scriptures that testify about me, ⁴⁰yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

⁴¹“I do not accept praise from men, ⁴²but I know you. I know you do not have the love of God in your hearts. ⁴³I have come in my Father’s name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him. ⁴⁴How can you believe if you accept praise from another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God?

⁴⁵“But do not think that I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. ⁴⁶If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. ⁴⁷But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?” —*John 5:31-47, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

There is so much in this text, I want to do with it what we did with yesterday’s word: to read it audibly three times in your presence. To read it with real thought before your throne of grace.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

There are 16 verses in this beautiful text. There are 16 blessed truths for which I want to praise you: (1) Jesus was true because God said so. (2) Jesus agreed with God’s estimate of himself. (3) John bore witness to Jesus as truth. (4) If we do not accept such testimony we will be lost. (5) We can rejoice in the light John gave concerning Jesus. (6) Jesus has a greater word or light than John — our Lord’s works confirm this. (7) The Father spoke to and through the One he sent. (8) We must believe the words of our Lord to have God in us. (9) The Scriptures are full of testimony for our Lord. (10) To refuse Jesus is to refuse eternal life. (11) Jesus refused man’s glory of himself. (12) We can fail to have the love of God in us. (13) Jesus came to be received as from the Father. (14) To seek one another’s glory is to refuse the glory from God. (15) Moses is clear on who Jesus is. (16) If we believe Moses, we will believe Jesus.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the convincing testimony of the deity of Jesus. (2) Thank you for the burning and shining lamp of John the Baptist. (3) Thank you for the great works of my Lord which can convince all he is your Son. (4) Thank you we have heard the voice of God and have seen the form of God in Jesus. (5) Thank you that we can have God’s word living in our

minds and hearts. (6) Thank you for the wonderful witness of the Scriptures concerning your Son. (7) Thank you we have been warned of the deadly danger of receiving glory from men.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“How can you believe, who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?” Here is a real hindrance to faith. It is easy to relate this to the Pharisees involved and forget the principle applies to all of us. Our trust and worship of our Lord is in the exact proportion to our pride. If we want praise for ourselves and offer the same kind of praise to those with whom we associate it will be impossible to believe One who claims total authority.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the testimonies about your Son I find real areas for petitions: (1) May I be willing to read and read again your testimony about your Son — and believe it! (2) How I would like to be like John — “a lamp” for you. (3) Open my mind to a deeper, fuller understanding of the works of your son. (4) May your word dwell in me richly. (5) Enlarge my appreciation of every word of your Scriptures. (6) For every day of my life I come to you for guidance — and believe you give it. (7) Guard me from the flattery of men.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

How I do want to hear with the inner ear your testimony: (1) “Your identity is also in my hands.” (2) “Enjoy all the light I have given you.” (3) “Diligently study the Scriptures — because they are your only source of faith and eternal life.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Singapore — Point for prayer: (1) *Young people* are open to the Gospel. It is reckoned that 30% of all university students claim to be Christian. Pray that converted young people may make a powerful impression on church and national life when their education is over — many fall away.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

All creatures of our God and King,
Lift up your voice and with us sing
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thou burning sun with golden beam,
Thou silver moon with softer gleam!
O praise Him, O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Friday—

“The Lord preserves the simple — i.e. the helpless — the guileless — I want to be that man. He can and does save me! Some men do not see because they do not want to — let God handle the problem!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The Lord preserves the simple; when I was brought low, he saved me. Return, O my soul, to your rest; for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you” (Psa. 116:6,7).

Thank you for these precious words! I realize the use of the word “simple” in this context refers to the helpless, the ignorant or the guileless. This is a general statement for encouragement as we consider your essential character, but at the same time, all men can at one time or another relate to this circumstance. Our ignorance could easily have destroyed us. We have found ourselves in a helpless circumstance — out of such you have delivered us. This kindness, this thoughtfulness, nay this *love* is the quality so much appreciated. Like David, we have felt like a willow branch hanging down. In your infinite grace you kept us from despair and saved us!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me — I am so glad to “return to my rest.” The words of my Lord are speaking to my soul: “Come unto me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest.” It is only under his yoke and in his school that I can find rest. Perhaps “restlessness” is the best one word to describe the bondage of sin. It is good that we run out of all resources; if we didn’t we might never run home. There is another motivation: we remember just who gave us the “good life” we are enjoying. “The Lord has dealt bountifully with you.” Once again your goodness leads us to repentance.

How do you personally relate to the restfulness of God, and God who is rest?

CONFESSION OF SIN

How shall I confess more or less than I have already

confessed? Essentially this is a confession of my ability to forget. This is an open admission of my willingness to be deceived. Sin is offered as an escape or a diversion from the dull routine of the daily round. The bait to this trap is the strong desires already in man. I do believe worship itself could be the wonderful alternative to sin. Worship is more than prayer — it is meditation on all you offer to man in your word. Worship is spending time with you. Once time is taken, once your word is opened, once contact and communication begin all the desires of my heart are taken up in the enjoyment of worship.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Holy, Holy Holy! Tho’ the darkness hide Thee,
Tho’ the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see,
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee
Perfect in pow’r, in love, and purity.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

12 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them.

²When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, “Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath.” —Matt. 12:1,2, NIV

²³One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. ²⁴The Pharisees said to him, “Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?” —Mark 2:23,24, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It is no problem for you to replay this incident. I want to share as much as possible with such a recrea-

tion of what happened in that grainfield of Galilee. How is it that Peter, James, John and Andrew did not know the law well enough that their conscience would prevent them from plucking the heads of grain? How is it that once they plucked them and began eating Jesus did not say something to them? The answer is obvious: the Pharisees have made an application of your law that was not intended. Dear Lord, this is the one large problem of religious men from that day till this day. It is more than good that your Son is there to make the proper application of your law.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Lord, your disciples are still hungry and are still passing through the grainfields of life! How sorely pressed I am in the application of your word to the hungers of life! How easy it is to judge in the sense of condemnation, the actions of others in their infraction of your law. In particular is this true of special days and special religious activities. Dear Lord, I need so much the love and wisdom that so characterized your dear Son! Form without worship and purpose is an empty shell. How many times have I found this true in my own personal experience. May I listen with my heart to the words of your Son and follow with my heart his example!

It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for every day of worship — particularly the resurrection morning. (2) Thank you for the patience of my Lord in his explanation of what should have been common knowledge. (3) Thank you for the Lord of the Sabbath. (4) Thank you for hunger that can only be satisfied in your will. (5) Thank you for the humanness of this incident. I would be plucking the grain myself. (6) Thank you for the Pharisees — some of them became Christians — like Saul of Tarsus. (7) Thank you for the privilege of following Jesus today.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?” What was lawful to do on the Sabbath? The law of the Sabbath was a law of rest. What these men meant was that the disciples of Jesus were not doing on the Sabbath what they expected them to do. The disciples of Jesus were breaking the laws the fathers and grandfathers of these Pharisees had fastened on to God’s Sabbath law. Jesus was to remind them that the spirit of the law was far more important than the petty regulations men had attached to it. There is so much application to this principle in my own experience. What has our Lord asked us to

do on the first day of the week? The example of the early church is to meet together to break bread and to hear the word taught and preached. But where is the spirit of joy and wonder that our Lord arose on this day? Have we lost the significance of the resurrection — we could be repeating the sin of the Pharisees.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Open my heart to the difference between religion and following my Lord: (1) I want to walk with Jesus through the very ordinary pursuits of life. (2) Worship was a way of life with my Lord — as well as public and private — I want this too. (3) I want to walk with my Lord every day — not only in the bright spring of April as here, but in the dark days of December. (4) I do want to satisfy my hunger as directed and blessed by Jesus. (5) Rest my mind and heart sufficiently that I might serve you better. (6) Check me from expecting a supernatural answer when a natural one is at hand. (7) Hold me from condemning in others what I do myself.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In the actions and attitudes of these disciples speak to me: (1) “I have set you free from legalism in all its forms.” (2) “If I approve of you, you need not fear what men will say.” (3) “Some men will never hear or see — this must never prevent you from following me.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Singapore — Point for prayer: (1) *Singapore* has become one of the most strategic centers for the evangelization of Asia. A number of missionaries have gone out to other lands. The Singapore churches have the means to support them too. There are now about 50 Singaporean missionaries serving in other lands. (2) *Missions* — There are now about 188 missionaries. It is not easy to obtain visas for new missionaries if the intended work is able to be done by a Singaporean. (3) *Unreached peoples: The Muslim Malays* are not responsive and too little is done in prayer and evangelism to win them, but there have been some saved.

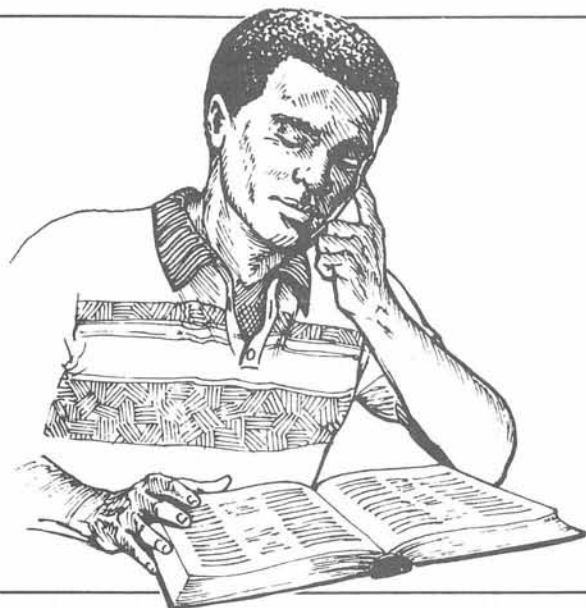
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Let ev’ry kindred, ev’ry tribe
On this terrestrial ball,
To Him all majesty ascribe,
And crown Him Lord of all,
To Him all majesty ascribe,
And crown him Lord of all!

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Saturday—

“What strength — hope — peace is found in taking refuge in God! Such a refuge is for the whole man the whole time! I hear Jesus say: ‘I am the truth and the life.’ ”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“For thou hast delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling; I walk before the Lord in the land of the living” (Psa. 116:8,9). In these precious verses several characteristics of yourself appear: (1) You are interested in the personal life of every man — but in particular your children. The term “soul” refers to the whole being of the whole man. (2) You have pledged yourself to oppose our enemy and give us deliverance. (3) You have power over death — indeed I hear your Son say: “He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die”! (4) You are touched with our feelings — our weaknesses and hurts are a concern to you. (5) You have a deliverance from tears — perhaps there are many ways you can dry our tears. (6) In this very day I can expect my feet will escape from some treacherous place because of your love.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. With the above qualities of yourself before me how much more does the little phrase “before the Lord” mean! I live and move and have my being before you, but it is before One who: (1) has a deeper, more intimate concern than could anyone else. (2) You understand the evil one — I do not. I know I am deceived and accused, but only you can deliver me from him. I even now cast myself upon your interest. (3) Death could be an option of this day. I do not know the day of my death, but you do. (4) I have cried just yesterday, and before this day is over tears could come. I know Someone who understands and cares — even yourself! (5) Keep my feet in your way. As I walk in the land of men I want to do so full of praise! I have every reason for joy!

How do you personally relate to the deliverance of God, and God who is our Deliverer? Speak it out or write it out.

CONFESSION OF SIN

It would be easy to offer the antithesis of the qualities just described as a list of my sins. Such as: (1) I believed Satan’s lie that “no one cares or understands” — such self-pity, such sin! (2) “There is no use, sin and Satan are too strong for me.” As I express it I see over and over again the problem is selfishness. No wonder I sin when I am, instead of you, the center of concern. (3) Do I fear death? Is there a dread that makes death something to ignore? What faithlessness! What a denial of the fundamental attraction of salvation! (4) “Don’t bother me!” Let me wallow in my own hurt — another expression of ego-centered worship.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah
Pilgrim thro’ this barren land;
I am weak, but Thou art mighty,
Hold me with Thy pow’rful hand:
Bread of Heaven,
Feed me till I want no more;
Bread of Heaven,
Feed me till I want no more.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹⁴He answered, “Haven’t you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread — which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. ⁵Or haven’t you read in the Law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple desecrate the day and yet are innocent? ⁶I tell you that one greater than the temple is here. ⁷If you

had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent. ⁸For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." —*Matt. 12:3-8, NIV*

²⁵He answered, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? ²⁶In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions."

²⁷Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. ²⁸So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." —*Mark 2:25-28, NIV*

³Jesus answered them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry?"

⁴He entered the house of God, and taking the consecrated bread, he ate what is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions."

⁵Then Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." —*Luke 6:3-5, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Father, I want to read these words as if you were reading them to me and we were sharing them together, which is indeed what is happening! Your Son is letting me know, and all men know what relationship we all have to the law principle. Essentially you are saying: man is more important than the law which regulates him. David's need and the need of the priests superseded the law. Hunger, and how it is satisfied is the subject being considered. Jesus' disciples satisfied their hunger in a way that *seemed* to violate the law, but they did not violate the law. David and the temple priests did the same thing! Finally: the words of Jesus are to be accepted as authoritative since he is Lord — of the Sabbath (subject) and all other subjects. Have I spoken truly? Dear Lord, I have tried.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

The grandest lesson in this text for me is the little phrase "the Son of man is Lord. . . ." He has become man to live among us; at the same time he is Lord! I want to honor him as my Lord — the Lord of all subjects under my consideration. He is also the Lord of my mouth, my feet, my hands, my eyes — and the rest of my body. He is Lord in the morning, noon, afternoon and evening. He is Lord especially in my relationships, with my wife, my fellow-workers, with strangers who meet me too. How I want to learn what the little phrase means: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice," i.e., as related to appetite.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you that I can read what David did. (2) Thank you that Jesus used your word as

authoritative. (3) Thank you for the good example of David. (4) Thank you for the failure of David; inasmuch as you forgive him there is hope for me. (5) Thank you that I can be your temple today. (6) Thank you for the Sabbath rest awaiting us in heaven. (7) Thank you for my Lord, Lord of all!

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"*The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.*" Whereas we believe the reference to "the Son of Man" refers to our Lord, there is a sense in which every son of man is Lord of the Sabbath law — or indeed any other law, i.e., he can decide how he will relate to the law. Man can decide to obey the law or not, but he will also decide just how his obedience will be carried out. However, we believe that in this context Jesus is saying: "I am in charge here. I'll not allow my disciples to do anything that will violate God's law. I am living by the great principle which you have not yet learned: "I desire mercy not sacrifice." How easy it is to fall into the trap of legalism!

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How I do want to learn from the principles given by my Lord. (1) Keep me aware of the superiority of human need. (2) Things are never as important as people — how I need to remember this. (3) Give me the courage and wisdom to look behind actions to attitudes. (4) May the greatness of your Son be an increasing awareness of mine. (5) How I want to know the real meaning of mercy as compared with sacrifice. (6) How I want Jesus as Lord of every day.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I want to hear him speak to me from this conflict: (1) "Be careful to put my values on acts of worship." (2) "Be very careful you do not condemn the innocent." (3) "Let me be Lord of all."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Singapore — Point for prayer: (1) Unreached peoples: The older Chinese who speak over six different non-Mandarin dialects are largely by-passed by most evangelistic efforts.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Thro' many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath bro't me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

