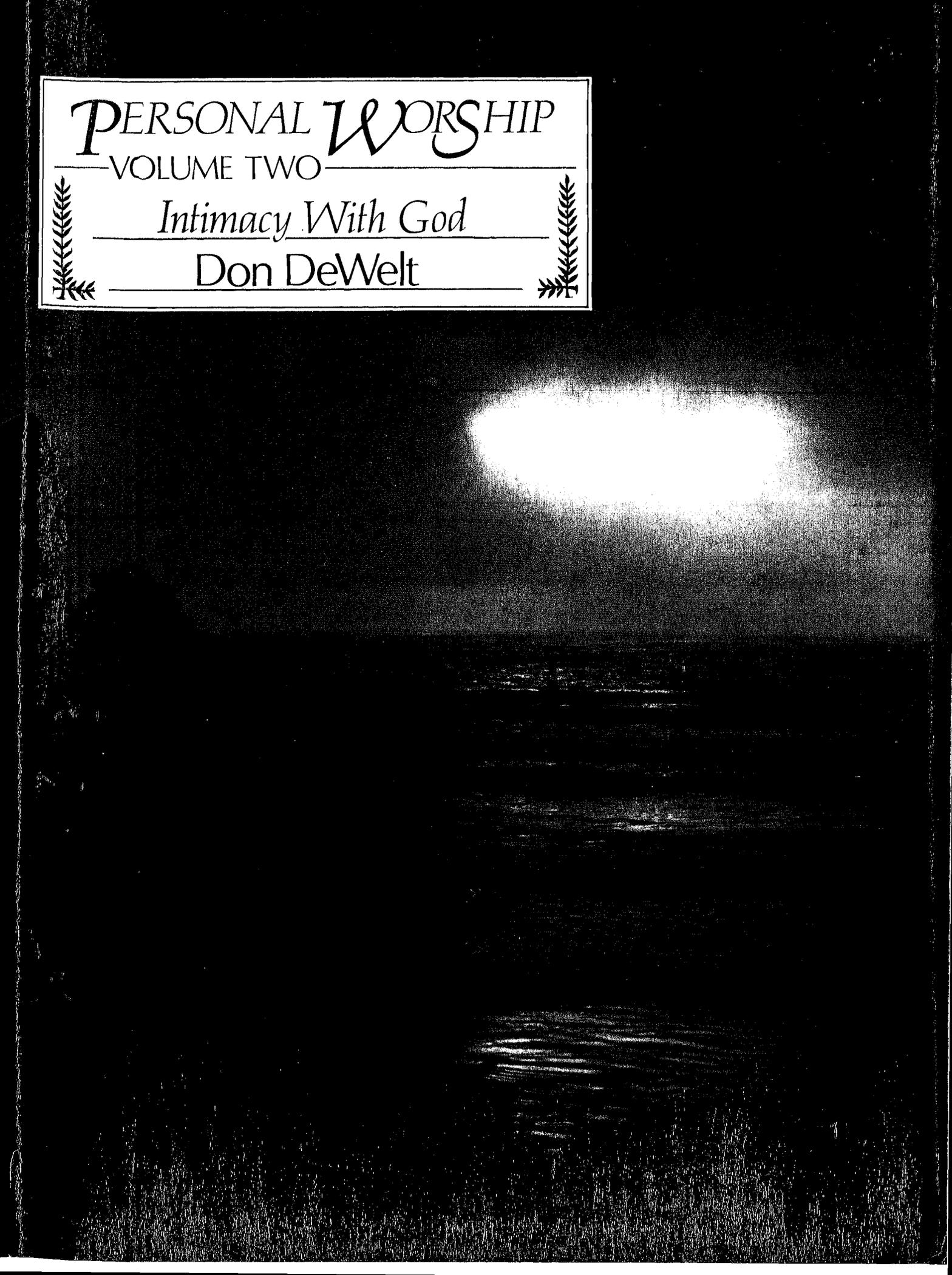


PERSONAL WORSHIP

VOLUME TWO

Intimacy With God

Don DeWelt





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Matthew 12:9-17:23

Mark 3:1-9:32

Luke 6:6-9:45

John 6:1-71

Don DeWelt

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HELP FOR CONTINUING YOUR PERSONAL WORSHIP

Do you remember the SEVEN THINGS THAT MUST HAPPEN before anything else can happen in your intimacy with God? When we mentioned them last quarter we were *real serious* about each of them. Let me review them in a little different form. *They are essential!*

1. *Our Lord had personal worship and assumed we would.* Read these references from your heart:

“But you, *when you pray*, go into your inner room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you” (Matthew 6:6, NAS).

“And in the early morning, while it was still dark, he arose and went out and departed to a lonely place, and was praying there” (Mark 1:35, NAS).

“But he himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray” (Luke 5:16, NAS).

In the life of our Lord, he *took time* — he *made time* for personal worship. Intimacy alone with his Father was *one essential need that must be met*. If Jesus needed it we need it a thousand times more. If it was essential for Jesus — if he could not live successfully without it neither can we. The *only thing* his disciples asked him to teach them was how to pray:

“And it came about that while he was praying in a certain place, after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples’ ” (Luke 11:1, NAS).

Why ask him? Because there was something about the prayer life of Jesus that spoke volumes to these needy weak disciples. If we repeat the request are we ready to follow his example?

2. Paul had “prayers”, i.e. a time and a place for prayer. Paul had personal worship. Hear him:

“For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing *I mention you always in my prayers*” (Romans 1:9, RSV).

“I do not cease to give thanks for you, *remembering you in my prayers . . .*” (Ephesians 1:16, RSV).

Paul had *two* specified times for his *prayers*:

“I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, *as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers*” (II Timothy 1:3, NIV).

Paul’s companion in the gospel had a time and place for prayers:

“Epaphras, who is one of yourselves, a servant of

Christ, greets you, *always remembering you earnestly in his prayers*, that you may stand mature and fully assured in the will of God” (Colossians 4:12, RSV).

I am not suggesting that Paul did not pray at other times than during *his prayers*, indeed, he asked the Thessalonians to “pray without ceasing” (I Thessalonians 5:17, NAS). It is in the closet of prayer we develop such a desire to “*pray at all times*” (Ephesians 6:18,19). In the same letter to the Thessalonians he *did say*:

“*We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers.*” Not only Paul, but Silas and Timothy are examples of those who had “*prayers*” (1:1). Or were they simply examples of those who prayed? I prefer the former thought.

In Paul’s letter to Philemon, Paul said:

“*I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers. . . .*”

With me it is a fact that unless I jot down a need and carry it with me into the closet of prayer I just do not remember to pray — I just *do not* fulfill my good intentions.

Our prayer life will be greatly hindered if our wives (or husbands) do not live with us in love and harmony. These words are especially directed to the husbands:

“You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, *so that your prayers may not be hindered*” (I Peter 3:7, NAS).

3. Do you believe Jesus prayed out loud? How could you believe anything else when we have the verbatim records of his prayers?

Why did our Lord pray out loud? Because unless he did his mind would wander — *perhaps NOT!* — but if *we do not I KNOW our minds will wander!* Inaudible or silent personal prayers without the aid of audible expressions or written requests just fall apart! There is no consistency in such a practice.

Paul wrote his prayers — we have several examples.

Just one more time I *must* say: If you do not pray out loud or write your prayers there will be no continuing visit to the prayer closet — *Please, please* begin to audibly pray — or write out all your expression in your personal worship!

4. Make a “*no exception*” commitment to this time and place of personal worship.

We only get done what we schedule *into* our daily

routine — when we schedule it *in* we get it done. If we “*let it slide*” or “*schedule it out*” — no matter how attractive it is, *it will NOT get done!*

Are you going to schedule an hour of worship *into your daily routine*? Look over your hour by hour routine — If you are like me your days are so varied you honestly do not know what you are going to do before you do it. If you have a job — 9-5 — you *KNOW* where you will be found nine to five. If you are a housewife you know where you will be and what you will be doing after the kids wake up.

Isn't there ANY hour you can give the ONE who gave you all 24? If your mother was dying and needed your help for an hour per day — or your children had a special need that required an hour of your time — or you could earn \$100 in a special hour of work — would you work it in? —or out?

Commit yourself — you will be so glad you did!

5. *Let's review* just three more benefits of your commitment. We said in the first volume there were at least a dozen — here are three more:

(1) You will never find a larger help in your understanding of his word than when you begin to view it from the nine perspectives of your time of personal worship. You consider a portion of the Old Testament *three times*. You lift up before our Lord the New Testament *six times*. You are NOT looking for lesson materials or sermon ideas — but you *will find them*. You are NOT primarily interested in careful exegesis — *but you will find it!*

(2) You will be able to help your wife or your husband or your children in their personal worship. It is impossible to hide your personal devotions from your family members. They know if or if not you do it. You help them first of all — and most of all by your example. BUT they will listen attentively if you want to help them in their own personal worship. If you pray with your wife or husband neither of you have in such a time of prayer *personal worship* — personal worship is just what the words imply — *individual worship* — it will be much easier to pray with your loved one IF you are already engaged in personal worship. You will get much less argument from your children for family worship if you have shown them by example what it means to worship. You can teach your children how to have their own personal worship — if they have their own time in the prayer closet family worship is indeed “a piece of cake.”

(3) Public worship takes on a dimension you never knew it had when you are consistent in your personal worship. If you sing the same songs to the Lord in the prayer closet that you sing in the public meeting — the repeating of such songs with others is a real spontaneous joy! When the preacher or teacher begins to read a text you have held up before the Lord it becomes the words of your beloved — and you are eager to hear it! What personal interest we can take in every part of the public assembly when we have been alone with God!

6. *Do you have personal worship as a habit?* Please, please do not assume one day you will if you are not now taking the time to do it. Every day the *first* consideration is meeting your Lord in this blessed trust! A habit is an involuntary action — when it is easier to do it than not to do it you have a habit. Feelings have very little — if anything — to do with this habit. I have approached the door of the prayer closet with very little feeling — *feelings follow action*. A habit is formed by making provision for fulfilling the desires of our Lord *before* any of our own. When you do this you will develop a deep love for our Lord that carries you into all of life with a joy — not a duty — but it *is a duty* — but it is done with joy not monotony or resentment.

7. *Are you committing an hour of your time to personal worship?* If you follow the sequence we have outlined — i.e. the twelve steps, an hour will hardly be long enough. Please notice that my example is before you to get you started — use the same verses I have suggested BUT write out your own expression — or audibly express yourself. Read what I have written and you will say: “That helps, but I would say it in just a little different way” — IF you say that I have accomplished my purpose! Each of us has a different way of expressing his praise — his confession — his thanksgiving — his petition — *from the same text*. Do it! This will indeed then become the “sweet hour of prayer” — and you will find as I do an hour is not long enough!

By this time the five expressions of worship should be very familiar to you. They are: *Praise — Confession — Thanksgiving — Petition — Intercession*.

We incorporate all five of these expressions individually and collectively. In the twelve segments we use them according to the following pattern:

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| Praise | (1) <i>Praise for God Himself.</i> |
| Praise | (2) <i>Praise for what God means to me.</i> |
| Confession | (3) <i>Confession of sin</i> as related to the attribute of God. |
| All five | (4) <i>Sing a song that uses any or all of the five expressions.</i> |
| All five | (5) Read the words of the N.T. <i>to God</i> . In this you use whatever of the five elements that are suggested in the text. |
| All five | (6) Read the words of the N.T. <i>for yourself</i> . In this you use whatever of the five elements are suggested in the text. |
| Thanksgiving | (7) Read the words of the N.T. <i>in thanksgiving</i> . Find expressions of thanks out of the N.T. text. |
| All five | (8) Read the words of the N.T. — just a small part of it <i>for meditation</i> . Use all five expressions on just this short phrase — or a few words. |
| Petitions | (9) Read these same words of the N.T. <i>in petitions</i> or requests. Find these requests in the text. Continue with your personal requests. |

- All five (10) *Let God speak to you* — his application of the words of the N.T. text could touch any one of the five expressions.
- Intercession (11) *Intercede* for the needs of those you know and love — or intercede for the lost world — country by country.
- All five (12) *Sing a song* that uses any or all of the five expressions.

I cannot emphasize too strongly that method is *very, very important!* We have spelled out repeatedly the twelve steps we take in the hour of personal worship. Just here I want to show you how such a method can become YOUR method.

We will use one of the days in the volume you have in your hands — but we will add a few words of help in making my efforts a help to *your personal worship*:

PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“He will endure as long as the sun, as long as the moon, through all generations. He will be like rain falling on a mown field, like showers watering the earth” (Psa. 72:5,6). There is something solidly comforting in knowing that ten or twenty or one hundred generations from today you will still be the same. We might not be worshiping you — or perhaps time will have disappeared in eternity — but you are always the same. The sun and the moon appear to us as such permanent entities. There will be a time when the sun and the moon will be moved from their places, but there will never be a time when you change in any way. How good to put my confidence in total permanence!

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

You will not use the same words I do — you will perhaps not emphasize the same thoughts I do — but you can praise God for his *total permanence*. Do it!

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

In a more personal expression: “You are to me ‘like rain falling on a mown field.’ ” Dear Lord, how beautiful a description of yourself! (1) We do not deserve your mercies but each day we arise they fall upon us like the rain from heaven. (2) We sometimes mistake your mercies and complain — but like the rain we are not going to change your wonderful purpose! (3) As rain is perfectly adapted to the needs of the plant world so are your influences in our lives. If we will but wait and meditate — with thankfulness, we will see, if not in this world in the larger world to come, how your goodness was behind every shower. (4) How different are the attendant circumstances in this shower or that! Just so are your influences in our lives. I suppose there has never been one rain on a newly mown field just like another even on the same field. Thank you for your goodness.

How do you personally relate to the permanence of God, and God who endures forever?

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

These beautiful thoughts came to me from someone else — I probably read Spurgeon on Psa. 72:5,6 — or someone else, It only took 5 or 6 minutes to read. You can too — do it!

CONFESSION OF SIN

How is it that I am caught up in the temporary when I know I live in eternity? How could I be so fascinated with the tinsel when I have pure gold nearby? How is it I complain about being dry when you send showers upon me as they are needed? Someone has been lying to me! Thank you for the awakening that I might see things as they truly are. My deepest need just now is to separate the temporary from the eternal. How I do need the wisdom that comes down from yourself! “Pure, peacable, gentle, easy to be entertained, without hypocrisy.” If my ability to use the knowledge which I have from your word was “pure” I would soon escape this deception of the evil one. Dear Lord, I so purpose — 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!

Please, please — do NOT be satisfied with only my words. Write or speak out your own! Let my words “prime your pump” — there is a well of “living water” in you — please let it out!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

My soul in sad exile was out on life’s sea,
So burdened with sin, and distressed,
Till I heard a sweet voice saying,
“Make me your choice!”
And I entered the Haven of Rest.

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

Of course I can not sing for you — you sing to God. He is listening — do not disappoint him!

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

²¹From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

²²Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

²³Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Out of my sight, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.” — Matthew 16:21-23, NIV

The time has come! Jesus can now explain in detail and plainly what he before had only spoken of in veiled form. Jesus not only here describes his death at the hands of “the elders, chief priests and teachers,” but he kept it up. What a shock to find out that Jesus

was not going to return force with force. *Jesus was not going to defend himself!* This must have been the greatest possible stumbling block. They missed the little power-packed phrase: "and on the third day be raised from the dead." If they had only been listening! How often is this true of all of us!

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

There are elements of confession, praise and thanksgiving in the above expression. Perhaps you will want to be more obvious in identifying such elements — use whatever element of the five the text suggests to you — but do it! Make this *your* expression.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Peter had good intentions. He had already developed the picture of the Messiah — and nothing Jesus said that destroyed that picture would be accepted. Peter did not lack for temerity — when he walked on the water or when he took Jesus aside and rebuked our Lord privately. We could hardly imagine a more ridiculous spectacle! And yet we are at the same time witnessing the most human of scenes. Death is a shock to anyone. If one of our loved ones were to predict his own death (even as my own father did) the first response is, "not so"! The rebuke of Jesus to Peter is also natural. Too much was in the balance for Jesus to say anything less. It was Satan's old ploy to sidetrack our Lord — and he would have none of it!

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

You can do it — but you must begin — use your own words — but do it!

This is only six of the twelve — but we have hopefully given you enough help to continue. Write to me if we haven't.

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. I hope you choose an hour — the best not less.

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.

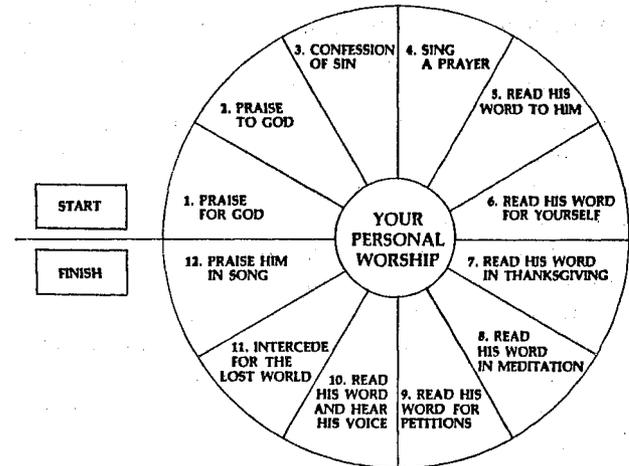
Read His word for yourself to find personal manna

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 day-to-day guide to praying for the world*. This is a 500 page book listing the 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 do hope each reader will consider the seriousness of what is here involved. I do wish I could sit down and look you in the eye and share with you my heart. Personal worship will help you in every area of your life. If it is necessary turn back to page five and reread the motivations for continuing your commitment.

On the next page I have a personal word from my heart to you. I do want to encourage you to write to me if you have a question or problem. I am here to help you.

A PERSONAL WORD WITH THE READER

This is addressed to all those who have started and stopped. Who have made resolutions and have broken them. I am not talking about starting and stopping out of a serious, but not a "life-threatening" commitment — but stopping after you had promised God you would not stop. I am not necessarily thinking about a New Year's Resolution — but about a resolution you made in the sacredness perhaps of a public rededication. But here you are "in the pits" again! I just want to say out of the above expressions repeated and repeated in my life that you *can* — you *will* overcome. You *can*, you *will* be the victor, not the victim!

Here are two factors that you can let be present in your life that will let Jesus have his way with you.

1. *Believe when you are forgiven he has no record of your failure! Do NOT — I repeat: do not tell God how many times you have failed — he has no record to which to refer. He has chosen to forget your failures so he doesn't really know what you are talking about. Every day is the first day of a whole new world for you. Do not review and relive what God has forgotten. Accept his awesome newness!*

2. *Make provisions to succeed — not to fail!*

Here is a poem that has spoken to my heart so many times. I never tire of reading it. *Let's read it again!*

If Jesus Came To Your House

If Jesus came to your house to spend a day or two —
If He came unexpectedly, I wonder what you'd do

Oh, I know you'd give your nicest room
to such an honored Guest,

And all the food you'd serve to Him
would be the very best,

And you would keep assuring Him
you're glad to have Him there —

That serving Him in your own home
is joy beyond compare

But — when you saw Him coming,
would you meet Him at the door

With arms outstretched in welcome
to your heav'nly Visitor?

Or would you have to change your clothes
before you let Him in,

Or hide some magazines and put
the Bible where they'd been?

Would you turn off the TV
and hope He hadn't heard,

And wish you hadn't uttered
that last, loud hasty word?

Would you hide your worldly music
and put some hymnbooks out?

Could you let Jesus walk right in,
or would you rush about?

And I wonder — if the Saviour
spent a day or two with you,

Would you go right on doing
the things you always do?

Would you keep right on saying

the things you always say?

Would life for you continue
as it does from day to day?

Would your family conversation
keep up its usual pace,

And would you find it hard each meal
to say a table grace?

Would you sing the songs you always sing
and read the books you read

And let Him know the things
on which your mind and spirit feed?

Would you take Jesus with you
ev'rywhere you'd planned to go,

Or would you maybe change your plans
for just a day or so?

Would you be glad to have Him meet
your very closest friends,

Or would you hope they'd stay away
until His visit ends?

Would you be glad to have Him stay
forever on and on,

Or would you sigh with great relief
when He at last was gone?

It might be interesting to know
the things that you would do

If Jesus Christ in person
came to spend some time with you.

—Lois Blanchard

The blessed Lord Jesus lives in our bodies in the person of the Holy Spirit. Please read with me these power-packed words:

"... you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed *the Spirit of God dwells in you*. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him."

"*And if Christ is in you*, (in the person of the Holy Spirit) though the body is dead, because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness" (Romans 8:9,10, NAS).

How shall we arrange our schedule so we will be able to entertain Jesus as a permanent unseen guest?

He wants to have a private personal conversation with us at least once a day — for at least an hour. Can we accommodate him?

The words you read in this volume of thirteen weeks of personal worship were written in at least a dozen places far removed from my home in Joplin, Missouri. I left the classroom and my home to journey to these places and to live in a strange home for a weekend. To speak Friday night, sometimes more than once on Saturday, several times on Sunday and return home Monday worn out. I had to get ready to teach again on Tuesday. What you read in this book was written out of the same weakness and failure you feel. But I haven't missed now for a long time. Stay with Him. Renew your love for Him. He will lift you up.

WEEK ONE

—Sunday—

He is our refuge and the One who makes us whole — Let's worship him!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to put confidence in princes” (Psa. 118:8,9). What a charming thought! “To take refuge in the Lord!” You are a refuge for the whole man, i.e., we can find protection for our mind in you. To think your thoughts is to bring a calmness of thought we cannot find anywhere else. We can find a bulwark of strength for our family in you. As we read together what you have said to each of us we sense a strength with each other and a love for each other we just do not have until we find it in you! What a refuge you are for the emotional chaos that fills our land! Man offers a refuge — indeed this seems to be his strongest emphasis — we could better label it “escapism.”

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 you for what you mean to me in this very quality! “Rock of ages, let me hide myself in you.” These words do indeed describe my desire and pursuit. All my confidence in what man can offer has ended in disappointment. It is just that it is not in man to direct his own steps, to say nothing of anyone else. My acknowledgement of need is not the same as the satisfaction of that need. Dear Lord, I do want to spend much more time in my refuge. I am so glad my refuge is not a place but a person, and an omnipresent, omnipotent Person!

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

All the above has been an expression of my spirit. At the same time, I can just as truly confess I have time after time put confidence in men and yes, princes. I

am learning, but it is a slow process. I am so glad you not only understand me, but directed the example of One who “did not trust himself to man for he knew what was in man” (John 2:24,25). My Lord found his daily refuge in you. How wonderful to be able to say we have never been disappointed in Jesus! In a very real sense confession becomes a means of strength since it propels me back to my only refuge — your dear self! I hide nothing, I want to repent deeply enough to change. Cleanse me from all my unwillingness!

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

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save me from its guilt and pow'r.

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

HIS WORD

⁹Going on from that place, he went into their synagogue, ¹⁰and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, they asked him, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”

¹¹He said to them, “If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? ¹²How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” —Matthew 12:9-12, NIV

3 Another time he went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. ²Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath. ³Jesus said to the man with the

shriveled hand, "Stand up in front of everyone."
 "Then Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they remained silent. —*Mark 3:1-4, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

My Father, why did your Son go into the synagogue? He knew this was the very arena of conflict with the wild beasts who came only to wait for an occasion to devour him. He went there because that is where your word was read and some men worshiped you. Indeed, Jesus went there to worship you in public as he worshiped you in private. Was the man with the withered hand "planted" there by the Pharisees? He seems to be very well known. His physical problem was easily seen. How wonderfully complete and full of life is your Son's answer to the accusing question: (1) *As to morality*: Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath? Is healing good? Is it lawful to save life? Is healing saving life? (2) *As to value*: Would you help a sheep on the Sabbath? Is man worth as much as a sheep — then shall I help this man? Thank you for such a courageous all-wise Savior!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

"They were silent." Dear Lord, how often I have found myself here! I have been answered but I do not translate the answer into my life! Forgive, forgive me! Long held traditions are not easily given up, but we *can* change, we *must* change if Jesus is to be Lord. I can be so much like the scholars of the law. God wants me above and beyond *everything* else to show mercy and *meet* the needs of man. Open my heart through the words of my Lord: "How much more valuable is a man than a sheep?" I want to answer that question: (1) Only man is conscious of himself and will carry that consciousness throughout eternity. (2) Only man can sin — an animal cannot — therefore only man can be lost and only man can be, and must be saved. (3) Only man will live eternally and therefore only the salvation of man has eternal value — this could not be said of a sheep.

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 example of the need for public worship. (2) Thank you Jesus was ready to face his accusers on their own ground. (3) Thank you that the closer we watch Jesus the better he looks. (4) Thank you for the eternal good Jesus came to give. (5) Thank you that my owner saved his sheep. (6) Thank you Jesus never did any of his miracles in such a way they could be doubted.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" Our Lord had

already plainly indicated that it was not a matter of law; it was a question of mercy. The question should read: "Is it merciful to heal on the Sabbath?" The need of man seems to be eclipsed by the question of law. Is it lawful to plot against an innocent man's life on the Sabbath? Is it right to hate and criticize on the Sabbath? These are all questions much more to the point. The seriousness of the situation is increased by the fact that Jesus knew their motives. The application of law is the whole point at issue. Our Lord's answer is "we shall apply it in mercy and love, with a desire to meet human need." Dear Lord, may we accept your word.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How much like the man here described do we all feel from time to time. (1) I want to bring all my needs to you in worship. (2) I know I operate far below the level you want me to — heal my withered efforts. (3) As this man looked with expectation and then joy upon your Son, help me to see him. (4) Make me deaf to all but the words of your Son as they relate to my need. (5) I want to remember who has the answers to the tough questions of life.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As the man with the withered hand listened to your Son, so do I: (1) "It is always lawful to help in the limitations of life." (2) "I can make you whole — stretch out your hand." (3) "How very valuable is one person."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Sri Lanka (Ceylon) — Population: 16,400,000. Growth rate — 2.1%. People per sq. km. — 216. Point for prayer: The land is very poorly evangelized and much prejudice and misunderstanding about the Gospel must be broken down. The colonial powers suppressed national culture and language and imposed national forms of Christianity in the past. Independence has brought in a backlash against Christianity and a "revival" of Buddhism. Pray for the evangelizing of this needy land.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
 Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
 Angels descending, bring from above
 Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.
 This is my story, this is my song,
 Praising my Saviour all the day long;
 This is my story, this is my song,
 Praising my Saviour all the day long.

WEEK ONE

—Monday—

He is my strength and my song! Keep me humble-minded that I may continue to sing.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. Hark, glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous: ‘The right hand of the Lord does valiantly, . . .’ ” (Psa. 118:14,15). What was sung so long ago — possibly in the temple has now become the expression of every Christian heart. At least such expressions of confidence and praise should arise from every one who is your son or daughter. It is my purpose to lift from these verses those qualities of yourself for which all men can praise you. (1) In you all men can find strength — indeed if any strength is to be found for the heart, it is in you. (2) There are so many qualities in yourself that exactly meet man’s needs we spontaneously burst into songs of praise. (3) We can all enjoy personal salvation — deliverance from all our enemies.

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 have no strength at all without you. I have no intellectual strength without your thoughts. Indeed, I would not even have the capacity of thought itself without sharing your likeness. The thoughts of man are like garbage compared with your knowledge. There is much good in the thoughts of men and all such good comes directly or indirectly from you. I am neither unwilling nor unable to read and assimilate the thoughts of men — I have just lost interest. The grandeur of your mind and its expressions have taken me captive! I have no moral strength without you — to will is present but to do that which is good, right or moral is just not there. Only as you move me, or I am willing to be moved by you, do I fulfill one of my least desires to do good! Praise your strength, you have indeed become my song!

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 will be easy to confess my sin in this realm. Whereas “the Lord is my strength” I at the same time find myself often turning to man or myself for resources. I praise you that I am learning — very often I can sing with the song writer: “My strength indeed is small.” That I should lean upon this broken staff at all is one of the mysteries of my iniquity. Forgive me! Out of this tattered tent should arise the glad song of victory. Instead too often are heard the laments of selfishness. Dear Lord, forgive me! To repeat my sins in prayer after I have confessed them is no value whatsoever. I am glad to cast them at your feet, or to cast them into the fountain filled with blood — to forget them; I know you do. Praise your wonderful grace!

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 need Thee ev’ry hour,
Stay Thou near by;
Temptations lose their pow’r
When Thou art nigh.
I need Thee, O I need Thee;
Ev’ry hour I need Thee!
O bless me now, my Savior, I come to Thee!

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

HIS WORD

¹³Then he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other. ¹⁴But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus. —Matthew 12:13,14, NIV

⁵He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. ⁶Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus. —*Mark 3:5,6, NIV*

¹⁰He looked around at them all, and then said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He did so, and his hand was completely restored. ¹¹But they were furious and began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus. —*Luke 6:10,11, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Father, I hesitate to express myself on your behalf. Indeed such is presumption of the worst sort. I only want to tell you how much your word means to me as I try to read it from your perspective. Was it really necessary to confront these religious leaders head on? I know it was; I am only trying to think through the circumstance. Talk about minimal human effort! The healing by your Son was just that. What "work" was there in pronouncing four words "stretch out your hand"? This was not the first encounter with these men. I need to remember this as I respond to their rejection of my Lord: (1) He had exposed their greed and love of money in cleansing the temple. (2) He had plainly said he was the Messiah in the Nazareth synagogue. (3) He forgave sins. (4) He ate with tax collectors and other sinners. (5) He did not keep their fast days. (6) He ignored their rules for Sabbath observance. (7) He claimed equality with God. They had had it! They had abundant evidence pointing to just one conclusion.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How do I really respond to him? I want to read the account of Mark for myself. It is in his words I best see myself. Does my Lord ever look at me in "anger and deeply distressed"? I'm very sure he does. I look at my own attitudes and actions with the same response. However, right there the comparison becomes a contrast. I do leave my confrontation with you not to plot how I might further grieve you, but how I might "put to death" the thoughts of my heart and the deeds of my body. I want to more and more count myself crucified with your Son — I want to affirm "it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in 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 the direct unassuming manner our Lord used in healing this man. (2) Thank you for the wonderful clear evidence of deity in this healing. (3) Thank you for the joy that must have flooded the heart of the healed. (4) Thank you for my Lord's concern for everyone present in the synagogue. (5) Thank you my Lord is always clear and pure in his call for

acceptance or rejection. (6) Thank you for the completeness and permanence of the healing. (7) Thank you I can reverse the response of these religious leaders in my response to this miracle.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, . . ." What was it that so deeply distressed my Lord? It was their stubbornness, but in what areas? (1) They were stubborn about mercy — Jesus healed the man to show mercy. These men hardened their heart at his joy of being healed. (2) They stubbornly rejected this clear evidence of the supernatural. They are about to decide Jesus is in league with Satan. (3) They stubbornly refused to admit the human authority for their traditions.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the heart and words of your Son I find reasons to pray: (1) I want to become angry with my stubbornness before you do. (2) Melt my resistance — all resistance to you. (3) Open my inner ear to every word you speak. (4) Keep me always aware that you will not do what you expect me to do. (5) Keep me expecting complete answers to all my prayers. (6) May I expect negative responses to those who do not understand. (7) Remember, oh my soul, that no one can destroy Jesus!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak Lord, thy servant heareth: (1) "Fear not the wrath of men — I didn't." (2) "No man can do more than I permit." (3) "All the plans of man are under my control."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Sri Lanka (Ceylon) — Point for prayer: (1) A greater openness to the Gospel has been evident in recent years. The lessening of resentments against the West and the growing economic privations of the land have made people more ready to listen to the Good News. Literature is in great demand and people are being won thereby.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Come, Thou Incarnate Word,
Gird on Thy mighty sword,
Our prayer attend:
Come and Thy people bless,
And give Thy word success:
Spirit of holiness,
On us descend.

WEEK ONE

—Tuesday—

This is indeed the day the Lord has made — It is better when we pray — I am glad to do it!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it” Psa. 118:22-24). This is a messianic psalm and full of meaning and for that reason I want to hold up the qualities of these three verses and praise you for each one: (1) Your dear Son has become the cornerstone of all of life. I remember that measurements for the whole building were taken from the cornerstone. The whole building was right because the cornerstone was right. However, (2) the stone was rejected by the builders. Dear Lord, there are various ways of rejecting you. When we do not know the measurements as related to the cornerstone, we cannot and will not build our house as you want it. I do not want to repeat the sin of those who rejected 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. My basic problem is that I want to design and build the house, but when that happens who gets the credit? It is only when we are willing to let you build the house that we can say, “This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.” I want to praise you that you have such a vital interest in every life that you want to be the architect. I believe the blueprint for every life is in your word. I also believe that a meditation on your word, both day and night is an essential prerequisite to applying in life what we learn in our meditation. I am confident that the construction of life preceded by those two steps becomes the house the Lord has made. Such building is done one day at a time. Let me say and mean — “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

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

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

How altogether too obvious is our sin as related to these beautiful verses: (1) Every day is a test as to whether I will accept or reject the Cornerstone for that day. If I rush into the day without meditation and prayer, how could it be anything but a disaster? (2) If my admiration and love for my Lord is not fresh and new for each day I cannot use the term “marvelous” with any meaning at all. (3) If I am not thoughtful in the major choices of this day how could I possibly say “This is the day the Lord has made”? I want to so condition my heart that my response is automatic. However, such conditioning is a daily, even hourly, practice. Forgive me, dear Lord, for not enjoying your fellowship.

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

¹²One of those days Jesus went out into the hills to pray, and spent the night praying to God. ¹³When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he designated apostles: ¹⁴Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, ¹⁵Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, ¹⁶Judas son of James, and Judas

Iscariot, who became a traitor. — Luke 6:12-16, NIV
Read also Matthew 10:1-6 and Mark 3:13-19.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Since your Son spent all night in prayer over his choice of the twelve it behooves us to spend at least a few minutes in as careful an understanding as we can. My primary purpose is praise and adoration. Why should Jesus spend all night praying to you? How we want to hear him pray — how we wish we knew what he said. But if we did, would we understand? Probably not. He must have reviewed all the disciples by name and need. The twelve were chosen the next morning because they were already chosen the night before. Jesus knew how poorly prepared they were; he must equip them. He gave them power and direction. His purpose in calling the twelve was not just to send them out but that they might first be with him.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. I can identify with each of these men. (1) *Peter or Simon who is called Peter.* I identify so closely because I, like Peter, say too many things I need to retract. (2) *Andrew his brother.* I do have a deep desire to bring men to my Lord, and I thank you for it. (3) *James the son of Zebedee.* Here is one of the “sons of thunder.” Energy and vigor have been mine ever since I can remember. May I be as willing a martyr, or witness as James. (4) *John his brother.* How I want the same vigorous love and commitment I see in John. (5) *Philip of Bethsaida.* I like the beautiful challenge of our Lord’s appeal to Philip in John 6:6 “to prove him.” Dear Lord, I want to be like him. (6) *Bartholomew or possibly Nathanael.* “The Israelite in whom there was no guile.” (7) *Thomas Didymus.* I want his proven faith expressed in the words: “My Lord and my God.” (8) *Matthew the publican.* This man never ceased to wonder what God’s grace could do with a tax collector. (9) *James, the son of Alphaeus.* Possibly the cousin of our Lord, one who shared his personal fellowship often. (10) *Thaddaeus or Judas.* Jesus had two apostles named Judas. (1) *Simon the Zealot.* Here is a super patriot in company with a tax collector. (12) *Judas Iscariot,* who also betrayed 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 Peter the first to open the door of salvation. (2) Thank you for Andrew who was first to tell his brother of our Lord. (3) Thank you for James who gave his life away for Jesus. (4) Thank you for the fisherman who became the apostle of love. (5) Thank you for Philip who brought others to Jesus. (6) Thank you for Nathanael of transparent sincerity. (7) Thank you for the publican who was called to tell others.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . and spent the night praying to God.” Unless there was some overwhelming burden upon our heart it would seem an impossibility to actually spend a whole night in prayer. What would we say that would fill up six or eight hours? It was no problem for our Lord. If he prayed for each of the twelve in detail he would only spend 40 minutes each in an eight hour prayer vigil. When these men were going to be the foundation upon which his whole work was to be built 40 minutes apiece would not be unusual. Considering the enormity of the need, all night hardly seems long enough.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

If your dear Son could spend all night in prayer, surely there must be much about which I can pray: (1) How I do want to learn more and more about the prayer-life of my Lord — help me. (2) Give me the energy of communion with you. (3) How I want the power of intercessory prayer — enlighten me. (4) Give me boldness like Peter. (5) How I need the love as taught by John. (6) The practical lessons in obedience as written by James are a real need in my life. (7) What a need there is in my life for the guilelessness of Philip. (8) Oh that I might know your word as Matthew did.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In the lives of these twelve men you can say so much to me: (1) “I can use the temperaments and talents of all men — if they are willing.” (2) “Not all men named Judas were bad.” (3) “Do you pray for those who learn from you?”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Sri Lanka (Ceylon) — Point for prayer: Missions — entry is very difficult. There are an estimated 90 missionaries. Pray that they may have a fruitful and strategic influence in this needy land.

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 ONE

—Wednesday—

We were created to worship you — we are most fulfilled when we do. Keep me from distractions.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“With my whole heart I seek thee; let me not wander from thy commandments! I have laid up thy word in my heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psa. 119:10,11). The attributes of yourself are not at all explicit in these verses, but there are several implicit qualities for me, and all men extol before your throne; (1) You want us to worship you. We were created to worship you, and eagerly do I respond to this quality. (2) You deserve an undivided attention from man. The whole total being of man should focus on you. How gladly do I take up such a practice — I want to give you all my heart. (3) Man has lost you, i.e., in the sense of awareness, we must seek you to find you — you are not lost; we are. Our Lord described you as the waiting father. Praise 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

Just for me. You and your word are inseparable. There is no way I can seek you apart from your commandments. When I wander from a careful meditation upon your word I wander from you. The “laying up of your word in my heart” includes several relationships: (1) I know my heart refers to my inward being — my mind, will, emotions and conscience. To “lay up” your word would include memory work — which is a wonderful form of meditation. (2) This is a decision before it is anything — I must decide to give a time, a place, energy, concentration to this practice. I shall never do it without a priority decision. (3) Sinning is directly related to your word. Sin is indeed “the transgression of your law” (I John 3:4). I want to so saturate my whole being with your word that my brain is washed, my will is overcome, my emotions are tuned and my conscience is educated. I do want to seek you with my whole heart.

How do you personally relate to the law of

God, and God who is the law giver? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

If you do, why is it you fail to do it? I refer in soliloquy to my strong desire to overcome sin and not being overcome by it. Dear Lord, I shall never be anything but a sinner, but I am not discouraged. To be anything else but a sinner I would need to know everything and do it. If I reached that place you would have another job. I say this in tragic jest. Forgive me. But you do expect improvement, or growth, and so do I. As I read verse twelve of this blessed 119th Psalm I find a beautiful answer to my deep need: “Blessed be thou, O Lord; teach me thy statutes.” Man (including myself) has been very unsuccessful in teaching me. You can do it! I want to pause before the author of your word and let him implant it in my heart.

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

His banner over us is love,
Our sword the Word of God;
We tread the road the saints above
With shouts of triumph trod.
By faith, they like a whirlwind's breath,
Swept on o'er ev'ry field;
The faith by which they conquered death
Is still our shining shield.
Faith is the victory!
Faith is the victory!
Oh, glorious victory,
That overcomes the world.

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

HIS WORD

⁷Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. ⁸When they heard all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon. ⁹Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him. ¹⁰For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him. ¹¹Whenever the evil spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." ¹²But he gave them strict orders not to tell who he was. —*Mark 3:7-12, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

As you observed the popularity of your Son what did you think? How empty was the praise some gave to him! The healer was forgotten almost as soon as the healing was completed. How incredibly sad this was. Why did he heal them when he knew they would soon forget him? He knew — as you did — that some would not forget. That some would have a delayed reaction to what happened. The real answer is twofold: He healed the multitude because he had compassion upon them; he was touched with the feeling of their infirmities. He healed them because in these miracles they could see his deity. How delighted I am to see yourself moving among that vast multitude reaching out to heal and help everyone.

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 difficult to identify with several who followed him, from Galilee or with some of those from Judea or Jerusalem. Like those from the lovely countryside of Galilee I have heard him and seen him before. But there is something about him — I just cannot stay away; I want to hear more, I want to see him again and again. As many times as I have read the gospels (and I could not count them) I yet read them this morning with new eyes — eyes he opened, as if I had never read them before. Some who came to him from Judea or Jerusalem came home skeptical to see if indeed it was all true, i.e., what they had heard. I want to go back and tell everyone the half has never yet been told.

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 planned work of my Lord; it helps me plan my work. (2) Thank you for the learners who followed him; may I be one of them. (3) Thank you for everyone in that multitude; each of them known and important to you. (4) Thank you for the service his disciples could be to him them; he needs us today. (5) Thank you there was no one who could not be healed. (6) Thank you for the constant consistent response of demons; they always fell down

and worshiped him. What does this say to us? (7) Thank you that I can right here and right now fall down and praise and worship him.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . he gave them strict orders not to tell who he was." Instructions to demons! Who would hear the news of his Messiahship from demons? Perhaps it was at the occasion of the large crowd that he wanted the demons silent. Could it be that the demons would publish abroad in the spirit world his fame? There was one obvious reason he wanted the demons not to speak of who he was: It came from the wrong source — the message is inseparably associated with the messenger. This was also true with the demon-possessed girl in Philippi (Acts 16:16-18).

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Even my Lord had problems with crowds and those who did not understand. I want to ask help as I read of his work: (1) I do need wisdom in knowing when it is best to say "no" and move on. (2) When shall I cease to help? — there were times when Jesus did and times when he didn't. (3) Help me to fulfill Isaiah's prophecy that your son would be preached to the Gentiles. (4) Give me the meek and lowly attitude of my Lord. (5) May all my speeches have my Lord's purposes behind them. (6) How I need the grace to cultivate faith through your word in the hearts of hearers. (7) Keep me aware that Jesus alone is the hope of the world.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these verses speak to me: (1) "My Lord had no unsuccessful attempts at healing." (2) "Demons know who Jesus is." (3) "There is a time for preaching and there is a time to not preach."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Sri Lanka (Ceylon) — Point for prayer: The Protestant Church is one of the weakest and most nominal in Asia. Few know about the new birth. Non-Bible-believing theological colleges and literature have not produced committed Christians or soul-winning evangelists. Church union is seen as a better solution than a vital personal union of individuals with the Lord.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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.

WEEK ONE

—Thursday—

You can no more be separated from your word than I from my words. Both tell of the heart. In you and in your word is my hope.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“In the way of thy testimonies I delight as much as in riches. I will meditate on thy precepts, and fix my eyes on thy ways. I will delight in thy statutes; I will not forget thy word” (Psa. 119:14-16). I realize this whole psalm is devoted to the meaning and beauty of your law — or your word. But since a man’s word is but the outward expression of the man himself, to appreciate one is to appreciate the other. It will be my delight for the next several weeks to hold up one quality after another of yourself as related to your word and praise you: (1) The meaning and purpose and value of your word is much better than the meaning, value and purpose of *all riches*. One life saved here to usefulness and unselfish service and then to the eternal joys of heaven is a clear testimony of the truth of the statement.

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. (In these expressions of praise the generic and specific merge.) (2) Praise you that your precepts are such that they merit meditation. Praise you that they are written in such a manner that all men can meditate upon them. After a thousand attempts to probe the depths of what you have written there is yet much more to explore. (3) I am so very, very thankful for eyesight, but more than that for the ability to understand — for what men call intelligence — which is in truth your own image in man. It would do but little good to fix my eyes on your ways if I could not discern them. (4) Praise your name that I do have a deep excitement about investigating every word of your statutes. I have been so wonderfully helped in the efforts I have given to this blessed pursuit!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

The last little phrase of these verses “stabs me awake”! “I will not forget thy word.” How is it I have such a lapse of memory? i.e., I only remember your word *sometimes*, but not all the time? The answer is obvious enough: memory is programmed. We precondition our memory to function under specific conditions at specified times. My sin is that I have not programmed my memory and conscience via my will to include your word. Your word is left in my subconscious and is not brought forward to the self-consciousness thus I forget your word. Meditation upon the meaning of your word both day and night will solve this problem — called sin!

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’ days of toil when heart doth fail,
God will take care of you;
When dangers fierce your path assail,
God will take care of you.
God will take care of you,
Thro’ every day,
O’er all the way;
He will take care of you,
God will take care of you. . . .

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

HIS WORD

¹⁵Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. Many followed him, and he healed all their sick,
¹⁶warning them not to tell who he was. ¹⁷This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:
¹⁸“Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him,
and he will proclaim justice to the nations.

¹⁹He will not quarrel or cry out;
no one will hear his voice in the streets.

²⁰A bruised reed he will not break,
and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out,
till he leads justice to victory.

²¹In his name the nations will put their hope." —*Matthew 12:15-21, NIV*

Read also Luke 6:17-19.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It is with our Lord's use of Isaiah 42:1-4 I want to particularly praise you. Indeed, my Lord, I want to observe what kind of servant you have chosen for yourself. What is affirmed of this servant of yourself goes infinitely beyond anything to which the prophet was ever called, or of which man was ever capable. He is indeed and in a unique sense "your beloved." He pleased you well. He pleases me beyond all words! You put your Spirit upon him in the sense of anointing him (Acts 10:38). From beginning to end the Holy Spirit empowered his ministry. Dear Father, how I love to read of the direction and inspiration your Spirit gave to the ministry of your Son.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Whereas I tried in the above words to identify your perspective I want in these brief words to identify with him and love him to the extent that I can be like him: (1) He will not argue and shout. My dear Lord did so much without fanfare and rabble-rousing. "He does not seek his own, therefore denies himself; he brings what commends itself; therefore requires no trumpeting." How unlike some of our efforts! (2) He will never crush the weak nor destroy the smallest amount of faith. (3) He will not stop until he has won the victory, making justice to triumph. He will indeed be (and is) the hope 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

(1) Thank you for the poignant name "Servant" — how well does this describe him. (2) Thank you for the assurance that servanthood is your choice. (3) Thank you for the fullness of your Spirit who was present in my Lord. (4) Thank you that his ministry has reached to this one needy Gentile. (5) Thank you for the example of silent success seen in my Savior.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"And in his name shall the Gentiles hope." Just one Gentile can say that without him there is no hope. I would find no hope for our family because without my Lord's instructions for interpersonal relationships we would be at one another's throats. Without Jesus' words about the life to come "in my father's house"

there would be no hope for those who have lived to the three score and ten and beyond. Without my Lord and his presence in me and with me any job would be meaningless. The hope of our neighborhood is in my Lord. How easy it is to find fault with others. Only Jesus can show me how to live alongside others in peace and love.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

This remarkable statement of the healing ministry of Jesus moves me to pray: (1) How I want to stand day by day with him and hear his words. (2) Make me a fisher of men. (3) Open my inner ear that you might truly be my teacher. (4) Heal me of the disease of blindness and deafness as related to your word. (5) I am indeed troubled by demons — I want my Lord to rebuke them. (6) How I want to draw near enough to touch you and be touched by you.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

There are so many things you could teach me: (1) "Not everyone really ever heard all I spoke and taught — you have much more than any one of them did," (2) "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (3) "I can heal all hearts who come to me."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Sri Lanka (Ceylon) — Point for prayer: Evangelistic outreach is, however, more noticeable now than for many years. Bible believing groups inside and outside the churches are now more aggressively reaching out. Efforts are now being made to win the university students. Since the nationalization of all schools, Christian teachers have been making an impact in government schools. Yet all these are but small beginnings.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Beyond my highest joy
I prize her heavenly ways,
Her sweet communion, solemn vows,
Her hymns of love and praise.

WEEK ONE

—Friday—

I like the Psalmist am a sojourner on earth — hide not your word from me — I need it so much! In it is life forever more.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live and observe thy word. Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. I am a sojourner on earth; hide not thy commandments from me! (Psa. 119:17-19). Such blessed attributes of yourself for which I can praise you! (1) Your desire to supply all my needs, all the needs of all men. We should lift our hearts in deep gratitude every morning we open our eyes. (2) We are your voluntary slaves — we are “your servants.” In a most practical factual sense we are all your servants, whether we acknowledge it or not. You have created the entire environment — personal and public in which we live. (3) Indeed, you have given us “life and breath.”

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 psalmist is to say over and over again that our whole purpose in living is to “observe” your word. Indeed it is! What point or purpose is there in life without your word? (4) You can and will give us wisdom as we read your will. Applications and meanings that escaped us before will now appear as if by divine intention — which is exactly what is happening. Bless your holy name! Thank you! (5) You are aware of the brevity of our life — of the fact that we are but pilgrims and we need news from home. How wondrously good you are!

How do you personally relate to the bountifulness 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

There is no point to my repeated confession of failure unless there is with it a repeated sincere desire to repent. Such I offer you. How I *do* want to change. In the daily routine I can inject meditation and

memorization of your word. You have already dealt very bountifully with your servant — to what purpose? “That I might live and observe your word.” There is nothing monotonous in reading your word again if I want to — and I do! If my eyes were opened (i.e., the eyes of my heart) and I did not have before me your law what would be the purpose of seeing? — life means nothing without your explanation. Dear Lord, I affirm this because of my need! Forgive my attachments to this city which has no foundation — to this country that will not abide.

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

Sweetly echo the gospel call,
Wonderful words of Life;
Offer pardon and peace to all,
Wonderful words of Life.
Jesus, only Savior,
Sanctify forever:
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

Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a **5** mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ²and he began to teach them, saying:

³“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will inherit the earth.

⁵Blessed are the meek,
for they shall inherit the earth.

⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for

righteousness,
for they will be filled.

⁷Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

⁸Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

⁹Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.

¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted because of
righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute
you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you
because of me. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, because great is
your reward in heaven, for in the same way they
persecuted the prophets who were before you. —*Mat-
thew 5:1-12, NIV*

Read also Luke 6:20-26.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

The best I can do in reading these beautiful words to you is to read with prayerful thought a paragraph of the first seven verses into which is written the meaning: "How well off are you who know that you are poor in Spiritual things, as well as materially (Luke 6:20): the kingdom of God is yours! How blest are those who know what sorrow means, because they are in a position to receive consolation and courage! Happy are those of a gentle spirit, who claim nothing of their own rights, for the whole earth will belong to them! Blessed are you who are hungering and thirsting for that character which is God's own righteousness: you shall be fully satisfied!"

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Happy are those whose hearts are pure, those who are completely sincere, for they shall see God. Happy are those who work to produce peace in human society, peace between God and man and peace with man himself; these will be known as God's sons. How blest are they who have suffered persecution for the cause of righteousness! The kingdom of God belongs to such as they. Indeed what happiness will be yours when men hate you and turn you out of their company, when you suffer insults and persecution, when they slander you and despise all you stand for, because you are loyal to the Son of Man.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the assurance that I can be blessed or happy. (2) Thank you for the promise of your concern in my dependence upon others for my support. (3) Thank you for the privilege of repentance — of real godly sorrow. (4) Thank you for the solid assurance you will and do strengthen my weaknesses through my sorrow.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"But alas for you who are rich, for you are in little position to receive further comfort" (Luke 6:24). It seems incongruous to bemoan the fate of the rich. It would seem this is the whole pursuit of the whole world. But then our Lord looks at things as they are and *not* as they seem. The comfort riches afford are all the rich will receive. Many rich find no consolation in their possessions. Others seem to enjoy their luxury. But if this life is but the smallest infinitesimal fraction of the life to come, i.e., by comparison of time to eternity, and riches do not count at all in the world to come, then the comfort found here is small indeed.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Here is the "blessed life" — how I need to pray about it: (1) Poverty of spirit is what I want and need. (2) Break my spirit that I might let you rule. (3) Convict my heart of the reality of sin that I might seek and find your forgiveness. (4) How I want a yielded attitude in every relationship of life. (5) I do want to enter the full inheritance of meekness. (6) Deepen my hunger — increase my thirst for your righteousness. (7) Lead me to some one who hurts that I may show mercy.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

How these words can penetrate my heart if I will let them: (1) "The pure in heart will see me — no one else." (2) "My sons make peace and pursue peace." (3) "It can be a good thing to be persecuted."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Republic of the Maldives — Population: 177,000. 220 small coral islands 600 km. east of Sri Lanka. Point for prayer: *There are no Maldivian Christians* — the only totally unevangelized nation in Asia. No Christian propaganda is permitted, for Christianity is abhorred by the people. Pray for these people in their sin and need — it would appear that their major hobby is immorality.

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 ONE

—Saturday—

You can not teach those who do not want to be taught — but there is no end to what you can teach to those who want to know. I bow before you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Teach me, O Lord, the way set out in thy statutes, and in keeping them I shall find my reward. Give me the insight to obey thy law and to keep it with all my heart; make me walk in the path of thy commandments, for that is my desire” (Psa. 119:33-35). Dear Lord, in these brief verses are all the cooperative principles of the fulfillment of your will in the lives of your servants. How marvelous are your ways! The one quality of yourself I see in these verses is “Great wisdom.” I immediately think of Paul’s words: “You must work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you, inspiring both the will and the deed, for his own chosen purpose” (Philippians 2:12,13). Together we will get it done. What is your part; what is my part? They are so much a part of each other we cannot separate them. Praise you for such unexcelled wisdom!

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 would surely seem that all these verses were especially written for me! Let me mark out my part and your part and marvel at the merging. *My part:* (1) Keeping your statutes. (2) Enjoying the reward of my obedience. (3) To obey thy law. (4) To keep it with all my heart. (5) To walk in the path of your commandments. (6) To fulfill my desire to walk in your path. *Your part:* (1) Teach me the way set out in your statutes. (2) Give me insight to obey thy law and to obey it with all my heart. (3) To make me walk in the path of thy commandments. How I do rejoice in the merging of my will in your will — in the “working in” as I “work out.” *The results are:* (1) I shall be taught by you through your word. (2) I shall keep or live out your word in my life. (3) I will have a subjective response of joy in this fulfillment. (4) I shall have insight needed to obey your word. (5) Your word will find expression in all of my heart. (6) My

desire to obey your commandments will find an answer.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

All of the above sounds so wonderful — and it is! How then is it so infrequently fulfilled in my life? It would be easy to say that I have not cooperated as I should. This is true but that is a superficial answer. The well-spring of motivation is in my love — my deep desire to do your will, and with it my strong love for your word. When I am ready to cultivate these qualities I will have all your power and strength flowing through me — *and not until and only when!* Dear Lord, I want to confess this basic sin. I have not taken the time and thought to give myself in love for your will as expressed in your word. This is a love for you, since it is impossible to separate what One says from the Person who says it. Forgive me and move me into a love relationship with you and your word.

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

¹³“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

¹⁴“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Neither do men light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.
—*Matthew 5:13-16, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I have read these blessed words hundreds of times. But never have I read them with more meaning than just now. Never have I approached you in just the way I do this morning to try to think and pray through each word in your presence. Your dear Son selects such common and ordinary things to give meaning to his words. “Salt,” “Light,” “a bushel,” “a lamp.” And now the transfer! I am the salt; I am the light. I have a stand and a bushel. Speak to me, dear Lord! I am listening; my heart is open to you! I hear him say to me, “You are the world’s salt! You stand in the same relationship to the world as does salt to meat which is decomposing. But if the salt (*you and I*) becomes insipid or tasteless; how is its saltiness to be restored or the meat to be preserved? That is, if you lose your power to preserve from moral corruption, how could you restore that lost power?”

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Just here I want to apply every word I can from this passage to my own heart cry. Jesus tells me that I am a lamp lit by his fire to burn as a light in this dark world in which I live. There is a real problem in this responsibility. “. . . The museum of human history is quite cluttered with the wrecked lives of men and institutions who could not resist the temptation of self-glory.” What motives will save us from this peril? When once we see how truly *lost* the world is we will have “that courageous humility that makes us truly helpful to men without seeking our own glory.”

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 it is my privilege to do what I can through living and preaching your word to preserve this rotten world from destruction. (2) Thank you that much is being done right here in our world even if there is very little “furious fanfare.” (3) Thank you I can be “a walking conscience” to bring your Son right into the evil society in which I live. (4) Thank you I am reminded over and again that “salt retains its value only if it maintains its distinctive character.”

(5) Thank you that I can truly believe that if I lose my saltiness the world will lose all hope.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . that men may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” There are two sides to this coin: (1) That men would glorify us and not the Father. Isn’t it almost unavoidable? Men glorified Peter and John — men praised and worshiped Paul and Barnabas — not all men immediately thought of God following their healing from our Lord. Some men will refuse to transfer their praise even when they know better. (2) We can allow this problem to be used as an excuse for false modesty and never give ourselves to any “good works.” Men *must* see our good works if they are going to glorify you. The answer is not only in the source of the good works, but also in the manner in which they are done. Egocentric action is detectable.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In these sometimes too familiar words I find real reasons for prayer: (1) I can give life and flavor to the part of the earth I affect — help me. (2) O thou, the source of all saltiness, keep me salty. (3) Show me today the good for which I was created. (4) Light my candle. (5) Put me on a hill. (6) Set me on a stand in your house. (7) Show men your good works through me.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

How powerful will be your words in these verses. (1) “Keep near me — I’ll make you salty.” (2) “Keep near me — I’ll turn on your light.” (3) “I am a hill and I am the stand for your light.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Taiwan — Population: 19,200,000. Growth rate — 1.9%. People per sq. km. — 533.

Point for prayer: *The outstanding Christian testimony* in the will of the late Pres. Chiang Kai-Shek in 1975 gave fresh impetus to believers to evangelize among a more responsive people. Pray that this land may be fully evangelized while there is time. The growing power of Communist China may be used to occupy Taiwan.

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 TWO

—Sunday—

In your Son — in your Word I find continuing delight! Freedom! Freedom is mine. Your law is fulfilled in your Son! I bow to lose myself in you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I walk in freedom wherever I will, because I have studied thy precepts. I will speak of thy instructions before kings and will not be ashamed; in thy commandments I find continuing delight. I love them with all my heart” (Psa. 119:45-47). What a profound statement of truth is in the promise of freedom! The words of your dear Son come immediately to mind. “you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.” In every situation of life we can move confidently — in every changing circumstance of life we can walk with a sure step. Praise your name for the liberating experience we find in studying your word! I have tested this concept enough to know how true it is. Dear Father, how we long to have your word honored and accepted by the heads of countries. If there is any way at all I can cause this to happen I am ready.

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 am not worshiping your book; I am worshiping you. I am not in love with ink on paper; I am in love with the meaning of yourself as seen in what you have said. Having said this I at the same time can enter into the expression of the psalmist with the most exuberance possible! “In thy commandments I find continuing delight”; indeed, indeed I do! If you can give me enough days I purpose to examine every word of your book in the closet of prayer. I have no greater need or delight! I have thought through the words of the Old Testament in more than thirty years of classes, but dear Lord, such was but a preparation of meditation on your commandments.

How do you personally relate to the truthfulness 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

A paraphrase in the negative could easily say what I want to in confession of my sin. I walk in bondage in every relationship of life because I have neglected the study of thy precepts. I mean that my bondage is a result of my neglect of daily study of your precepts. I am ashamed to mention my interest in the Bible to almost anyone. I am intimidated by those in high places and somehow my mouth and heart are closed. I know why: it is because I am not current in my meditation on yourself and your Son as found in your word. Forgive me! I already know what the Bible says and I am bored! It is because I have been deceived — I shall never exhaust the precious treasure of your word! Break the apathy of indifference and open my heart to receive with meekness your life-changing word! Forgive me and renew 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

The Lord is my Shepherd, no want shall I know;
I feed in green pastures, safe-folded I rest;
He leadeth my soul where the still waters flow,
Restores me when wand’ring, redeems when oppressed;
Restores me when wand’ring, redeems when oppressed.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁷“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. ¹⁹Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and

teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

²¹“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ ²²But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.

²³“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. —*Matthew 5:17-24, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It does seem redundant to read the words of your blessed Son back to you. But as you know it is a means of praise and wonder. I surely am on holy ground as I read the words of his sermon on the mount. Jesus did not come to repeal or ruin the law but to fulfill it. The law must remain in effect so it can be the standard against which those will be judged who will not accept your leniency through faith in your Son.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. I do not have the time or space to worship you through all these verses. I do praise you for the unalloyed joy I find in my Lord's fulfillment of the law for me. (1) My Lord fulfilled the law's purpose to demonstrate the standard of righteousness by showing himself to be the perfect man and all that you had in mind when you gave the law. Once the law was kept and we can identify with the one who kept it, the law can also be fulfilled in me. Praise your name! (2) My Lord fulfilled the law's purpose to declare the exceeding sinfulness of sin by living as a man above sin, thus condemning all sin that men commit and dissolving all the rationalizations they (we) offer to justify their (our) sinning.

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 the law has been fulfilled in him — since I am *in him* it is also fulfilled in me! (2) Thank you that all things necessary for my salvation have been accomplished by my Lord. (3) Thank you that there is no escape from the guilt of disobedience — such guilt can drive us to yourself. (4) Thank you for One who was himself all he taught others. (5) Thank you for the *exceeding* righteousness I find in my Lord.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . leave there your gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” Does our Lord expect us to have a friendly good will toward all with whom we associate? This is exactly what our Lord expects. There are persons who for several reasons become a source of irritation to us. What shall we do with them? These are the very ones of whom we are speaking. There need be no ill will in your heart. Hopefully there will be none in the heart of our brother, but at least in our heart we have freely forgiven him. My Lord is saying to me that resentment and grudges cannot be present if I am truly to worship you. We must give up our hatred or resentment of our brother or our attempted worship.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How can I receive the fulfillment of the law and the prophets? (1) Relate me to the meaning of the law's fulfillment. (2) I want to see with my heart the One of whom all the prophets spoke. (3) Has all been accomplished in your Son? (4) I want to be taught by Jesus to keep your law. (5) Show me the true motives behind my service for you and others. (6) I do want to right now let heaven rule in my life. (7) Rule from the throne of my heart.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Deliver me from being just religious — speak to my conscience! (1) “Claim your citizen's rights in my kingdom.” (2) “Your rights are found in me and my words.” (3) “Teach men my words and be called by myself great in the kingdom.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Taiwan — Point for prayer: *Missions* — There are now about 863 missionaries in the land. There are many openings for new missionaries in evangelism, church planting, and inspiring of believers to action, but national believers are increasingly shouldering the leadership, administration and burden of the work.

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 TWO

—Monday—

I have indeed thought upon the course of my life. I come now to your word and your throne for an answer.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I have thought much about the course of my life and always turned back to thy instructions. I have never delayed but always made haste to keep thy commandments. . . . At midnight I rise to give thee thanks for the justice of thy decrees” (Psa. 119:59, 60,62). How full of meaning are these words of the song writer of long ago. How many thousands upon thousands of men and women can say: “I have thought much about the course of my life”? What shall it be that directs my paths? Where shall I find point and purpose to my living? If we cannot find a reason for life in your word we shall not find it! How I want to testify that in the “dead ends of life” I have never delayed but always made haste to keep thy commandments. There really is no option that makes sense. Thank you for your wonderful Son revealed in your word.

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 now lived past the “three score” and I am living out the “ten.” In these years — and even now — I consider the direction and reason for my life. I find no meaning at all apart from your word! Can we find value in our children — indeed we can if they find life in you and your Son. They are indeed an extension of ourselves, separate and valuable for themselves, but what is there for them without your precepts? What shall we leave in the lives of others that lives after we have moved to another life? The more I think on these matters, the more I want to praise you for your truth that abides forever! An investment with eternal dividends! Praise your name as revealed in your word.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Perhaps the first confession would be that verse 62 of this psalm does not apply to me. When has it been that I awoke at midnight and arose to thank you for your self-revelation found in the Bible? If I did it, I can’t remember it. What would produce such a nocturnal response? If I was meditating upon the words and meaning of your book just before I retired, such a response might be expected. What we do in our leisure hours does indicate what is in our heart. Dear Lord, forgive me! I could right now choose to change my leisure habits. Is there nothing in your book to fascinate me? Is there nothing I could read that would hold my interest? Dear Lord, I am trying to be as honest with you as I can. (I already know you see the intents of my heart.) Forgive me, I repent!

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 shade by day, defence by night,
A shelter in the time of storm;
No fears alarm, no foes afright,
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

²⁷“You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ ²⁸But I say that anyone that looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰And if your right hand causes

you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

³¹“It has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’ ³²But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to commit adultery, and anyone who marries a woman so divorced commits adultery.

³³“Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.’ ³⁴But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne; ³⁵or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. ³⁶And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. ³⁷Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one. —Matthew 5:27-37, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Of all the sections of your word this is the one where it would be so easy to leave the real purpose of these words and launch into a commentary comment on the meaning. My purpose here is to read your word to you in an expression of praise and attempt as much as possible to receive with meekness your engrafted word that is able to save my whole life. The problem of adultery has been with society from the beginning of Satan’s work. To stop it in the individual heart is to stop it in society. Dear Lord, I am that individual! I want to receive the censure and purifying your Son brings to 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. What can save me from the all-pervasive sexuality of this day? Here are the commitments I make to receive this salvation: (1) I want to read all over again and again what you have said about this subject. I Cor. 6:9-20; 10:1-13; chapters 5 and 7 of I Corinthians; I Thess. 4:3-8; Heb. 13:4. I want these words to sink into my conscience. I claim the promise of II Peter 1:3,4. (2) I want to be so constantly in love with you that I cannot, I do not love the world. I believe this is exactly what I John 2:15,16 says to me. “The intelligent choice to love all of the opposite sex even as God loves them destroys the power of lust.” (3) I want to get a good look at hell and realize that no lustful desire is worth the price attached. I John 3:3 tells me the hope of heaven makes me pure.

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 clear unambiguous statement: you shall not commit adultery. (2) Thank you for the opportunity of stopping adultery where it begins. (3) Thank you for the drastic measures my Lord spelled out in stopping lust. (4) Thank you that what seem

severe and unusual measures by men are not considered so by you. (5) Thank you for your clear teaching on divorce. (6) Thank you you are just as severe with divorce as with lust. (7) Thank you for the wonderful motivation you have given me for telling the truth.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Let your yes be yes and your no, no; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.” Man is such a strange creature; when he wants to impress one of his fellow creatures he adds emphasis to his affirmations or denials, when all the while there is a strange possibility that he is not telling the truth. If the heart is basically false, dishonest or unjust the mouth cannot but reveal that condition. Such a man must resort to oaths to guarantee his affirmations, for how else can he make up for his generally-known lack of integrity?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

These revisions of the ten commandments move me to ask for help: (1) How can I prevent the lustful look? (2) I want to see every woman as a precious person not a sex symbol. (3) My look need not enter my imagination — keep me aware of this. (4) Give me courage to perform the drastic mental surgery here suggested. (5) I know you want my whole self — I want to give it. (6) I am so glad for the wife you gave me — I want to give my whole self to her. (7) It is so easy for me to over emphasize — deliver me — I want my “yes to be simply ‘yes.’ ”

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Emphasize all over again the depth of these words: (1) “Bring every thought into my captivity.” (2) “Bring your mate often to me in prayer.” (3) “Hold your emotions up to me that I might heal them.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Taiwan — Point for prayer: *Literature work is now extensive.* There are plans to penetrate the secular book market with Christian books as well as publishing new books translated from other languages and encouraging local writers.

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 TWO

—Tuesday—

Your words "are the theme of my life wherever I make my home." Jesus came to live out the reality of this blessed thought — I worship him — and yourself.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

"Thy statutes are the theme of my song (or wonderful to me) wherever I make my home. In the night I remember thy name, O Lord, and dwell upon thy law. . . . With all my heart I have tried to please thee; fulfill thy promise and be gracious to me" (Psa. 119:54,55,58). What marvelous qualities of yourself are found in these verses! (1) Your word (which is but an expression of yourself) is such that it makes me want to sing, i.e., there is happiness in the meaning of your word. (2) Your word is of such substance it produces a theme — your word has continuing meaning in it. (3) No environment need hinder my song. Your word produces my environment. (4) If I meditate upon your word for a period of the day you will bring it to mind at night. In all these ways and more you are active in my life. Praise 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

Just for me. I have related the above praise to myself — only because what is true for me can be, and should be true of all men. I continue the attributes of yourself I see in this text. (5) At night I can quietly absorb the meaning of what you have said, i.e., "meditate upon your word," or "dwell upon your law." I am not reading rules and regulations; I am reveling in revelation that has life and hope and peace for my troubled heart. (6) You prompt a desire in me to please you. I would not do it only out of fear; if I did I would not be so happy about it. The text says it exactly as I do it: "I have tried to please you." I'm delighted to include the last quality. (7) "Fulfill thy promise and be gracious to me." I claim your un-earned favor!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Much of my praise has been admixed with confession. At the same time, it will be good to delineate the specifics of my failures to be forgiven and to be reminded again how totally dependent I am upon you. (1) Whereas I could sing your praises everyday, I fail to do so because I simply do not spend adequate thought on your word. (2) The theme of my life is yourself, but I feel like I am just learning how to make them true. (3) I have been (or allowed myself to be) overcome with the environment. Forgive me. (4) Night time is a period of real need — I am tired and vulnerable — thank you for speaking to this need. (5) I have not meditated on your word at night — not at all as I could — I am glad to respond to what you are saying here. (6) I am not always filled with a desire to please you, but I want to be. (7) I do indeed claim your grace. Thank you 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

Take the world, but give me Jesus,
All its joys are but a name;
But His love abideth ever,
Thro' eternal years the same.
Oh, the height and depth of mercy!
Oh, the length and breadth of love!
Oh, the fullness of redemption,
Pledge of endless life above!

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

HIS WORD

³⁸"You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' ³⁹But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak

as well, ⁴¹If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴²Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

⁴³‘You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? ⁴⁸Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. —Matthew 5:38-48, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, who is sufficient to receive the application of your Son’s words to his interpersonal relationships? Non-resistance in personal problems. You are speaking to me in the four examples of my Lord: (1) In personal insults of a physical or verbal nature: “Whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.” (2) In litigation over trifles (which includes personal property): “If any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.” Considering how valuable the coat and cloak were in my Lord’s day such would include equally valuable items with me. (3) When I am pressed into service I do not want to give I must hear my Lord speak to me: “. . . Whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him two.” (4) Most of all, when asked for a gift or a loan “return good for evil by intelligent liberality.”

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

These words speak so powerfully to my heart. *On verse 44:* “. . . this word *enemy* covers the whole realm of those who oppose: personal antagonists, business competitors, political opponents, social rivals.” *On verse 45:* “The honest man, whose conscience has been stabbed by Christ’s message and who feels keenly his own imperfection, will be reminded that God did truly bless him even in his sinfulness. Such a disciple will be motivated to bless and help men, especially his enemies, loving them as God first loved him.” Dear Lord, this is my desire and prayer.

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 there is a way to remove the desire for personal retaliation. (2) Thank you that I now know love and good will are more important than personal property. (3) Thank you that it is not necessary to determine if a person deserves the gift before I give it. (4) Thank you I can actually return good for evil — Lord help me to *do it!*

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Be perfect therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” If our Lord knew we could not keep the law of Moses, and he did, then what *does* he mean by asking us to “be perfect”? “He who loves like the heavenly Father loves, is thoroughly equipped to grow into absolute perfection. He who loves, needs no other rules or standards, for he will always act in the best interest of his neighbor, friend or enemy. To love consistently is to be perfect.” One translation of I John 2:5 is “Whoever practices obedience to his message really has a perfect love of God in his heart.” We are indebted to Harold Fowler for the thoughts in the above. “Laws are but the muscles of love, given to punish those who are unable or unwilling to be governed directly by love” (*ibid*).

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

These words of my Lord on non-resistance and love call for the following requests: (1) What real spiritual value is there in non-resistance? (2) I want to make real practical application of these words — lead me into a situation where this can happen. (3) When am I being taken advantage of? I really need heaven’s wisdom in answering this question. (4) Who are the enemies for whom I shall pray? (5) How can I express my love for those who hate me? (6) I want the perfection my Lord asked of me. (7) In all the above areas I do expect your answer as I am willing to perceive it and receive it.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You surely have much to say to me in these verses: (1) “Do not resist an evil person.” (2) “Love your enemies.” (3) “Pray for those who persecute you.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Taiwan — Point for prayer: *Between 1945 and 1960* there was great growth in the church — both due to the influx of Christians and many experienced Christian workers at the fall of the Mainland, and also a remarkable people movement among the mountain tribes. Growth has slowed due to increasing materialism, the over-dependence of many of the smaller churches on overseas funds and failure to teach and mobilize the church members for outreach and personal evangelism. The need of the Church today is for systematic Bible teaching and revival to bring unity and zeal for outreach.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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 TWO

—Wednesday—

You — and you alone are all I have in life — you are so kind to me! I am glad to enter the privacy of the closet and worship you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Thou, Lord art all I have; I have promised to keep thy word . . . Thou hast shown thy servant much kindness, fulfilling thy word, O Lord. Give me insight, give me knowledge, for I put my trust in thy commandments” (Psa. 119:57,65,66). All praise is a form of testimony when it comes from the heart.

What did the psalmist mean when he said, you were all he had? Dear Lord, this is so literally true in the lives of all men. All we have in the capacity to understand is from you. All we have in the use of this marvelous capacity is found in your word. Life would make no sense without your word — there would be no point to intelligence without your word.

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 “thy servant” of verse 65. You have been so kind to me that I am simply overcome. You have promised over and over again to be kind to me, and yet when your promise is fulfilled I am surprised, delighted all over again! Because of my guilt I do not expect kindness. I so easily forget my guilt is only a hedge to lead me to you. How I rejoice to read the promise in verse 66 that you promise me insight if I only ask, and oh, how I do ask! Insight I receive as equal to wisdom. I read and claim your promise in James 1:5,6 as well as in this verse.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

My desires and dreams are not matched with reality. But more and more I see one merged with the other. At the same time, It would be easy to be despondent over the difference. A replay of the activities of one day, or one week, would give lie to the claim that:

“Thou art all I have” — or would it? “Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart.” Dear Lord, at the best, with the most one could say for attitude and performance I am miserably short. Forgive me. Sin is like the refuse of daily living — we surely have a large amount of it to get rid of.

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 Savior of men,
Calling in mercy again and again;
“Turn now from sin, and from evil depart,
Have I not died for thee? 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

“Be careful not to do your ‘acts of righteousness’ before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. ²“So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ³But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁵“But when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ⁶When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray

to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹“This is how you should pray:

“ ‘Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,

¹⁰your kingdom come,
your will be done

on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹Give us today our daily bread.

¹²Forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.’

¹⁴For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. — *Matthew 6:1-14, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, there could be no passage of scripture that strikes closer to my heart than this one. What a struggle I have with my motives! If I worry about what men say or think about this righteous act or that one then I know I am wrong. It is with your good pleasure and approval I must concern myself. Dear Lord, as you know my motives so you judge me. It is a small matter to be judged of men. It is good to be able to give to the needs of men with no fanfare or recognition. Praise you that such is possible today. I have wondered *much* and *often* about the publication of these prayers I am even now writing. I know just two things about them: (1) Without either writing or speaking audibly there is no way I can keep my mind on what I am doing. (2) My desire is to help others in the one most important area of life which is prayer. If I can be of help in the development of personal worship I want to do it. We all learn better by a model. If those reading these lines have been able to see how you have led me and directed my wayward mind to your throne I shall be glad, very glad.

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 does occur to me that writing or speaking in prayer would eliminate vain repetitions, i.e., if we are sincere. My particular concern just here is to pray the prayer my Lord here taught his disciples. Just as if I had never before prayed these lovely words let me say them again with all the meaning I can put into them.

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 is a wonderful exciting reward reserved in heaven for me. (2) Thank you for the privilege and joy of giving especially to those who

do not know who gave. (3) Thank you for the “recompense” from yourself promised to those who give. (4) Thank you for the life-changing experience of praying to you “in secret,” i.e., with total sincerity. (5) Thank you that you know my needs and meet many of them without my request.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” Back of all action is God. He either directly or ultimately controls everything. This request is based squarely upon such a truth. James tells us not to attribute temptation to God (James 1:13-15). I Corinthians tells us that no temptation will appear in our experience without a way out or through. This is a prayer to not lead us into an overbearing situation where instead of growing stronger we are overcome. What a blessed request this is! God knows we are no match for the evil one, our Lord reminds us we can ask him to so arrange the circumstances of our daily life that we will be delivered from the power of Satan. This is no insurance against chastening — “whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth” (Heb. 12:6-8), but it is a promise that if we ask he will rescue all of us from what could be an impossible situation.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I have good reason to pray over my acts of righteousness: (1) Keep my expressions of worship hidden from men. (2) Increase my desire and capacity to give to the needy. (3) Open my eyes to see your rewards for me. (4) Deliver me from praying in any way to be seen of men. (5) Wherever I go give me a prayer room. (6) “Hallowed by your name.” (7) May your will be done by my willingness this day in my eating and speaking.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I can think of no more important words from you to me than these: (1) “I will give you your daily bread.” (2) “Forgive as you want to be forgiven.” (3) “If you ask I will deliver you from the evil one.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Taiwan — Point for prayer: *The witness to students* — the 300,000 university students are probably the most open section of the community now. Many churches have student centers that are well used.

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

—Thursday—

Your hands have moulded my spirit — me — you had a particular plan when you did this, you want me NOT my money — I want you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The law thou hast ordained means more to me than a fortune in gold and silver. Thy hands moulded me and made me what I am; show me how I may learn thy commandments” (Psa. 119:72,73). If Solomon wrote this psalm he could speak from experience — to him we could refer for a real example of one who had a fortune in gold and silver. We could even relate this to David as an example. But for us who have never had anything close to a fortune in gold and silver, and have never been all that taken up in the value and beauty of your word, how could we offer anything but an inexperienced opinion? Dear Lord, we do have more than opinion! We have Jesus’ own words. He who was rich beyond our wildest imagination said: “A man’s happiness, satisfaction, or ‘life’ does not consist in gold and silver (or the abundance of the things he can buy).”

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 had to make a choice between one or the other, I do not believe there would be a problem. It is trying to have both that causes no end of problems. We like to think that a fortune in gold and silver would be the means of advancing your cause. If we are not in love with our Lord and his word now we will not be in love with him and his word when we have the gold and silver. The basic problem is how do I use what I have to honor your rule in my life? Dear Lord, I want to impress these words upon my deepest consciousness: *“Thy hands moulded me and made me what I am.”* This happened historically in Adam — it happened spiritually through the second Adam and my acceptance of his free gift. Dear Lord, it is happening *personally* by my learning from you as you teach me from your commandments.

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

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

In the realm of law it is not difficult to feel very, very guilty. We can fill up the page or the air with rationalizations, or justification, or excuses, but when it has all been said the guilt remains.

It seems there is more in this one psalm than I had ever imagined. But without your grace and mercy there is nothing here — nothing but guilt. It is only when I regard your work in me as a continuing, never ending, process that I can enter the reality of the values here discerned. I try (I only try) to be as open and honest with you as I possibly can; my sin is a true embarrassment to me. I have marked this in two or three places just yesterday. Dear God, if you are not in the process of teaching me your commandments (even through my failures), I have no hope at all. But I know you are! Praise your name! My admiration for your law grows every day!

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 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.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁶“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only

to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

¹⁹“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

²²“The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. ²³But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! —Matthew 6:16-23, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, there is so much to assimilate in these verses I am embarrassed to give only a superficial consideration to them. As I see them there are three areas in which you are speaking to my heart: (1) *Fasting* (vss. 16-18). (2) *Treasures* (vss. 19-21). (3) *Personal dedication* (vss. 22-24). How I do want to open my ears and eyes to hear and see all you have for me. It is my deepest desire to be open to receive with meekness your word.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. I receive to my whole self these words: “Put your trust in God alone! Put your whole confidence in things eternal, for only they are permanent. Concentrate your attention and service upon God and his promises, since double-mindedness is a really impossible course. It brings on unnecessary worries and draws the attention away from God. Real faith is able to concentrate upon God’s rule and provisions and accept life as a matter of course, living one day at a time” (Fowler).

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 provision of fasting — I know I need it. (2) Thank you for all three of these provisions for worship: (a) alms, (b) prayer and (c) fasting. I want and need them all. (3) Thank you that you are ever vigilant to see and meet my need. (4) Thank you for the identity of real treasure. (5) Thank you for the clear statement that focus of attention and interest produces either light or darkness.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“You cannot serve God and Mammon.” Our Lord is not talking about God or money, he is talking about God and money. He is saying we cannot serve both of them at the same time. We can serve money or we can serve God, but it is impossible to give adequate service to both at the same time. The service suggested

here is that of a slave — it is the giving of one’s self to a master. There are several reasons besides the one basic reason just cited. (1) Money and God have different goals — one is selfless service; the other is selfishness. (2) Money and God have different motivations — one asks to walk by sight, the other by faith. (3) They have different fulfillment — one is of the earth and the other is eternal. (4) They have different effect on those who serve — one produces contentment and the other anxiety.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I find no passage of scripture more full of potential for petitions: (1) Enable me to forgive as I want to be forgiven. (2) Give me the courage to claim the forgiveness you promise. (3) Lead me into a practical use of the instructions on fasting. (4) Open my eyes to the real reward from fasting. (5) How I do want to know how to store up treasures in heaven. (6) Enlarge my understanding of the real value of heaven’s treasures. (7) Having my whole body full of light is such an attractive thought — develop my point of view that this might happen.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What do you say to me in these words? (1) “Forgiveness of others from the heart is much more than a good idea — it is essential!” (2) “I assume my disciples will fast.” (3) “You can and should accumulate treasures in the eternal world.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Taiwan — Point for prayer: *The Protestant Church* today is stronger among the Mandarin speakers, but weaker among the Hoklo, and very weak among the Hakka. There are fine national leaders of maturity and many Bible Schools and Seminaries training workers for the churches. Greatest growth is seen among the two larger indigenous Chinese Churches because of a high degree of loyalty to the Lord and their fellowship and the involvement of the whole membership in outreach.

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 TWO

—Friday—

Since you are my Father you both blessed me and corrected me — I am so glad for this kind of personal interest! I am worth more than many sparrows.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Those who fear thee shall see me and rejoice, because I have hoped in thy word. I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me” (Psa. 119:74,75). As I appear before your throne of grace and affirm the statement of the psalmist, I at the same time must remember that: “Thou Lord, seest me.” Dear Lord, I have hoped in your word — I do hope in your word — but you know how woefully short all my best efforts are. What quality of yourself do I see in these two verses? There are two attributes for which I praise you and all men can praise you: (1) *Hope*. Only in you as revealed in your word is there hope. How empty and meaningless is life without this quality. (2) *Chastening*. Because you love me, and all men, you interrupt our selfishness to let us know there is something more in life than sex, food and money.

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 both good and frightening that our lives are observed by others. It is good because we have opportunity to give life to all the lessons and sermons we have taught and preached. It is frightening because the *credibility gap* is sometimes rather large. Dear Lord, I do want to be my own best convert, my own best student. Even as I praise you for this privilege there are those who observe us and who also love us. They are as willing to accept us with our imperfections as you are. I take this to refer to the interpersonal living of the family and close friends. But even here, dear Father, I want to “hope” or “trust” in your word.

Could it be that I accept affliction as coming from you? You permit it if you do not immediately send it. You use it whatever its source. Praise your wonderful grace.

How do you personally relate to the chastening of God, and God who is our Father? Speak it out or

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is very easy to fall into the trap of self-pity, or morbid introspection. I have recognized such qualities as from the evil one. I reject them and ask for your help. In the same principle of accepting affliction in self-pity is the possibility of recognizing it as an expression of your love. In the option to self-loathing is the possibility of inward cleansing. Dear Lord, I ask for humility and freedom — praise your name — I find them both in my response to Calvary. Help me dear Lord, to be so busy meditating upon your word that there will be no time to wonder or worry about what men will see or say. In your personal interest in my needs you have afflicted me. I refer to whatever it is that hinders my plans.

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

Not a shadow can rise,
Not a cloud in the skies,
But His smile quickly drives it away;
Not a doubt or a fear,
Not a sigh nor a tear,
Can abide while we trust and obey.
Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus,
But to trust and obey.

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

HIS WORD

²⁵“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? ²⁶Look at

the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

²⁷Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

²⁸“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin.

²⁹Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³²For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. —*Matthew 6:25-34, NIV*

(Cf. *Luke 12:22-48*)

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It is a rare opportunity we have to look every day at part of your word with a fresh perspective — just as if we had never seen it before. What a startling statement this verse appears! Do not worry! Do not be anxious; quit fretting! Ah, it is well enough to say, but a man must eat! That is the very point — life is not the pursuit of food. A man has to have clothes — no, he doesn't; if life is one constant effort to acquire clothes, life is not worth the living.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Lord, it would be easy for me to “bow out” on this text. I could say plainly, “I do not worry” and to some extent this is true. But as you know my heart, there are several areas where such is not true. Do I give much more anxious thought than I should to what men think of what I said, wrote or did? Dear Lord, I'm guilty. Have I asked far too many times about how this or that project will eventuate? My Lord, how wrong I have been here! When will I take a good look at the track record of all my concern? What have I added by all my inquiries?

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 example of your care and interest in birds — such an example for me! (2) Thank you for the beauty of the lilies teaching me of your law and your mercy. (3) Thank you for the promise of clothes and food from my anxious response to what you have given me. (4) Thank you that you make these promises to your children — to those who trust you. (5) Thank you, thank you for the *One* principle that solves anxieties: “Seek first your rule in my life.”

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day.” This is my Lord's way of saying, “Live one day at a time.” How wonderfully good to know he is also promising sufficient grace to cope with the trouble of that day. To borrow tomorrow's cares is real presumption — we do not know we will have tomorrow. When we learn to live one day at a time we can stop our worrying. Tomorrow really never exists — when it dawns, lo, it is today! If we anticipate problems for tomorrow along with the troubles of today we will have more than we are able to handle. How beautiful is the promise of Deuteronomy, “As thy days are so shall thy strength be” (Deuteronomy 33:25).

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Here is a gold mine of prayer requests: (1) Deliver me from the demands of anxiety — give me *your* peace. (2) Enlarge my understanding of the importance of being alive. (3) Open my eyes to see the birds of the air as you do. (4) I want to stand today beneath the cross of your Son and remember how much any one of us is worth to you. (5) I want wisdom to know the difference between trusting and fatalism.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in these beautiful words: (1) “Who has given you all you have to this present moment? Is it not even myself?” (2) “I know what you need and I will give it.” (3) “Seek first my rule in your heart and my direction in your conduct.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Taiwan — Point for prayer: *The Tribal Church* now claims 80% of the people and nearly half the Christians. In recent years there has been spiritual decline due to poverty, inadequate Bible teaching and ensuring of a personal relationship with the Lord for each Christian. The breakdown of tribal life has been speeded up by the drift of many to the cities and increasing education among the young people. Immorality among the youth, and inability of parents to control their children in a changing society have led to the loss of many young people.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread thro' all the earth abroad,
The honors of Thy name.

WEEK TWO

—Saturday—

You care and share in my embarrassment! What an amazing thought! When I ask for bread you will not give me a stone! I can leave all judgment in your hands!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Let me give my whole heart to thy statutes, so that I am not put to shame. I long with all my heart for thy deliverance, hoping for the fulfillment of thy word” (Psa. 119:80,81). Right here and right now I want to give my whole heart to you in praise for the qualities I see of yourself in these verses. (1) You care about my embarrassment. Indeed you do not want any man anywhere at anytime to be “put to shame.” (2) This verse is really discussing a positive action for man. You want man to be constantly fulfilled. (3) You are very much concerned that we be the victor instead of the victim — the overcomer instead of the overcome. Praise your name for such a promise! (4) Most of all you are immutable, i.e., you never change — your word is *always* fulfilled! This can be both joy and grief — unspeakable joy and grief beyond words.

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 seems so often that the words of the text were written just for me alone. My shame and embarrassment are all associated with one lack: the translation of your word into daily conduct. What I want above all is a consistency in conduct that will enable me to be the same at all times in all places with everyone. I am really asking for a fulfillment of your own nature in me! Somehow, dear Lord, I believe if I give my whole heart to you the whole time it will happen. Even as I say this I want to read again the verse that speaks of giving my whole heart to your statutes.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

I can identify with the nation of Israel (or at least with the minority) who looked and longed for the

coming of the Messiah. As they expected the Christ to deliver them — as their sight grew dim with looking for the promise so does my heart long after the forming of Christ within me. This is my basic sin and greatest need. There seem to be two worlds: (1) The world of worship and meditation — of rejoicing in your presence. (2) The world of the daily routine duties of the day. Somehow my dear Lord was able to merge these two worlds until his life and attitudes were worship. It is for the forming of this one in my heart that I yearn.

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

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.

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

HIS WORD

7 *“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ²For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.*

³*“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ‘How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.*

6“Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.

7“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

9“Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a snake? 11If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! 12In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. —Matthew 7:1-12, NIV
Read also Luke 6:37-42.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, how often I feel totally inadequate and full of presumption to attempt to read these words back to you and yet, once I begin I find in this an experience of purifying and enlightenment I could find nowhere else.

In this passage I want to know just who is included in these words. I believe he is talking to me. When I am unmerciful in my criticism of others he speaks to me. When I condemn on the basis of suspicion and surmises, I am guilty of judging as my Lord here describes it. When my motive for criticism has no help to offer the one criticized I am guilty. How easy it is to fall into the trap of smug self-righteousness!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Whereas I spoke for myself (and meant every word) it was the principle applicable to all I had in mind.

Here, dear Lord, speak just to my heart!

Fault finding is the sad admission of a sinful heart.

Do I have some secret joy in finding a failure in someone else I imagine is not found in me? Why am I ready to presume my brother or sister guilty before proper investigation? Isn't this the terrible sin my Lord is here condemning? *Harold Fowler* has said it, so well:

“To judge or criticize another is to put oneself in a position superior to, and removed from, the one he criticizes. But as long as we are men, we do not enjoy that privileged position. A critical spirit makes us hard, cruel and vindictive and, worse yet, quite convinced that we are indeed superior men.”

Dear Lord, forgive! My goodness is in you not myself!

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 judgment has been taken out of my hands when it relates to motives. (2) Thank you for the lovely oil of gladness we have in these verses as related to interpersonal relationships. (3) Thank you

for the promise that men will reciprocate in kind. (4) Thank you that we need not be blind men, nor follow blind men.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” It would seem our Lord is saying that when the heart gets full enough it will spill over into the mouth. Not everything that comes into our mind is expressed with our mouth. It is only when the mind understands it, the will identifies or agrees with it, and the emotions are aroused by it that what has thus filled our heart comes out of our mouth. We are not suggesting that any long period of time is involved. If the subject is of such a nature that we are immediately made responsible for what we say, then no more time is necessary.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What a privilege to allow you to help me pray from these verses: (1) Guard my heart against criticism of my brother. (2) I do *not* know men's motives — keep me full of love. (3) Show me my own hypocrisy. (4) I do want to get the planks out of my own eye — help me. (5) Please enlighten my understanding as to just when I am casting pearls to pigs. (6) I am asking for heaven's wisdom in my praying. (7) How I want to apply the golden rule in my house to those I know the best.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

(1) “What you condemn in others may not be sin — please be careful.” (2) “Do you know how long your brother resisted temptation before he fell? Where is your spirit of gentleness?” (3) “Do not judge your brother by your own growth.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Taiwan — Needy areas and peoples: The 2 million Hakka speaking people need to be evangelized in their own language despite increasing use of Mandarin. They have no Bible and there are only about six missionaries.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Praise ye the Lord! O let all that is in me adore Him!
All that hath life and breath,
Come now with praises before Him!
Let the Amen sound from His people again:
Gladly for aye we adore Him.

WEEK THREE

—Sunday—

All of creation is your servant — how amazing! Fix your word in my heart as you have established it in heaven. How unselfish — lavish — and practical you are in giving! I want to worship you that I too can be unselfish.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“For ever, O Lord, thy word is firmly fixed in the heavens. Thy faithfulness endures to all generations; thou hast established the earth, and it stands fast. By thy appointments they stand this day; for all things are thy servants” (Psa. 119:89-91). The qualities associated with your creative power are often mentioned in this beautiful psalm. As permanent as heaven so permanent is your word. What a source of confidence and strength for all men is this promise! The heavens we can see and the heavens we cannot see will sooner dissolve and disappear before one word you have spoken will fail to be fulfilled. How many generations had lived upon earth before the psalmist wrote these words? How many generations have lived since the day when the words were penned? How many generations will live upon this earth before Jesus comes again? In not one generation has one word of yourself failed of fulfillment. Praise 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

Just for me. Since you through the psalmist spoke these words, we know much more about the relationship of this little planet to the galaxy in which we are a very small part. Our estimate of you increases upon each exploration of space. The laws you set in operation are sustaining all we see in space. What the psalmist said 900 years before your Son came we can say this day 2,000 years since he came. If he should remain with you another 5,000 years we could repeat these words and find every one of them true! Glory to your name and power! How glad I am to acknowledge “. . . all things are thy servants”! Since you do not live in *time* it is very easy to agree with this truth. Ultimately all men and angels will agree with this statement. This servant wants to express it now!

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 your word is so firmly fixed in heaven, how is it that it is not much more fixed in my heart? There is someone who is intent on disrupting your word, i.e., defeating your purposes. He is only a created being and his power is related to man and other angels. I am simply delighted to say that his influence relates *not at all* to your essential being. Satan has not carried out one single act without your permission. The evil one's actions relate to man. Of course, this involves me. More and more I am becoming aware of reality. Man does *not* live by the sensate responses of this life. Man really has life only when he is directed by your word. The more I can relate your word to every hour of every day the more full of peace and joy I will be.

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

¹²In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

¹³“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.” —Matthew 7:12-14, NIV
Read also Luke 6:37-49.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

If I waited until I was ready to say all I want to say in the most meaningful manner possible I would be waiting when you called me home. It is somewhat easy to understand your meaning, i.e., I am to put myself in my neighbor's place and do to him just what I would want him to do to me. The problem is I am not my neighbor. To compound the problem, I do not want to be my neighbor. What I am saying so poorly is that my overpowering selfishness shuts me out from this kind of identity. Could I be so bold as to refer to such an attitude as the “narrow gate”? There are two cities toward which all men move: *Destruction* or *Life*. The choice is made at the gate.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Lord, for today and its opportunities and relationships help me to be interested enough in all men to try to take their place and respond accordingly. Most of all may I adopt in every relationship the mind of Christ. Every decision of life is a gate — my mind-set will determine how I shall enter that opportunity, and just how I will travel that road. It would seem my Lord intended to say to me that I will need to look, and even to at times search for his way before I can find it. Dear Lord, keep me aware that I will be lonesome for companions on the narrow way. I will act many times against custom and convention. Keep me aware of the end of the easy way; destruction! One day many men will discover to their eternal sorrow that “all they spent their lives for was nothing but dust and ashes.” My Lord, I plan on finding your way for each choice today!

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 wonderful complete application of the golden rule. (2) Thank you for the summation of the principle of the law and prophets in one verse. (3) Thank you that I do want to find your way for each choice. (4) Dear Lord, thank you that I can leave the many and walk with you. (5) Thank you that I feel no smugness about my need for your way. (6) Thank you for the way of life here and hereafter. (7) Thank you that I really do not mind being different.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... and few are they that find it.” Jesus knew so

well just how few there would be in his own ministry who would find the narrow gate and stay on the narrow way. In our day and time narrowness has become a *bad* word. But only in relationship to God and his word is this true. Narrowness in other fields is called *specialization*. If there are no banks to the river there is no force to the water's flow. If there are no limitations on a work project, no work is done. Considering the ultimate end of *life* or *destruction* a search for the narrow gate and the narrow way seems altogether reasonable. A careful consideration of the lives of those who have found the gate and way is a good recommendation for the continued search.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I do want to pray about my entrance into the narrow gate: (1) How often shall I enter? Shall it not be every day? (2) Teach me just how narrow is narrow? (3) If I follow your Son as I read his biographers I know I shall be on the narrow way — give me wisdom. (4) How shall I identify the broad way? (5) Is the “Broadway” of today the broad way of which my Lord spoke? (6) Is Jesus describing the outcome of evangelization? (7) To the above questions I know you have answers — I do expect to receive them.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me. (1) “You must be prepared to go against custom and the crowd if you follow me.” (2) “You cannot learn my way from others — it *must* come from me.” (3) “Fear of destruction is no enemy to love but its true guardian.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Taiwan — Points for prayer: (1) *Needy areas and peoples:* There are still about 500 small towns and larger villages without a resident Bible believing witness. (2) *Factory workers* of the lower income group are relatively unreached — most believers coming from a middle class background. Pray for the factory evangelism. (3) *The fishing villages* are poor, and the people work long hours and few have ever witnessed to these needy and superstitious people.

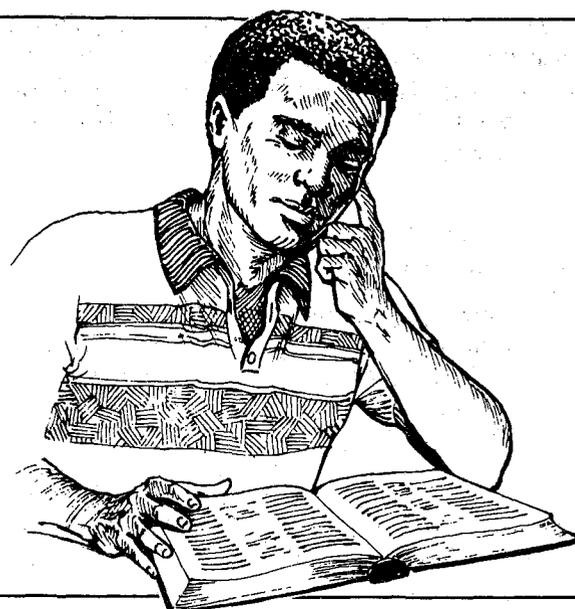
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I have a Christ that satisfies,
Since I have been redeemed,
To do His will my highest prize,
Since I have been redeemed,
Since I have been redeemed,
Since I have been redeemed,
I will glory in His name;
Since I have been redeemed,
I will glory in my Savior's name.

WEEK THREE

—Monday—

If your law (as seen in your Son) had not been my delight I indeed would have perished in my affliction. By your fruits I know you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“If thy law had not been my delight, I should have perished in my affliction. I shall never forget thy precepts; for by them thou hast given me life” (Psa. 119:92,93). What poignant attributes of yourself are in these words: (1) You speak to man in precept and promise he can understand. (2) The content of your word (law) is such as to prompt delight in the heart of the hearer or reader. Praise you for these qualities — there are others — but I want to pause in the joy of praise. (3) Your law is of such a nature as to overcome and explain affliction. Some of your answers amount to a simple confidence in your essential character, but it *is* an answer! (4) Your precepts are so beautiful and valuable that we want never to forget them. (5) In your word, and from your word, we have 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

In praise I read this word for myself. This is a privilege. (1) I do believe you have communicated to man in words that can be understood. Indeed to believe less would be to attribute less ability to yourself than to a newspaper editor. (2) Your word’s primary message to me is one of delight. Indeed, I have found it so! From Genesis to Revelation I come away with the total impression that you have such a deep interest in man’s happiness that you would die to give it. The “joy that was set before him” as he endured the cross was also for us! (3) There are times of depression for all of us, but it is not a continuing attitude. Your word, through your Son lifts us out. Our memory turns back to the blessed beautiful promises and depression disappears. (4) I really lose interest in other things when I compare them with the everlasting quality of your word.

How do you personally relate to the delight from God, and God who is Delight? Speak it out or

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

The predictable nature of your laws is both encouraging and discouraging. The law of forgiveness presupposes sin and repentance. The law of light presupposes darkness. The law of life anticipates or at least includes death. We need not continue in disobedience but we will continue to need forgiveness. Such as: (1) I understand your law, but I do not obey it, i.e., perfectly — or even in a way that pleases me. (2) I do delight in your law, but I am sometimes carried away by pleasure instead of joy. (3) I *know* all things are working together under your direction for my good, but I gripe about it. (4) Of all things I want to remember, it is your law that I do forget! (5) When I have life from your word I sometimes choose death by ignoring your will. I need and claim forgiveness. I want these ideals to become my life-style. I gladly accept your cleansing.

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

¹⁵“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. ¹⁶By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷Likewise every good tree bears good fruit,

but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. —*Matthew 7:15-20, NIV*
Read also Luke 6:43-45.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

My dear Father, I will attempt to paraphrase the words of your Son as an expression of my relationship to you. You are saying to me through these words from your Son: Look out for phony teachers and preachers. They say all the right things and present credentials that recommend them. At one time perhaps they were all they seem to be now. But today they are hungry with money madness. These very innocent looking men are promoters of a variety of evil. You can only tell this if you observe them long enough and close enough, but observe it you will! It is as easy to expect a life of purity and sincerity from these men as it would be to get grapes from thorn bushes or figs from a thistle bush.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. How pungently does the above relate to me! How deceptively easy it is to be a phony preacher! Dear Lord, I do not in any way want to be that kind of a man! By following Paul's manner of life Timothy became acquainted with the fruit of his whole being. Dear Lord, I want anyone to be able to follow my habits, conversations and attitudes and say your fruit has been growing from this tree! How well do I know that orthodoxy is no criteria for inward evaluation! Respectability might be the covey for a rotten heart. Dear Lord, I am also glad to read these blessed words: "A good tree *cannot* bring forth evil fruit." I could be frightened out of all trying by this terribly severe condemnation of the false. At long last the fruit of the whole life will identify the real and separate it from the false.

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 this shocking warning. (2) Thank you that your Son can look beneath all covering and see the real person. (3) Thank you that this is said in such a manner that each of us asks "Lord, is it I?" (4) Thank you that each of us knows what kind of fruit our life has produced in the last 20 years. (5) Thank you that we are not called upon to do *anything* with the tree, just examine the fruit. (6) Thank you that the running sands of time leave a clear picture of what they have uncovered. (7) Thank you that you do the cutting and burning.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Therefore by their fruits you shall know them." By the mature development of their whole lives we shall know them. Not by some individual act that we would consider "out of character." "Two trees of the same species may be identical in every respect but the maturing of the fruit reveals their true nature." It is more than unfortunate to judge a man or a woman on the basis of a single incident. This is done all the time, but it is totally contrary to the principle our Lord here gives to us.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Here is a text to move us to your throne of grace to ask for help: (1) Keep my convictions strong in the objective nature of truth. (2) Teach me real fear in regard to false teachers. (3) Keep my eyes open for those who look like sheep, but are really wolves. (4) May my evaluations be on the outcome of a life not on appearances. (5) A man may be morally sound but doctrinally wrong — give me wisdom to help such a one. (6) Keep me in a good humor or no one will be helped.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me. (1) "A man's words, especially when he is unconscious of them, are a fairly good indication of his heart," (2) "Every tree — i.e. all trees that do not bring forth good fruit will be hewn down." (3) "Rejoice that I alone will judge the fruit of the lives of men."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Taiwan — Point for prayer: *The missionary vision* of the national Church is only seen in a few groups and congregations. There are stirrings of greater things — such as through recent conferences on evangelism, but this burden is not seen to be part of the life of the Church. Some tribal preachers have gone as missionaries to Sarawak, Malaysia, other denominational workers have gone to minister to Chinese congregations in other lands (but this is hardly mission work!).

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 THREE

—Tuesday—

There are no imperfections — no mistakes in your creation — all you create is eternal — it fits every need! I lift up my heart in praise.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I have seen a limit to all perfection, but thy commandment is exceedingly broad. Oh, how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day.” (Psa. 119:96,97). What a rare opportunity is mine that I can pause every day and hold up another facet of your character and praise you for it! In these two verses there is one quality that speaks very personally to me. (I try to think of myself as rather a poor representation of all men. There are no mistakes in your work — or yourself. I do admire quality work in any field. I have found out that there is always someone around who can and will point out its limitations. But when you have commissioned a task your efforts include *all* contingencies — there are no areas where someone can point out a mistake. Thank you! I can say with no hesitancy “Oh how I love thy law,” but I have yet to find a way to meditate upon it all the day.

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 do advance the above as an example for all or as representative of what I consider for all men. Just here I do want to be as personal as possible. The limitations of human efforts at perfection are many: (1) Nothing is static, i.e., there is always a better way to do it. (2) It does not fit every circumstance; so much of our work is provincial. (3) Some men cannot understand it. (4) Some of our efforts are not practical. (5) Not everyone has even heard of it. In stark contrast your work is: Eternal — never needs an improvement. Such as the smallest flower, or the largest tree. Or we could consider any part of the human body. Has man improved on the human eye. Any photographer will tell you his best camera is a clumsy copy.

How do you personally relate to the perfection of God, and God who is Perfect? Speak it out or write it out.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Sorrow — real genuine God-prompted sorrow must precede repentance. Repentance must be totally open and honest, a full admission of my sin. The one sin that includes many others is the sin of failure to meditate upon your word “all the day.” I am guilty, I am wrong, I feel guilty about this. You have ways of changing this. If I am going to meditate upon your word every day throughout the day your word in some form must be with me. I have memorized some of your word, but it does me little good unless I call it from my subconsciousness to my consciousness and slowly turn over the phrases of what you have said.

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; ther’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

²¹“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²²Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles? ²³Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’

²⁴“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶But everyone who hears these

words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash." —*Matthew 7:21-27, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Of all the texts we have considered this is one of the few with such conclusive words as to stand by itself. Here is the great eternal moral principle upon which all my life, or the lives of all men are built.

"Everyone who opens his heart to receive with meekness what you say and does not hesitate or procrastinate but obeys your word shall be like a man building a house upon a solid foundation of bedrock. There are many floods or crises in life. When such a rain, flood and wind hit our lives *then* we shall discover upon what we have built our lives."

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, to some extent I am always failing to obey your word as I would want to — let alone fulfill it as you would want it. At the same time, I recognize my Lord — and even yourself — is asking "What will you do in a crisis?" Let me ask myself what I would do in the following floods of life? (1) If I were suddenly struck blind? (2) If our house burned down and all that is in it were turned to ashes? (3) If all three of our children were taken in death — or with an incurable disease? (4) If my wife were taken in death or with a long lingering illness? (5) If I was involved in a conspiracy of lies and lost my job? Is my dwelling place in you? Is my security in you? Is my whole being lost in your Son and his word?

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 I still have ears to hear your word. (2) I thank you that I still have your word to hear. (3) Thank you I can obey you. (4) Thank you that I *want* to obey you. (5) Thank you for the invariable promises or consequences of obedience or lack of it. (6) Thank you for your definition of who is wise and foolish. (7) Thank you for your eternal security.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... and great was the fall thereof." Indeed, indeed! In so many ways the collapse of a life is a tragedy. A great deal of effort has come to naught. Think of how much work, time, energy and money have all been lost as a result of a faulty foundation! How many wonderful friends and loved ones have been estranged and lost because they could not trust the person whom they knew. When our life is built on the

pursuit of money we at the best can only get what money can give — and it has a way of slipping through your fingers like sand. The same result comes in the pursuit of pleasure. Our Lord is speaking of the lasting value of what he taught. The above thoughts read like cliches, Dear Lord, they are not! They are the eternal sober facts of sand or rock!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

This is much more than a sermon — these powerful words lead me to prayer: (1) In so many relationships I want to know your will so I can do it — open my heart as I read your word. (2) I do want an intimacy with you that gives meaning to my service. (3) Day by day I want to build upon yourself in the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart. (4) I want to remember Judas Iscariot — he called you Lord, and did many mighty works — holy company does not make us holy. Probe my conscience! (5) Open my eyes and ears to hear and see the meanings you have given to us in your own life-style.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me. (1) "Remember: the principle of 'faith that works' is the only faith I accept." (2) "Rains will come, floods are on their way — check your foundation." (3) "It is possible to be the wise man — now is the time to start."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Thailand — Population: 52,700,000. Growth rate — 1.9%. People per sq. km. — 103.

Points for prayer: (1) *A very marked increase in interest in the Gospel since 1968 after 150 years of very discouraging and hard mission work. This interest has been caused by a number of factors working together — the grave Communist threat, the excellent witness of Christian medical mission work, and also a breath of revival and spiritual deepening among the few Rhai believers.* (2) *Pray for the breaking of the demonic powers behind the entrenched Buddhism and widespread fear of the spirits among both Thai and tribal peoples.* (3) *Needy areas* — the whole of the country is still a pioneer mission field, but more needy is rural central Thailand and also the poor northeast where the density of Christians is one tenth of the low national average.

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 THREE

—Wednesday—

Unless I relate what you have said to the way I live there is little meaning in what you have said. Ah, but there is understanding in you and your word!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I have more understanding than all my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the aged, for I keep thy precepts. I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep thy word.”

(Psa. 119:99-101). The purpose of recording these verses is to hold up before our hearts an attribute of yourself for all men’s admiration and praise. Not all men praise you, but they should. Here is reason for praise. (1) You recognize the need of man for a rational explanation of the world in which we live. The explanation you offer in your word gives a depth of understanding that cannot be found from anyone else. At the same time it honors you as the Source. (2) You understand how terribly futile even a long life can be without an explanation from heaven. (3) Evil is overcome by admiration of good and you are Good!

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 cannot think of anything I need more than these precious words. If I am unwilling to meditate upon your word all such promises fall to the ground. Meditation is a rethinking — a reevaluation — a checking and double checking — and then checking again. Such a practice is carried out today in a thousand jobs. There are three obvious practical applications of this principle: (1) Carry your word in printed form of a testament or even the whole Bible — open it and meditate upon it. If someone offered me an opportunity to obtain \$100,000, i.e., if I understood what he said, I would turn over his words in my mind regardless of what else I did. (2) Listen to an audio cassette and meditate. Play and replay — listen and listen again. (3) Memorize his word — this is what I want to do. Thank you for helping me in the practical application of these verses to my life.

How do you personally relate to the understanding of God, and God who understands? Speak it

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

It would seem the sins here are sins against the light. (1) Why am I so ignorant and stupid when I could be full of your understanding? It is easy to answer and in doing so confess my sin. “The desire for other things choked out the word.” Forgive me! I am glad I can every day renew my mind and be transformed. (2) How is it that instead of growing older and wiser, I only grow older? There is a teacher teaching — Satan has teachers. He has translated his lies into printed form — into audio and video form. We are being taught. The older we get under such instructions, the sadder we become. Stop! Stop! Turn it off! I flee to your word for shelter and protection — to say nothing of light and warmth. (3) I love verse 101 in this psalm: “I hold back my feet from every evil way in order to keep thy word.” My respect and love for you is what keeps me in your way.

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 must tell Jesus all of my troubles;
He is a kind, compassionate Friend;
If I but ask Him, He will deliver,
Make of my troubles quickly an end,
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

²⁸When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, ²⁹because he

taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

8 When he came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. —*Matthew 7:28-8:1, NIV*
Read also *Luke 6:43-49*.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How wonderful it would have been to be seated in that crowd long ago and hear your Son! I am astonished now — what would have been my reaction then? I do not know that my astonishment is for the same reason. I am more amazed at the meaning of what he has said than his authority. I have accepted your Son's supreme position — it is the impact of what his words could mean for all mankind that astonishes me!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

My Father, I do not want to be a fool. The scribes are yet with us! Could I be considered as one of them? Dear Lord, strike from my hand the pen with which I write if any one of these words is to be considered as having any authority whatsoever. I respect the scribes — many are as sincere as yours truly. But I do not at all respect any scribe who suggests that just because he said it or wrote it that it has any authority. All of us are on an equal level. We sit at Jesus' feet and learn from him. If we gain something to share, its value is in what he said and we communicate. May we move from place to place as we follow him and listen with all our hearts to *what he says!*

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 words of his sermon preserved and with us today! (2) Thank you that his word will never lose its power. (3) Thank you that in eternity all scribes will know the answers to questions they cannot now answer. (4) Thank you that the answers are in his knowledge and not ours. (5) Thank you for the ability to be astonished. (6) Thank you that I can identify for myself and others who has the authority. (7) Thank you that today I can follow him!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... great multitudes followed him.” How I do want to join the crowd and stay with him. To be in the company of God in human flesh. “The wonder of it all” would not describe the reaction. We are sure some who followed him knew who he was, but even the impact of walking in the presence of God was not what we who live 2,000 years later would expect. If he were here today just *why* would I want to follow him? (1) To hear his teaching? How much time do I spend

each day reading what his eyewitnesses wrote? (2) To be amazed again and again at his miracles? Have I spent adequate time meditating over the miracles recorded by those who saw him?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

As I reflect on his whole discourse I want to pause in prayer: (1) May my amazement issue in obedience. (2) Give me a sharp accurate remembrance of what he said. (3) If he has all authority — and he does — why do I spend time with anyone else? (4) How closely have I followed you today? Dear Lord, I ask these questions as petitions — give me *your* answer. (5) How could so many people afford to miss work as they followed my Lord? Probably the answer is in the abject poverty — they didn't have a job — forgive my excuses.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in these three verses: (1) “I can only teach those who want to be taught.” (2) “Amazement doesn't of itself mean anything.” (3) “Acceptance in your heart of my authority is the key.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Thailand — Points for prayer: (1) *The churches* have not grown as fast as the population for decades, until the last several years. The rather nominal and older congregations were in decline, but there is a new surge of life with some spiritual Bible believing church leaders emerging that have been stimulated by revival in northern Thai congregations. The younger churches (the fruit of the newer Bible believing missions) are showing steady growth — especially among the tribal people. Pray that the believers may become strong and effective witnesses for the Lord. (2) *The problems faced by the churches* — lack of mature preachers, most believers only semi-literate or illiterate and many are converts from among “outcast” leprosy patients at mission hospitals and clinics. Thus many are open to aggressive propaganda by sects and not able to really form an effective evangelistic force.

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 THREE

—Thursday—

“How sweet are your promises to my taste! sweeter than honey to my mouth.” Jesus cared about people — I want to much more than I do!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I have not departed from your laws, for you yourself have taught me. How sweet are your promises to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth” (Psa. 119:102, 103). Dear Lord, here is real motivation for keeping your word! If you are the teacher I am going to be on the front row with both my ears open. I am going to truly learn if my instruction comes from you! If somehow I can make the transference from the printed page to yourself I will listen and learn. It is easy for me to relate the words in the letters from my dear wife to herself — it is as if she were there talking to me. So it is this morning! I bow before you and listen with my inner ear. I can only testify to the sweetness of your promises as I have claimed them in my experience. But such as I have ingested are even as your word “sweeter than honey.”

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 feel so strongly about this quality of yourself! You can and do personally instruct me from your word. Perhaps I am so involved in this concept because I know the principle is true: if once I can make the transference from the words on the page to yourself I will not depart from your laws. I praise you that I can even now close my eyes and visualize your reality in the person I read about in the gospels. He was a teacher, indeed, *the* teacher. The Holy Spirit is the author of your word — may he give life to the letter! Praise your name, I even now claim your presence!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

There have been many times when you were separated

from your law and it became a cold, hard set of legal regulations that I hated with a passion. You were not at fault — it was my own stupidity and willfulness. As you know, it took me a long time to hear your voice behind the voice of the preacher. I delight in the experience of opening your word and letting *you* teach me. Forgive me for every time I did not look behind the book and see who was really speaking. Forgive me for every time I listened critically to another brother or sister whom you really wanted to use to tell me something, but I wasn't hearing you. 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

In loving kindness Jesus came
My soul in mercy to reclaim,
And from the depths of sin and shame
Thro' grace He lifted me.
From sinking sand He lifted me,
With tender hand He lifted me,
From shades of night to plains of light,
Oh, praise His name, He lifted me!

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

HIS WORD

7 When Jesus had finished saying all this in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum .
²There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die. ³The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. ⁴When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, ⁵“This man deserves to have you do this, ⁶because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue.” ⁷So Jesus went with them. —Luke 7:1-6a, NIV
Read Matthew 8:2-13. (We print here the text of Luke but we read the account of Matthew.)

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I see myself and all men twice over in these accounts. Dear Lord, I am the leper! (1) The disease of sin has infected my being until all hope of being clean is gone. (2) I have heard of your Son and what he can do. I believe he can do all I have heard and more! (3) I feel totally unworthy to be healed. I find nothing in myself to recommend my healing. (4) I must cast myself upon his mercy. (5) My need forces a confession from my lips. (6) A shocking unexpected development! He didn't need to touch me — he could have spoken the word of healing. But he did touch me! (7) In this I am so greatly comforted — and healed. My uncleanness and sickness are gone! I am well!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. I can also identify with the centurion. In a very real sense I take his place: (1) I am a Gentile outsider. I have no birthright claims for your favor. (2) I am in the army of the enemy. I wear the obvious uniform of opposition. I cannot hide my sin and the fact that I have sinned. (3) My need is so overpowering that it breaks all conventional barriers down. Dear Lord, I *must* have some help! (4) There are many who are precious to me who lie "paralyzed" in the power of Satan. (5) It is only from the word of my Lord that these dear ones can be made well. (6) My blessed Lord, I want right *now* to trust you for the healing of those so dear to 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 Jesus was willing to touch the untouchables. (2) Thank you Jesus was careful about obedience to the law. (3) Thank you Jesus was so approachable — to lepers and soldiers. (4) Thank you for the beautiful word "clean" — it means so much to this leper! (5) Thank you for the centurion's confidence in our Lord's authority. (6) Thank you for the wonderful quality of submission seen here. (7) Thank you for my Lord's rebuke for us religious people. (8) Thank you for the promised feast in heaven.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Go; be it done for you as you have believed." The wonderful law of faith is here stated and finds fulfillment in the life of the centurion. It is first enunciated at creation when God spoke and it was done. Faith from our point of view always comes by hearing. The centurion believed the words of our Lord and it was done. So many wonderful things could happen in our lives if we would listen to our Lord and believe him. But there must be the wholehearted confidence we see in this soldier. This army captain considered it done

when our Lord spoke. His faith was in the authority of our Lord. Our faith is in the nature of the one speaking. The more we learn of the essential being of our Lord the more confidence we can place in his words.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In these two incidents there are many points for prayer: (1) Am I as ready to reach out and touch the moral lepers of our day? (2) Lead me to someone in deep need who wants help. (3) Guard me from hasty premature announcements of success. (4) Keep me aware that you have men who will believe in places and jobs to which I do not relate. (5) How I want the humble faith of the centurion. (6) Deepen my understanding of the word "authority." (7) Enlarge my understanding of the expression "kingdom of heaven."

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me through the leper and the centurion: (1) "There is something worse than leprosy — you have been healed and there are no restrictions on telling about it." (2) "If an army captain can care so much about his servant how is it you are so indifferent to greater needs?" (3) "Wake up!"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Thailand — Points for prayer: (1) *Leadership training* — there are a number of good denominational and interdenominational Bible Schools. There are a number of talented young men coming into the Lord's work. Pray for the much used cassette ministry for the training of local leaders. This is vital with the poor communications and widely scattered Christian community. (2) *Missions* — a rapid post-war increase from two groups. There are now approximately 1030 missionary agencies in 70 agencies, mostly with the newer Bible believing groups and the majority in evangelism and church planting ministries among both the Thai and minority groups. There is a pressing need for more to use the present receptivity of the people and build them up into strong churches. Communist and Malay insurgency has limited missionary activity in some 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 THREE

—Friday—

Give me light for every day — and illumination on the path of the future — I enter the closet to find your answer. Keep me calm in the midst of interruptions.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. I hold my life in my hand continually, but I do not forget thy law” (Psa. 119:105,109). For many years I have loved verse 105 of this blessed psalm. Dear Father, I claim your promise and praise your name. Your word illumines each day, “a lamp to my feet” and lightens the distinct future, “a light to my path.” The attribute of yourself in this verse is your personal interest in today and every tomorrow. I want to praise you that you have such a capacity to exercise in the life experience of every man and woman upon the face of the earth. In contrast to verse 105 is verse 109. My life and the lives of all men are not only in your hand and the concern of your heart but all men hold their own lives in their hands. How equally important it is that we forget not your law.

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 more and more of your word for every day. How I want to in a most practical way relate what you say to what I am and what I do. Open my mind so I might find very real ways of making this true. Two or three occur to me now: (1) I could decide to memorize one verse before I eat each meal. And to talk about that verse’s application to my life. (Dear Lord, I am praising you for your word as a lamp and trying to accept it as such.) (2) To print three verses on 3”x5” cards and fasten them in places I would see them several times each day. (3) Make a covenant with some dear friend who would agree to say at least three verses to me and I to him each day.

How do you personally relate to the lamp and 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

In all my words you read my heart behind them. You know amid my desire to integrate your word into my life there is an admission of failure to do so. My life is in my hand — my responsibility — how fleeting and elusive is life! How soon forgotten are all the important plans and accomplishments of man. That I should be caught up in the “illusive dream” of sex, food and money is sad, sad! *“But I do not forget thy law.”* How solid and sure is this word! How glad I am to be forgiven and to be able to start all over again each day I live. While my life is in my hand, I do not forget your law! Your law is fulfilled in your Son and your Son made full the law for me! 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

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.

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

HIS WORD

He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: “Lord, don’t trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. ⁷That is why I did not consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁸For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and that one, ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”

⁹When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, “I tell

you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel. — *Luke 7:6b-9, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What a delight it will be to journey with my Lord to the house of the centurion. We are stopped on the way. The centurion demonstrates the meaning of his words in the persons of his friends. He said to them "Go," and they went with the message for our Lord! We wonder just who these friends were — how many were there? What effect did the words of our Lord have on them? More importantly: What effect do his words have on me? I want to open my heart as I look to my Lord and hear him speak. (1) "Jesus marveled at him." I could think of nothing I would like to do more than to bring the surprise of delight to my Lord.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

(2) My Lord now addresses the multitude: "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." I want to take a very careful look at this faith: (1) Jesus is addressed as "Lord" — as a man under authority he acknowledges my Lord's position. (2) He recognizes our Lord has more important things to do than to answer his request, but he does want an answer. (3) He honestly feels he is unworthy to be in the same room with our Lord — or he feels his house is such an unworthy place for the presence of God in human form. (4) He could not bear the thought of looking at Jesus face to face. (5) "Say the word, and let my servant be healed." For this man all that was necessary was for my Lord to say it and it would be done!

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 were no interruptions in my Lord's life — the needs of people were always on his schedule. (2) Thank you for the obedience of the servants. (3) Thank you for the encouragement that culture barriers can be overcome. (4) Thank you for the outstanding example of humility seen in the centurion. (5) Thank you that my Lord defined faith in the action of this man. (6) Thank you that I can expectantly listen for the "go" or "come" of my Lord. (7) Thank you that my Lord separates religion, "Israel" from real "faith" — the centurion.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"When Jesus heard this he marveled at him, . . ." Men marveled at Jesus, but here our Lord marveled at a man. An unlikely man he was! There had no doubt been other army captains who had servants who had become sick. A servant would be a real loss to one who needed his service. But this man *loved* his servant. It wasn't his service but the servant that was

the concern of the centurion. This unusual man had no doubt heard of Jesus earlier. Had he stood in a crowd and watched Jesus heal someone? Had he listened to our Lord as he taught? By whatever means this good man had acquired a total trust in the power or authority of our Lord over sickness. No doubt he believed Jesus could do anything else he chose. At this quality of faith our Lord marveled.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In Luke's account of the centurion I can learn much: (1) If this good man did not deserve your presence in his house how much less myself — may I never forget the privilege it is to have you living in me. (2) Over so many of my friends I want you to "say the word" and make them well — dear Lord, say it through me. (3) Send your ministering angels to help me in needs you alone can see. (4) Teach me from this text the real meaning of faith. (5) Deepen my meditation on the power in the words of your Son.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me again: (1) "It is still true today that my real servants respond to my call to 'go' and 'come.'" (2) "The example of faith presupposes my authority." (3) "Is this text so many words or do you really believe it?"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Thailand — Points for prayer: (1) *Medical work* has proved a valuable key and many owe their conversion to the loving witness of these institutions. There are about 30 Protestant hospitals. Pray for the witness to the many non-Christian nurses (some are seeking the Lord), and for the raising up of Christian Thai medical workers. Leprosy control and treatment among the 400,000 sufferers of this disease has resulted in the planting of many small churches among the Thai, and one even among the Malays. (2) *Student witness* is yet small, but growing. (3) *Literature* — a number of publishers are producing more and more Thai books and much is distributed through the ten Christian bookstores. Several groups plan massive Bible and literature distribution programs in the light of Thailand's exposure to Communist aggression.

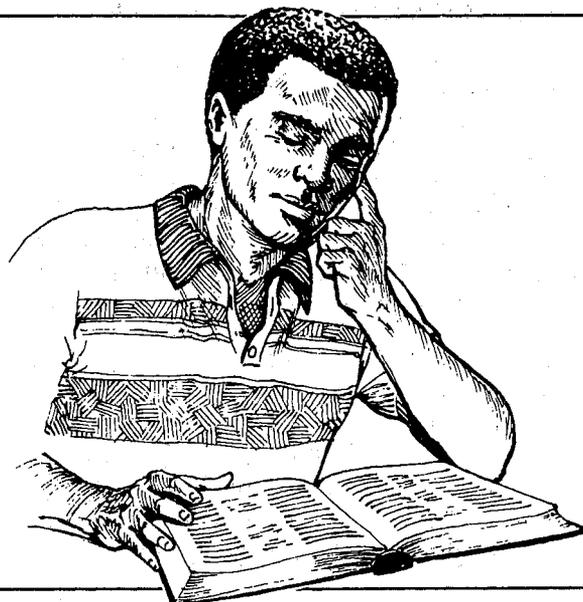
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Guilty, vile and helpless, we;
Spotless Lamb of God was He;
"Full atonement!" can it be?
Hallelujah! what a Savior!

WEEK THREE

—Saturday—

You are my protection — my hope! — my heritage. You are the resurrection and the life — you speak to every person behind a tear-stained face: “Weep not!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Thy testimonies are my heritage for ever; yea, they are the joy of my heart. Thou art my hiding place and my shield; I hope in thy word” (Psa. 119:111,114). I do want my opening praise to be generic, i.e., I want everyone to be able to relate to what I say about you. If any man anywhere has any heritage — we call it “roots” — it is your word. If any of us wanted to be remembered beyond our own generation we need to relate our life to your testimonies. It would be interesting to list the one hundred men who are most remembered in America and see how many related to your word. At the same time if no public remembrance is involved yet throughout an endless eternity it will be true: *“Thy testimonies are my heritage,”* All men need a “hiding place.” The song writer spoke for all of us: *“There is a place of quiet rest near to the heart of God.”* Bless your name! Our hope is in you and your word.

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

There is no other verse to which I can relate quite like this one. If I am going to leave anything at all to my children and grandchildren — and their children, it will be my attempts to teach your word. My importance is in you — not at all in myself. I know how limited I am in expression and thought. The closer I relate to what you say in your word the more meaning and value there is in my stumbling attempts at teaching. I can say with increasing fervor “they (your words) are the joy of my heart.” The more I meditate and pray the happier I am in the study of your book. Having said the above I want to agree with the psalmist that my “hiding place” — my “shield” is not a book but a person — even yourself! In times of stress and strain and misunderstanding I go to the One behind the words on the page even your own precious self!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is no problem to admit I have been lured away from your word and yourself by Satan. Dear Lord, forgive me for trying to find identity and importance in what I know is plastic. I need to go far more often into my “hiding place” and be quiet. I want to wait before you until I can get life into focus. Forgive me for facing life without a shield. It has hurt me — and you. I list here my personal sins against you and myself — forgive me. I claim your beautiful promise of cleanness. Dear Lord, I want to resist all effort to fake any expression of joy — if I do not mean it, i.e., with a clear conscience, I will not say it! Praise you for helping me! You have 10,000 reasons for joy.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now.

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Anywhere with Jesus I can safely go;
Anywhere He leads me in this world below;
Anywhere without Him dearest joys would fade;
Anywhere with Jesus I am not afraid.
Anywhere! anywhere! Fear I cannot know;
Anywhere with Jesus I can safely go.

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

HIS WORD

¹¹Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. ¹²As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out — the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. ¹³When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, “Don’t cry.”

—Luke 7:11-13, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I am just one more person in that "great crowd" who went with your Son as he approached the city of Nain. He is talking with his disciples. Or is he quiet and thoughtful as he draws near to the gate of the city? Out of the city gate four men walk carrying a coffin. In it is the dead body of "the only son" of the weeping mother who follows as close to the pallbearers as she can. This woman is a widow and all her hopes are in that casket! Dear Lord, I am trying as best I can to identify with this poignant record. Our Lord has eyes only for the widow. He walks directly to her. There is an expression of pathos such as I have never seen on the face of any man!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I became so involved in the reading of this beautiful record of you that it was read into my own heart. But even here I want to tell you what these precious words mean to me. (1) They are only representative of many incidents the gospel writers could have chosen to tell me of the many wonderful acts of compassion my Lord did. (2) My Lord was looking for a need he might meet and help. He is alive *now* and looks for the same thing in my life. (3) Jesus did his miracles in the presence of many witnesses in the broad daylight with no fanfare. The fanfare followed his miracles — it did not precede them. (4) Jesus considered the need of the widow more important than bringing life back to her son. (5) There was no question at all in the mind of that woman that Jesus loved her and helped her. In all these ways and many more you speak to my heart.

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 tangible circumstances of this miracle. (2) Thank you that we are still one of the learners in this incident. (3) Thank you that one day we shall meet the son and the mother personally. (4) Thank you for my Lord's compassion that is just as real today as then. (5) Thank you for the precious words my Lord speaks to every tear-stained face: "Weep not." (6) Thank you that Jesus has an answer to every heartbreak. (7) Thank you for those eyewitnesses who told this story to Luke.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... and said to her, 'Do not weep.'" From the woman's perspective such words could have been almost an insult. She had every reason in human experience to weep. She had just lost the dearest in her life. Her only child had been taken from her. She had no other means of support. Her days ahead looked

bleak indeed. She had just lost her only family identity and companionship.

From our Savior's perspective he had many reasons for saying what he did. He offered her the hope of the worlds and life to come where there would be no death or separation. He was offering to her a trust in a heavenly Father who has a special interest in widows. He is about to restore all she had before this loss along with the hope for the future.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

It is good to relate our requests to these encouraging words: (1) What a testimony of the deity of Jesus to these servants — how can I communicate this good news to such men today? (2) Dr. Luke can tell us more about sickness and death than any of the other gospel writers — how I want to relate better to such persons and their loved ones. (3) Jesus did his miracles in the presence of a large crowd in the broad daylight — give me deeper and deeper understanding of the purpose and power of his mighty acts. (4) Break my heart with those whose hearts are breaking.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in this poignant story: (1) "My heart yet goes out to every grieving mother." (2) "No word of mine shall ever be void of power." (3) "My word has been preserved so it can live again and again in the hearts of those who need hope."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Thailand — Points for prayer: (1) *Minority groups:* The Chinese number around 3 million, but fewer have put their trust in the Lord than in other overseas communities of Chinese such as Singapore, etc. There are about 70 Chinese Protestant congregations with 6,000 members. Only 2% of the Chinese are Christian — mostly Catholic. (2) *The Malays* (1,600,000) live in the 5 provinces adjoining Malaysia. There is much political tension and unrest. This is the only Malay community open to evangelism in Asia, thus is strategic — especially for the Malays in Malaysia who are legally not allowed to be evangelized. After years of work by missionaries a little Malay Church of about 100 has been born. Many others have heard the Gospel and believe, but hold back because of fear.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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.

WEEK FOUR

—Sunday—

You are my only protection from "evildoers" — Draw me aside to yourself! You can and do raise me from death in trespasses and sins! I bow before you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

"Depart from me, you evildoers, that I may keep the commandments of my God. Uphold me according to the promise, that I may live, and let me not be put to shame in my hope!" (Psa. 119:115,116). There is a certain exclusiveness in your nature. You abhor evil and love righteousness. All plants must have room to grow. Our Lord came "separated from sinners." Jesus withdrew from the crowd to allow time for the fulfillment of your will in his heart. When evildoers stifle and hinder the keeping of your will in our lives we must do something — either withdraw or cause them to leave. Such has been the record of your conduct from Genesis through the Old Testament. At the same time, if *you* yourself do not uphold us no amount of separation will give us life or hope. I believe the "promise" of verse 116 is generic, i.e., your promise to meet our needs. Dear Lord, I want to allow you also to *define* my needs.

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. "Evildoers" do not always force themselves upon me. Sometimes, too many times they came by invitation. I am speaking this to my own conscience. To spend time before the TV set is too often to invite evildoers who will defeat the fulfillment of your word in my life. To spend time talking about other people soon can turn negative and sour and become gossip and lo your word has been set aside! Dear Lord, I say these things to remind myself of my tremendous need of you! I *must* withdraw and spend time before you. I *must* memorize your word that you might uphold me according to your promise and I shall not be put to shame in my hope. Thank you for opening my heart to this deeper appreciation of your very self.

How do you personally relate to the exclusiveness 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

It is so good to be able to clear my record every day. I am glad because I know as if never before that, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," i.e., an association with evildoers, unless it is to be a friend to sinners in order to teach them, as my Lord did, will corrupt my conduct! I say from my heart with the psalmist, "Depart from me, you evildoers, that I may keep thy commandments." At the same time, I am confessing my failure to say this often enough or with enough conviction to prevent such corruption. I am not lost by failure — I am lost by continuing in failure. Dear Lord, I will come each day and be transformed by the continual 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

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down;
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling;
All Thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation;
Enter ev'ry trembling heart.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁴Then he went up and touched the coffin, and those carrying it stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" ¹⁵The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

¹⁶They were all filled with awe and praised God., "A great prophet has appeared among us," they said.

"God has come to help his people." ¹⁷This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country. —*Luke 7:14-17, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I could never in ten thousand worlds ever tell you what these words mean to me! I want to look — and then look again — to hear and then hear again the actions of your dear Son. Jesus touched the coffin. My dear Lord will touch every coffin that was ever lowered into a grave! And with the same results! One day, "I tell you the truth . . . the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself" (John 5:25,26).

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. As soon as the dead body became the living son he began to talk. What did he say? Was it a recital of what he had experienced since he died? We cannot imagine the gospel writers would have omitted this if such was the topic of conversation. It is far more in keeping with what we know of the circumstances that he discussed topics both he and his dear mother could share. It was in his words his mother realized he was alive again. The whole point of this glorious resurrection is in the little word "awe." A great hush and amazement must have swept over the crowd that assembled for the funeral. Oh, dear Lord, I want to kneel before you in the same reverent spirit. I want to say with even more meaning than those present "God has come to help his people."

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 my Lord — he touched men and their needs. (2) Thank you that my Lord used the words "young man" because I can identify and so can all men. (3) Thank you for the direct brevity of my Lord's words — so unlike some of us. (4) Thank you for the dual purpose of this magnificent miracle — "he gave him back to his mother." (5) Thank you that no one present could escape (at least for a little while) the wonder of the occasion. (6) Thank you that these people praised the right One: "They praised God." (7) Thank you that this spread the testimony of my Lord's deity like wildfire across Judea and surrounding country.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"God has come to help his people." How beautifully descriptive of the whole mission of the Messiah. It was God in human form who raised the dead that day outside the city of Nain. God came to help his people

to see that man lives in the body and also lives without his body. The son had to return to the inert form ere it could leave the coffin. God came to help his people see how much he cared about human relationships. Jesus moved immediately to help the widow in her grief. There would be a day, perhaps, when the son would follow the coffin of his mother. And there would indeed be a day when the burial of this son would be completed. But for today our Lord could dissolve their grief in joy — so he would do it! Most of all God came to help his people to see himself in the person of his Son.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How often I have prayed at a funeral — here I can pray at a resurrection: (1) Help me to reach out and touch even when there doesn't seem to be any way to help. (2) It would be such a joy to be able to stop pall-bearers and tell the dead body to come to life. Keep me aware that one day there will be no more funerals — when my Lord returns — "Maranatha" — even so come Lord Jesus. (3) How glad I will be when my Lord gives all who have gone on before back to those who meet them in the air — I want to be ready if he should come today!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in these brief verses: (1) "I am your prophet today — hear me!" (2) "I have indeed come to help my people this day." (3) "Spread the word around today that I am the resurrection and the life."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Thailand — Point for prayer: *The tribal peoples* are generally very poor (unless they illegally grow opium), illiterate and under terrible domination of the spirit world. Many missions have labored and wept for a harvest which is now beginning to appear. Among the Meo, Lisu and Lahu strong, well led churches are emerging, but the Yao, Pwo Karen, Akha and Shan and the Kui and Khmu and also the Lahu, etc., the work is slow and hard, with believers lacking work and the encouraging of potential leaders are the great needs. Conditions are hard for the missionaries and now worsened by Communist infiltration.

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 FOUR

—Monday—

I can not — I must not try to live separated from you — tune my ears — alert my heart! Give me your own encouragement! I need it!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“With open mouth I pant, because I long for thy commandments. Turn to me and be gracious to me, as is thy wont toward those who love thy name” (Psa. 119:131,132). The purpose of this portion of my worship to you is to separate from these verses the qualities of your character for which I praise you. Dear Lord, I never attempt this without a deep feeling of inadequacy. Here is what I see in this text: (1) Man becomes like a deer or some other animal about to die of thirst when he tries to live apart from you. The reverse is also true that when we are listening to you and walking in your will we are alert and strong and satisfied. Praise your name. (2) Your word is created for us and we are created for your word. The depths of man’s thirst are satisfied in you. How wonderful! (3) It is your habit to turn to man and meet his needs. How beautiful are 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. It is one thing to find such attributes for others — it is just as important to find them for myself. Which I am very glad to do. I have been both empty of your word — and full of your word — so I know from experience what a difference there is! Satan is so clever that there have been times when I did not know what was wrong. I was thirsty inside — a great emptiness held me. And then I opened my mouth at the fountain of living water — indeed I felt like jumping in! How refreshing, how exhilarating is the meaning of every word of your book! I have no greater joy than the eternal value — the life changing application of your word! How I love you for your very nature is love. It is your habit to be gracious to me!

How do you personally relate to our thirst for God, and God who satisfies? Speak it out or write it out.

CONFESSION OF SIN

There is no hesitancy on my part to admit my sin — embarrassment — and I am ashamed — but I *want* to come to you for cleansing. I *want* to be clean. I *want* to be whole. I am glad to see indications that I am losing interest in what once attracted me. At the same time, I simply do not “long for your commandments” as deeply and as often as I need to. It is much too easy to be deceived into thinking that you will *always* be gracious unto me. I need to read again this verse: “My flesh trembles for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments” (Psalm 119:120). Indeed I am! I read this “beneath the cross of Jesus,” but I do not want to continue in any sin. Forgive me and make me whole!

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 all my labors and trials are o’er,
And I am safe on that beautiful shore,
Just to be near the dear Lord I adore,
Will thro’ the ages be glory for me.
O that will be glory for me,
Glory for me, glory for me;
When by His grace I shall look on His face,
That will be glory, be glory for me.

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

HIS WORD

²When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples ³to ask him, “Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?”

⁴Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the

poor. ⁶Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me."

⁷As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind? ⁸If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in king's palaces. ⁹Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you." —Matthew 11:2-10, NIV

Read also Luke 7:18-27.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How well do all of us relate to the discouragement and bewilderment of John in prison! How often have we all had second thoughts — and they were not all good. Am I right in paraphrasing your Son's words to John (and to myself and all others) "John, I am engaged in the very work you know confirms my Messiahship: (1) Many blind have their sight. (2) The lame walk. (3) The lepers are cured. (4) The deaf now hear. (5) The dead are now alive. (6) The good news of my Messiahship is preached to the poor. You will be a happy man if you just trust me implicitly." Did John trust Jesus? Whether he did or didn't we do not know; we do know Jesus eulogized John as the greatest man who ever lived.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

The discouragements of imprisonment cannot even be imagined by those who have never been there. We can read of the dismal despondency that takes a hold of the whole being of those thus incarcerated. We all have asked the question: "Are you the one? Or should we look for someone else?" Maybe this is just one more dead-end street! Dear Lord, speak again into my heart the new life you gave to John in his prison. "I have power over all of this life. No one has ever come even close to performing the obvious acts of divinity seen in my miracles. Poor imprisoned humanity will never have such good news preached to them as I bring. I am the One; there is no other!" Dear Lord, I do believe. Forgive me for doubting!

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 humanness of this account — John was the greatest — but not perfect. (2) Thank you that some of John's disciples were not perfect either; they were yet followers of John, not Jesus. (3) Thank you that we are not perfect — only forgiven. (4) Thank you for the wonderful credentials our Lord presented to John and all of his deity. (5) Thank you that Jesus knew the weakness of the flesh and offered strength in himself. (6) Thank you for Jesus' estimate

of John. (7) Thank you that the last prophet was more than a prophet.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you." How wonderfully true this was of John. It is the real task of every Christian. It seems incongruous that the creator of the world would need preparations for his coming. If he was a military hero or a political leader he would have included all such preparations in his budget. But when his highway is the human heart a much different preparation is needed. The one word that described those who were ready for him was "repentance." It is only when our minds are altered to match his view of life that we are ready for him.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

No doubt some of both our Lord's disciples and John's disciples prayed for this great man. There are requests in the text for our life: (1) The evident signs of deity need to be repeated often for my encouragement. (2) My Lord can and does open the eyes of our hearts to see as never before — may it happen this day. (3) How lame we all are in areas of our life — dear Lord, Make me whole! (4) Only your Anointed One can open my ears to hear your word — do it today! (5) Happy is the man who finds no occasion for falling in my Lord — I want to be that man! (6) He must increase, I must decrease. (7) I do want to prepare the hearts of men for your coming — help me.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in these verses: (1) "My report to John has much more in it — look for it." (2) "Your estimate of John should agree with mine." (3) "The newest member of my body is greater than John."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Thailand — Point for prayer: *Refugees from Laos and Cambodia* have proved a very receptive field of labor for missionaries with thousands seeking the Lord from both lands. Many of these new believers have moved to other lands such as the U.S.A., France, etc. Pray for continuing evangelistic and relief ministries.

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 FOUR

—Tuesday—

How wonderful it is to know you are ordering my steps — you know my limitations! We are greater than John the Baptist. Tell me how!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Thy testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them. Keep steady my steps according to thy promise, and let no iniquity get dominion over me” (Psa. 119:129,133). In these words are several beautiful attributes of yourself: (1) You have given us a word that is of its very nature a reflection of yourself, i.e., your word constantly fills us with wonder. What the ancient psalmist said about your testimony in times past is true of all your revelation since that day. (2) All the qualities I see in yourself motivate me to want to keep your will for my life. I am drawn to worship you by your essential nature. The same is true of your word. I want to keep your testimonies because of their beauty — both in content and purpose.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. If all the above is true — and it is — how could my steps ever falter? Once again we are reminded that there is another power present. How very, very much I need the next quality of yourself alive and active in my daily experience: (3) You are at work steadying my steps. Indeed, this is the promise you have made to me and even now you are in the process of keeping. (4) What a beautiful combination: you have told me what to do and you give me the strength to do it! It isn't that there will never be temptation and failures — there will be, but they will not be of such a nature that they will have “dominion over me.” I praise you for such altogether adequate provisions for every day of every year.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

I can see immediately what my need is in confession.

My sin is in not spending more time with your testimonies. Not only more time, but more meditation that the wonder and beauty of your word might be increasingly apparent. My sin is that I have not put my *whole soul* into this pursuit. It will take real thought — a total willingness — unrestrained love and a clear conscience before I can say “my soul,” i.e., my whole inner person is given to keeping your will. Iniquity is never static — it never stands still. Either I have dominion over it, or it is over me. Dear Lord, I have sinned by treating sin and Satan so lightly. How I do want to develop your Son's attitude toward sin — he hated it with deep constant hatred! Forgive me and help me to do the same.

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 need Thee ev'ry hour,
Most gracious Lord;
No tender voice like Thine
Can peace afford.
I need Thee, O I need Thee;
Ev'ry hour I need Thee!
O bless me now, my Savior,
I come to Thee!

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

HIS WORD

¹¹I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. ¹²From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it. ¹³For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. ¹⁴And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. ¹⁵He who has ears, let him hear.

¹⁶“To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others:

¹⁷“We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.”

¹⁸For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ ¹⁹The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and “sinners.”’ But wisdom is proved right by her actions.” —*Matthew 11:11-19, NIV*

Read also Luke 7:28-35.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, in these few words and this little space I could never say one hundredth of what could be said of these beautiful words from your Son. His estimate of John the Baptist has always interested me. How different is your estimate of man's greatness! John was greater than Abraham? Greater than Moses? Greater than David? In what sense greater? He did have a unique function, i.e., of being the immediate forerunner of our Lord. Greater than all other prophets in that he could see and point out the One of whom others could only foretell. But it was his personal character also that formed a part of your estimate of John. Full of the Holy Spirit since his birth. Full of humility, self-denial and courage.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. The “bewildering amendment” attached to the foregoing estimate of John speaks so deeply to my heart! “*Yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*” To say it in a few words: John was not a Christian and therefore lacked all that we have. A Christian is one who has been forgiven by the shed blood of our Lord. John could anticipate his death, and when our Lord died his sacrifice for sin was retroactive and included John and all others before the cross who died in faith. At the same time, we can presently claim what John could only promise. “The least born of the Holy Spirit is greater than the greatest born of woman.” Glory to his 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 that my Lord estimated the whole record of John's life in his commendation. (2) Thank you for the present grand example John is for us yet today. (3) Thank you that we have what John promised. (Dear Lord, give me grace to receive it.) (4) Thank you that zeal and force are commendable when used in the right attitude for the right purpose. (5) Thank you for the Elijah to come that I see in John.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“*They are like children, sitting in the market places and calling on others . . .*” In a very real sense our Lord could have said: “We are all like children sitting in the market places and calling out to others . . .” But what are we saying? Our Lord called out the very will of yourself. We could hardly compare Jesus to children — although he was once a child. We are the juveniles. How immature we are! Nothing pleases us. It is also because we are looking for a deliverer but we have never taken the time or thought to discover just what he looks like.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How important are these verses to life each day: (1) How great an influence was Zachariah and Elizabeth in the life of this good man? Give me such influence in the lives of others. (2) May the joys and values of the Christian life be clearer than ever to me. (3) Keep me aware that there is nothing easy about your rule in the lives of men. (4) Elijah was a bold yet humble man — how I want to be like him. (5) As I read your word — I do have ears — may I hear what you are saying. (6) Petulant childishness is such a sin — deliver me! (7) Make me a friend to sinners — just like my Lord.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these verses speak to me: (1) “There are great men in rough dress today.” (2) “It still takes force and determination to allow me to rule your heart.” (3) “Some men will never respond.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The Middle East — Population: 297,517,000. Growth rate — 2.8%. People per sq. km. — 18.

Point for prayer: *The challenge of Islam.* The home of the First Century Church is now the most needy mission field in the world. The Muslim conquests virtually wiped out the decadent Christianity prevailing in these lands, leaving a despised and harrassed remnant of a great variety of ancient churches that did not succumb to Islam. Islam reigns supreme where once the Gospel was preached.

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 FOUR

—Wednesday—

You are righteous forever — your law describes perfect reality. My delight in your law delivers me! Teach me yet once again how to repent.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Thy righteousness is righteous for ever, and thy law is true. Trouble and anguish have come upon me, but thy commandments are my delight” (Psa. 119:142, 143). It is so good to know Someone who amid change changes not. You are always right and always will be right. There is no smugness in your claim to righteousness. You do not consider us less then because we know less or fail to fulfill. What a comforting and amazing fact it is that all your qualities are absolute. No wonder that your commandments are my delight. Your law perfectly matches man’s need; it is true in the sense of perfectly stating reality. This life is full of trouble and anguish — some of it from my own willfulness and some by the nature of the environment in which we live, but always and ever there is something to delight my 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

Just for me. In my first expression of praise I have tried unsuccessfully to speak for all men. Just here I can speak wholeheartedly for myself. It will be a joy for me to finally arrive in that land of endless day — or of pure delight, and rejoice with all others in the completion of what now is a blessed promise: “Thy righteousness is righteous for ever.” It will be good to review all the subjects of man’s interest one after another and find what you have said in your book the Bible was right in every instance. I can rejoice in tribulation since I know it is but a necessary corollary to the enjoyment of heaven. If there was no darkness, how could I possibly appreciate the light? Praise your name!

How do you personally relate to the righteousness of God, and God who is Righteous?

CONFESSION OF SIN

There is much repetition in this psalm as relating to

your law, testimonies, or commandments. There is also much repetition in my sinning. If it were not for your eternal nature of love I am sure my sin and confession would become exceedingly dull. In all of my admission of failure I am only confessing my total dependence upon you — my desperate need of you. I am glad it is not my responsibility to mark out my moral practice or progress. I would either quit or become vain. I am ready to admit failure but never defeat. If you are on my side, and I know you are, who can successfully be against 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

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 us 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

²⁰Then Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent. ²¹“Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²²But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. ²³And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. ²⁴But I

tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you." —*Matthew 11:20-24, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, I am often at a loss for words to enter an appreciation of the words from the lips of your dear Son and my king. I wonder what words he used in his condemnation of these cities. It is a judgment pronounced upon *people*. Repentance is *such* an important response to all he did and said. I want to in deed and in truth *repent!* It is a total change of the total mind. Repentance is neither sorrow nor change; it stands between both. It is preceded by sorrow and is followed by change. A change of mind that lasts indicates true repentance.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Is there an admission of failure in the words of my Lord? There is as to the response of these people. That my Lord should do so many, many miracles in these cities and yet fail to get the response expected says something very clearly to me: Not everyone with eyes sees; not everyone with ears hears; not everyone with brains thinks! These words shock me! Jesus *will* condemn to hell some people. The people here described as under his judgment were nice religious people who would not harm a hair of his head. Just an acquaintance with Jesus does not produce faith. Faith is doing what he says. Goodness is not repentance. A submission of the will and intellect to his Lordship is repentance. An education in what he did or said is not necessarily faith. Dear Lord, do I even now hear 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 revelation of the "other side of the coin" of my Lord's deity. (2) Thank you that at least someone can accept the message of his miracles. (3) Thank you for the quantity and quality of my Lord's signs. (4) Thank you for the omniscience of Jesus in his knowledge of the past. (5) Thank you for his omniscience seen in a knowledge of the judgment and just where all would stand. (6) Thank you for the fairness and even mercy of the judgment. (7) Thank you that one day all will know who Jesus is.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you." Such a strong word! But just as in all our Lord's words there is more than adequate reason behind this assertion. Let's examine several possible reasons for such a condemnation: (1) Whereas Sodom had a righteous man

in its gates "who vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their ungodly deeds," they had no one like the very Son of God to walk their streets and visit their homes. (2) The only miracle of Sodom was its destruction. How many hundreds, even thousands of people were healed in Korazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum? (3) Sodom was a heathen city — the towns of Galilee were all inhabited by the children of Israel.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Surely in the judgments of Jesus there are reasons for requests: (1) How utterly insensitive some people can be! Lord, is it I? (2) My largest need each day is to repent — I seek your motivation. (3) Since I can see, as I read, more miracles than were performed in these towns I shall have less reason not to accept his Lordship. I am asking for a willingness. (4) Opportunity spells responsibility — how overwhelming is the responsibility of our nation — and most especially her teachers! Forgive me! (5) There is a hell ahead for some people — am I associated with such persons? Speak through me to them.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these words you can reach my conscience — speak to me: (1) "How many more miracles of redeeming grace do you need before you obey Me?" (2) "He that exalts himself will be humbled." (3) "He that humbles himself will be exalted."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The Middle East — Point for prayer: Missions. Early Protestant Missions in the last century frequently turned from the difficult Muslim majority to evangelizing the more receptive nominal Christians. Few of the present Protestants are from a Muslim background. Yet the sacrificial labors and tears of many missionaries among Muslims will surely yield the longed-for harvest. Missionaries need much prayer, for this is Satan's territory; discouragements, lack of visible fruit and hostility of many can cause some to give up the struggle. Pray for adaptability to new cultures, acceptability among the people.

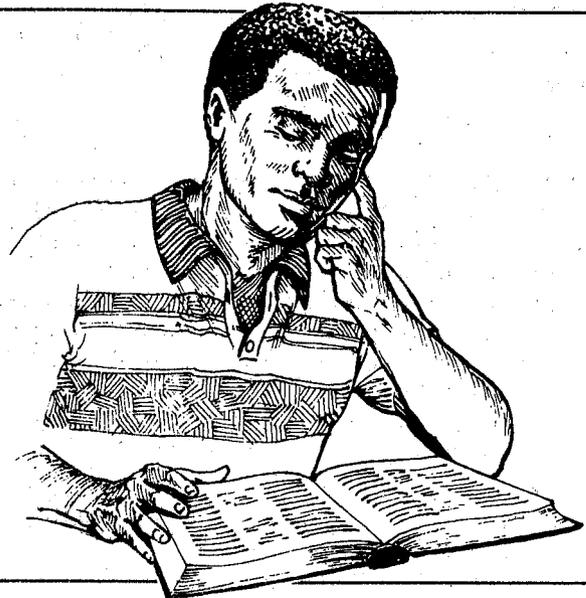
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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 FOUR

—Thursday—

David's example of worship is before me — You met his need — you can meet mine. I bow before you. Gladly I take on me the yoke of Jesus — rest for my heart is the result!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I rise before dawn and cry for help; I hope in thy words. My eyes are awake before the watches of the night, that I may meditate upon thy promise” (Psa. 119:147,148). How I do wonder at the circumstances that prompted such words. What was it that moved the psalmist to cry for help? What problem would keep him awake most of the night? Regardless of the environment out of which these words come they express qualities of yourself for which we lift our hearts in praise. There is no stress in life for which we cannot seek your help. If something presses down upon us and sleep will not come we can cry to you and you will indeed help us! The source of help is in your words. How eternally important it is that we keep your word ever before 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

There have been times when sleep escaped me — not many times — but I want to confess that my meditation was on some solution and not upon your word or upon your promise. Perhaps there will be other nights when I can make direct application of these blessed words. I want to learn how to so meditate upon your word that all the hope in life is found there. Your essential promise is to enable me and forgive me. I purpose to give myself to you in the examination of every word in your book every day of my life, i.e., some portion of it every day! I need to improve on my meditation — help me!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

For all the days when I called upon someone else or something else for help forgive me! When my hope

has been in things and not in your words forgive me. For all the times when I forgot or neglected your wonderful promise to be with me — forgive! I am so glad that I want to ask you for cleansing. It is good to be inwardly moved to want to seek your approval. I sense that just on the other side of this present circumstance is a really bright tomorrow. There is a time really close when I will find more and more hope in your words. There is a day really near when I will be able to meditate upon your promise in such a manner that I will be filled with peace and joy! In the face of hope I ask for forgiveness of my present sins.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now.

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Sweetly, Lord, have we heard Thee calling,
Come, follow Me!

And we see where Thy footprints falling
Lead us to Thee.

Footprints of Jesus, that make the pathway glow;
We will follow the steps of Jesus where'er they go.

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

HIS WORD

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

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

²⁸“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” —Matthew 11:25-30, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Of all times when our Lord should be full of praise and thanksgiving we would hardly expect it here. Jesus had failed to communicate to those who should have appreciated him most. What profound purpose we can find in this for our reasons for praising you! Here are some reasons for our Lord's praise: (1) His Father, the Lord of heaven and earth was in control; the universal Sovereign had not lost his position. (2) The separation of those who wanted to hear and those who did not want to hear was clearly drawn. (3) For the obvious autonomous nature of salvation. Salvation is of God. (4) That God the ruler of heaven and earth stoops to bless the nobodies and rankest beginners — the babes!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I have hoped (sometimes unsuccessfully) that my expression of worship in the above section has generic application. In this area I want to be just as personal as possible. How hauntingly poignant is the invitation of my Lord to : "Come unto me." And yet, I *must* read just as carefully his pre-conditions for approaching him. I cannot, I will not, come until I am as humble as a child. I cannot learn from him until I am transparently sincere in my desire to know. If I feel I am wise and learned I just as well not come for I will not listen — if I do I will not hear — if I do I will not submit. It is only when I am truly weary and burdened that I can find his rest. Dear Lord, I must think and pray before I come. I believe my Lord has fashioned a yoke that just fits my stubborn neck. Dear Lord, I *do want* your rest for 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 example of my Lord in praising and thanking you. (2) Thank you that I can with him praise you as "Lord of heaven and earth." (3) Thank you for the marvelous prerequisites to learning: ignorance, wonder, faith. (4) Thank you that you (my Father) take pleasure in such an attitude on our part. (5) Thank you for the plain claim of omniscience made by my Lord in these verses. (6) Dear Lord, I want to be that one to whom your Son chooses to reveal your will. (7) Thank you for the privilege of bowing my head and receiving your yoke.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Our Lord must have made and helped make a good number of yokes while he worked in the carpenter's shop. The fit of the yoke to the neck of the ox was so very important. If the yoke was not "easy" or did not fit it could cause great discomfort to the poor beast and could result in the loss of the animal as of any

use to the owner. We are sure that Joseph and Jesus made the best yokes in all of Nazareth. This says so much to us. Everyone wears a yoke. We are all in someone's service — even if we just serve ourselves — we serve. Who could know better how to help us find peace and purpose than the One who created us? Isn't it better to serve a gentle humble master under a light burden with a yoke that fits?

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Here is an example of praying from my Lord — surely I can learn from him. (1) I praise you Father because you are Lord of heaven and earth. I want this to be a reality in my understanding. (2) Please reveal to this babe the deeper meaning of your words. (3) That you take pleasure in revealing your will to us becomes a great motive for study — help me. (4) I accept at face value the words of your Son: "No one knows the Son except the Father" — how much more there is to learn of him! I do so want to know more. (5) I am delighted for the modifying clause concerning yourself — Jesus has made you known to us. Open my heart!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In the gracious invitation of your Son I hear you speak to me: (1) "I specialize in helping the weary and burdened — bow your heart to receive the yoke." (2) "Rest in your soul is much different than rest for your body." (3) "If you are not gentle and humble you are not like me."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The Middle East — Point for prayer: Missions — There are encouraging signs of a growing concern in Western lands for the evangelization of the Muslim world. a) The number of missionaries in the Middle East has risen to over 1,300. b) The increasing numbers of Christians in secular employment in the Middle East, who give up good prospects in their homelands to witness in this way. These need much prayer. c) The growing army of permanent and short term workers witnessing among immigrant Muslims in Europe. There are 3,000,000 Muslims from the Middle East now working in Western Europe. There are now more Turkish and North African Christians in Europe than in their own countries.

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 FOUR

—Friday—

Both yourself and your word are near me. I have been a longtime student of your word. I want to recline at your table with your Son!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“But thou art near, O Lord; and all thy commandments are true. Long have I known from thy testimonies that thou hast founded them forever” (Psa. 119:151,152). My purpose is always the same: to raise an attribute of yourself before the throne of grace in adoration and praise. In these two beautiful verses I can gladly do this. Praise to your glorious name because: (1) You are near. Nearer indeed than the very air I breathe. Present above me, within me, around me, ahead of me, behind me. So near that I can speak to you as my most intimate friend. At the same time, I am moved to fall before you in wonder — the Creator and Sustainer of all things. (2) All that you have said in your word — and I equate this with the Bible — is in total agreement with reality. In every examination your “commandments” conform perfectly with what we know in every branch of science. (3) Long have I demonstrated subjectively that your word is true. I have proved it time and again to meet every need of my heart and life.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Dear Lord, I would that what I have just said were said by all men. Surely all men could come to the same conclusion if given the same evidence. You are not far from anyone of us. Just now I want to acknowledge the lovely thought that “Long have I known from thy testimonies that thou hast founded them forever.” I am a few years from the allotted three score and ten but the more I meditate upon your words the more deeply am I convinced of their eternal nature. Someone beyond time and space has caused them to be written. To look beneath the surface of your word is to find you. I have been greatly impressed all over again at the record of “fisherman” John. Given the set of circumstances out of which this man came there could be no other explanation to the profundity of his thought. Praise your name.

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is the whole-soul purpose of Satan to cast doubt upon your word. From his first expression in the garden: “Yea, hath God said?” to the present so-called “liberal” theologian he has not stopped his efforts to overturn your testimony. How sad it is that I must confess my sin in listening to his doubts. I listen to his lies and the doubt is mine. I do not minimize the need for a thorough examination of all the evidence. But even after such a pursuit “How can you believe, who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?”

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

Alas, and did my Savior bleed?
And did my Sov'reign die?
Would He devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?
At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light,
And the burden of my heart rolled away,
It was there by faith I received my sight,
And now I am happy all the day!

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

HIS WORD

³⁶Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. ³⁷When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume. —Luke 7:36,37, NIV

²⁰Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. ²¹When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, “He is out of his mind.” —Mark 3:20,21, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

There is always so much to see and hear for my own heart in every word I read from the life of my Lord. I do want to read this from your perspective. I do not know who the Pharisee was who invited my Lord to his home, but I am sure he did not know who it was who reclined with him at the table. How far away was my Lord when they were ready to eat? Since the crowd was so great Jesus probably was only a few inches away. How I would like to have been a guest at that meal.

How easy it would be to misunderstand our Lord's work. What a contrast this feverish activity was to the quiet life he had lived in Nazareth! But then our Lord has always been misunderstood by us who should know him best.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

It has been a constant source of wonder to me as to how James, Joseph, Simon and Judas could live for years and years in the same house with Jesus and really never know him. I believe James wrote the epistle that bears his name. Is this why he is so insistent on a faith that works? He had faith — and he had *no* faith. Lest I am too critical of James or Judas or Joseph, I need to remember that the "Other Jesus" or the "Other Comforter" has taken up residence in my house — or my body, and I really "know him not." Jesus came to his own — and those who were his own in the nearest of human relationships knew him not. The one we would least expect to know him came with a gift of perfume.

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 at least one Pharisee who wanted to offer hospitality to our Lord. (2) Thank you that Jesus integrated his teaching with eating. (3) Thank you for the popularity of our Lord, at least he could speak to many who would have otherwise not heard. (4) Thank you for the concern of his mother and brothers — even if misplaced, it was concern. (5) Thank you that what seems insanity to some is the work of my Lord.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... she brought an alabaster jar of perfume." Why did she bring this expensive ointment? What she did with it will of course answer our question. The real reason is found in her love for our Lord. She must have known Jesus before he went to the Pharisee's house. It was a bold act of faith to enter this house uninvited. It was even more courageous to anoint our Savior's feet. Who was this woman? All attempts to identify her seem to me to be inadequate. It is enough

to know she can represent only one of us. She was a sinner who loved much.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What an encouragement to pray is the encounter of human need: (1) I wonder how many houses my Lord entered during his ministry — I do want, Lord, for you to make my house your house. (2) My Lord was not distracted or disturbed with the interruption by men — how I want to be like him. (3) Those who were the closest to my Lord seemed to understand him the least — if such happens with me help me to remember him. (4) Jesus went to a Pharisee's house to eat — wouldn't this decision upset some people? How I want your wisdom in my associations! (5) Why did this sinful woman want to be with Jesus? There was something wonderfully approachable about Jesus. How I want to be like him!

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these precious verses speak to me: (1) "Crowded can be both good and bad depending upon your motives." (2) "If people think you strange or unbalanced they thought that of me." (3) "Men are not guilty by association."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The Middle East — Point for prayer: *The National Believers* — They are few and scattered, and much in need of prayer as they live in very difficult circumstances. It is easier for them to emigrate to lands with greater religious freedom — as many have done. Probably the majority of converts out of Islam have left their homelands for this reason, for they face extreme pressures. There is a great need for the planting and growth of vigorous churches.

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 FOUR

—Saturday—

When I consider that I have a book before me authored by yourself — I take great delight in reading it! I want to express my love and gratitude to you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The sum of thy word is truth; and every one of thy righteous ordinances endures forever” (Psa. 119:160). What a marvel to find hidden here in the 119th Psalm this lovely verse! I agree with the conclusion here related and apply it to your whole revelation as found in the sixty-six books of your book. (I am not at all unaware of the opinions to the contrary.) I have never found one word of your book in disagreement with fact. How comforting to know that the sum total of what you have said is the whole truth! Dear Lord, I believe that when this earth has melted with fervent heat not one word of your righteous ordinances will have failed of fulfillment. There could hardly be a greater characteristic for which I praise you. The wonderful compatibility seen in what I read in your word and what I see in life leads me to exclamation of 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

For myself. — I want to honor and praise you in some specific areas of life where I have found this verse to be so eternally true: (1) “The sum of thy word is truth” on the subject of *love*. To pursue the references found in *Monser’s Topical Study* on this one subject is to be increasingly amazed. The example of love seen in my Lord and reflected in the life of Paul is so far above anything anyone else has said from any other source that there is no comparison. (2) “The sum of thy word is truth” on the subject of *disagreement*. This is such an important area. How shall we handle this sticky problem in human relationships? It is easy to trace from Genesis to Revelation the subject and agree with the psalmist.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, how shall I know the truth of any theme until I have digested all you have said? To be ignorant and in the dark — and even to curse it, is one thing — to be *willfully* in such a place is quite another. I have never been moved so deeply before with the need for constant meditation on your word. I confess my tragic lack in this pursuit. I have run a little way, but in so many subjects I have lived in the dark — and sometimes I complained bitterly. Forgive, forgive me! There are other areas of sin — of my personal violations of your law. But in everyone of my personal sins I see a lack of a knowledge of the sum total of your word on the subject. I know that knowledge has a tendency to puff up. I know that only a personal relationship with you avails anything, but the light of your word shows me your face! I love you, 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

Must I be carried to the skies
On flow’ry beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed thro’ bloody seas?

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

HIS WORD

³⁸and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

³⁹When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is — that she is a sinner.”

⁴⁰Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you."

"Tell me, teacher," he said.

⁴¹"Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴²Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

⁴³Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled."

"You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

⁴⁴Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. ⁴⁷Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven — for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little." —*Luke 7:38-47, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Since I have been in your service so long, and since I know my own sins, to at least some extent, I hardly know how to identify. I can relate to *both* of these participants. Simon who did not love as he should, and with the woman the forgiven sinner. Dear Lord, I want to learn from both of them.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I know that prayer has five expressions: (1) petitions; (2) intercessions; (3) thanksgiving; (4) praise; (5) confession. I want to relate myself to Simon and the woman in each of these expressions of prayer: (A) *Simon*: (1) Break my hard heart. (2) For every prostitute in my town I pray someone — even myself will communicate your forgiveness. (3) Thank you that you open my eyes to see much more than form. (4) Praise your name that you open my eyes to my need. (5) I am a self-righteous hypocrite in some areas of my life — I repent. I want to change. (B) *As the woman*: (1) Dear God, I could never express my gratitude for your love. (2) Open the eyes of the hearts of religious people that they may see as you do. (3) Thank you for the deep peace in my heart. (4) Praise is my whole expression of the whole day. (5) My sin is forgiven — help me to forget it as you have.

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 tears of repentance. (2) Thank you that our Lord did not resist being touched. (3) Thank you for the value the woman placed on her love for her Lord. (4) Thank you that Jesus lets none of us off as "the good guys." (5) Thank you that the debt of sin can be, and is, forgiven!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Which of them therefore will love him more." Loving is the involvement of the whole person. Our Lord is essentially asking: Which of them will give himself to the One who forgave? To whom much is given — by way or form of forgiveness, much is expected. What would be expected? (1) A deep continual sense of thanksgiving. When he thought what could have happened to him; when he considered what happened to others who could not pay and were forgiven he was so full of thanksgiving. (2) A very high estimate of the character of the one who forgave him. If he admired him before, he now had something very personal about his admiration. All of this speaks so near our own hearts.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I see so much in this incident that moves me to pray: (1) How can I help those so deeply involved in illicit sex in my day? (2) Teach me ways I can use in bringing such people to Jesus. (3) My Lord was not offended by this effusive expression of affection — how much can I associate with custom — how much with character? (4) How deeply indebted I am to you — I want my debt canceled! Will I love you for it? (5) Give me your view of the awfulness of sin's bondage that I might appreciate my liberty.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As a guest with my Lord in the Pharisee's house I want you to speak to me: (1) "Tears are welcome when they wash my feet and cleanse your heart." (2) "Only real faith can save you." (3) "Only the one who has been forgiven much can love much."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The Middle East — Points for prayer: (1) *Converts out of Islam* for a close walk with the Lord, deliverance from all the erroneous Muslim thought patterns, a desire and opportunities for helpful fellowship with believers, acceptability by other Christians who are often suspicious of such converts, and boldness in the face of threats, ostracism, physical danger, etc. (2) *The witness of the believers* — deliverance from fear of witnessing, life style that recommends the Gospel, tactful winning of Muslims where the law forbids such a witness.

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 FIVE

—Sunday—

I have found great spoil! A king has left it for me! It is your word! If I entered the closet seven times a day it would not be adequate time to praise you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

"I rejoice at thy word like one who finds great spoil. Seven times a day I praise thee for thy righteous ordinances" (Psa. 119:162,164). Dear Lord, how blessedly good it is to be rested and able to come into your presence with great eager anticipation! Even as our Lord said the rule of yourself is "like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up; there in his joy he goes and sells all he has and buys that field" (Matthew 13:44). How shall I know of any part of the treasure's value without your word? If Matthew, Mark, Luke and John had not written down what they saw and heard I would have no treasure. If the writers of the Old Testament had been too busy to write I would never know of all you have for me. Seven times a day will I praise you for your word.

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 want to examine and appreciate the value of every word you have given to me. I stand back in wonder and amazement at the beauty I see just at first look, but the more I look the more beautiful detail I see in each verse. As the man with the treasure I do not plan on keeping this treasure for my own enjoyment alone, I am going to see it and allow it to circulate in the marketplace of mankind. Even now I am engaged in a project to get your word out to at least six foreign countries. Dear Lord, direct me! There are so many comparisons I can make to a treasure and your word. I want to lift just two up for praise to you: (1) A treasure represents much thought, energy and time — your word has your mind, your life and eternity in it! Praise and glory to your name! (2) A treasure is full not only of beauty but value. A perfect combination. Indeed, indeed your word is full of beauty and value!

How do you personally relate to the beauty of

God, and God who is Beautiful? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

How sorry I am that I do not always feel as I do just now. I know that your equation of reality is: (1) Your word or your facts; (2) my faith; (3) my feelings — but there is such a difference in the attitude I have at times when I approach your word. I can be defensive because of my sin; I can be introverted because I am ashamed; I can be dull and insensitive because I do not wish to face your facts about my sin. Ah, but when I come eager to confess my sins and rid myself of anything that hinders the free course of your will in my life, what a joy is mine! Such is my desire just now, dear 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

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

⁴⁷Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven — for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."

⁴⁸Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

⁴⁹The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

⁵⁰Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." — Luke 7:47-50, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Gladly, gladly do I do this! Sometime, somewhere before this incident our Lord had encountered this dear woman. She had confessed freely, fully, tearfully her sins. Jesus had assured her that her sins were forgiven. Indeed, she came to him as the Messiah to receive such forgiveness. But there was more to her forgiveness than relief. She was overwhelmingly in love with the One who had forgiven her. This one who had much sex and no love now was consumed with a desire to express her love.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

What they said *was* important, but it was on another subject. Related but not the subject of love of a forgiven sinner. *Method* so often trips us up. We are so often involved in *how* something shall be done that nothing is accomplished. Jesus was God — only God can forgive sins. The words of forgiveness were given intentionally to point to his deity. I hear him! Dear Lord, I am the sinner to receive his words. The closing words are so full of meaning: "your faith has saved you; go in peace." Faith comes by accepting or trusting what our Lord has said. Jesus forgave her; she believed he could and did. She emotionally — totally related to his words. This is real faith — this produces real peace!

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 clear plain eternal offer of sins forgiven. (2) Thank you that no sins are too numerous or too bad to be forgiven. (3) Thank you that Jesus is as much alive today as then and speaks the same words to me. (4) Thank you that I can respond just like the unnamed woman. (5) Thank you that I am taught that forgiveness can be the wellspring of gratitude. (6) Thank you that I can also see some men will never be forgiven until they know they are sinners. (7) Thank you for the sharp and clear picture of my Lord as God among men.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Your faith has saved you; go in peace." What beautiful words from the only one who can forgive sins! From how much had this woman's faith saved her! (1) From the humiliation of being a commodity instead of a person. Sex is like food — it will be a part of life because of its nature. When men buy food no problem occurs that affects the food. Men do

misuse food the same as sex. But when men buy other persons and use them to satisfy their own desires it is a tragic loss to the person. (2) Saved from the deep estrangement she felt within her own self. Prostitutes tell us that a deeper loneliness takes hold of their heart that can be described in human language. (3) Most of all she was saved from the awful frustration and constant agitation associated with this relationship. She had peace!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How many requests are there in the context of the forgiveness of sins? (1) Remind me all over again that my sins are always viewed as under the blood. (2) Thank you that repentance is an attitude — I claim the result of such an attitude — I hear my Lord say: "Your sins are forgiven." (3) I can answer the guest's question: "It is God incarnate in human form who forgives sins." Deepen my appreciation of the deity of my Lord. (4) How much fuller is the meaning of the term "saved" as used here by Jesus. Her whole life was saved. I need and claim such a salvation for myself. (5) I cannot imagine this woman continued in her former manner of life — she had enough of the chaos of sin. I need your peace to guard my heart and thoughts.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these four verses speak to me: (1) "Your past sins have all been forgiven — do you doubt my present ability?" (2) "Trust in my willingness to forgive is the basic need of all life." (3) "Accept my peace."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The Middle East — Points for prayer: (1) *The need for Christian homes* — these are very few. Unequal marriages between Christians and Muslims are the major cause of backsliding. The Muslim world needs to see the beauty of a Christian home. (2) *The cultivation of a missionary vision*. Arab missionaries are more acceptable than Westerners in many lands. There are now about 230 Middle Eastern missionaries — largely from Egypt, Jordan and Syria, who are serving the Lord in other Middle Eastern countries. Many other Christians also work in lands closed to normal mission work — in Libya, Arabia, etc.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Jesus is all the world to me,
My Friend in trials sore;
I go to him for blessings,
and He gives them o'er and o'er.
He sends the sunshine and the rain,
He sends the harvest's golden grain;
Sunshine and rain, harvest of grain,
He's my Friend.

WEEK FIVE

—Monday—

“Great peace have they who love your law.” I have truly found it so. Evil shall not have dominion over us. Praise your name!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Great peace have those who love thy law; nothing can make them stumble. My soul keeps thy testimonies; I love them exceedingly” (Psa. 119:165,167). In these two precious verses are two characteristics of yourself. As out of the abundance of the heart our mouths form the words — so your words are the expression — the extension of yourself. (1) You have given us a word that properly received will produce a great unassailable personal peace. The quality of character reflected here would be a complete understanding of the deepest needs of man. (2) You have given us a revelation in the form of what we call the Bible with the capacity to bring peace and tranquility to every relationship of man: with himself, with others and with you. The 167th verse gives us the key to open this quality in our experience: “my soul (total self) keeps thy testimonies.”

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 not many things that make me stumble — just one thing: the loss of peace. There are not many things that destroy my peace, just one thing: failure to love you (as revealed in your word) with my whole self! Somehow there must be an integration, a transfer, an assimilation of the words on the pages of your book into the wellsprings of action in my life. *Love* is the answer. Read again these words: “Those who love thy law”; “I love them exceedingly.” How about an application of the characteristics of love as found in I Cor. 13:4-7. (1) My love for your word is patient and kind in the application of it in every relationship. (2) My love for what you have said is not jealous or boastful as I compare my acceptance with others. (3) My love for what I read in your word is never arrogant or rude. Dear Lord, it is easy to say I love your word and your Son — it is something else to live it. Forgive me.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Do I need to spell out just how short I fall of the above qualities? I know I do and I openly and in detail confess my miserable failures to you. Lord, how can I be more patient — more humble? Love is the answer — love is meeting the need — in my own life — in the lives of others, but the attitude accompanying such an effort — ah, it is there I am short. (4) In my receiving your word in my relationship with others I am never overbearing in an insistence of my own way. Such a statement is a “pious platitude” — it is not true. Forgive me. I want to change. (5) I am never irritable or resentful in the daily living of your word. What a joke! I am blood guilty, but I want to repent. 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

Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and heav'n and nature sing.

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

HIS WORD

²²Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. ²³All the people were astonished and said, “Could this be the Son of David?”

²⁴But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons." —Matthew 12:22-24, NIV
Read also Mark 3:22

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Each time I approach this section of my worship I pause — for two reasons I pause: because I really never know just how to express myself — and second, because I am reminded once again how sharp and penetrating is your word. As I look in the face of this poor man I see myself! I do not believe any Christian is demon-possessed — at least I find none in your word, but I do know since Satan is not an omnipresent being we are attacked by demons. I, indeed am under constant attack like other Christians.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I see myself and indeed all men in the exchange of my Lord with this unnamed man. (1) If we are going to have any help it will be because our friends have brought us to Jesus. How could I ever thank you enough — or those dear friends who first came so long ago and brought me to my Lord? (2) Of the evil influence at work in our lives we can really never know. The depth and power of Satan's influence are known only to you. (3) We do know that whereas we were blind now we see! Oh, the startled wonder of being able to look at life through your eyes! (4) We were once mute or dumb to the words of praise and eternal value; now we can speak as you speak — we can lay your word up in our hearts to come out of our mouth.

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 the disciples had learned that no case was hopeless. (2) Thank you that the disciples did not argue among themselves as to what should be done. (3) Thank you that Jesus is our One and only deliverer. (4) Thank you for the completeness of our salvation. (5) Thank you that the wonder and power of your miracles will never leave us. (6) Thank you for the clear cut choice: either God or Satan. (7) Thank you for one who knew beyond all controversy who healed him.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons." This was a deadly dangerous statement. Since our Lord knew the hearts of these men he knew this was a calculated conclusion. These men meant it! These Pharisees had been moving toward this statement for weeks and months. "There was something supernatural about Jesus" they said, "and now we know who it is — it is Satan."

What a totally illogical assumption. What an impossible conclusion and yet they made it. It was the unpardonable sin! It was the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. At the base of these words is the rejection of his deity. They had heard him and seen him in his miraculous ministry — to now decide that all his work was directed and empowered by Satan was the ultimate of rejection. This was rejection with no recourse. How dangerous it is to be religious but not Christian.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In this confrontation I find much about which I want to pray: (1) The poor possessed man is almost forgotten in the midst of the argument. How easy it is to forget human need in the heat of a theological discussion — deliver me from this. (2) Guard my thoughts that I might recognize Satan's efforts to deceive. (3) I am glad to acknowledge that Jesus has the ability to free me from Satan's power — dear Lord, I want to claim such supremacy. (4) Jesus said that His power over demons was a demonstration of your kingdom — an example of your rule in the heart of man — how I do want to learn from this thought — give me wisdom!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I can hear your voice in these verses if my ears are open: (1) "I have entered and bound Satan — this does not mean he is dead." (2) "You cannot be passive with my word and serve me." (3) "Fragmentation of personality is a result of not staying near to me."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The Middle East — Points for prayer: The most Effective Means of Reaching Muslims: a) *Medical work* — this opens up countries and hearts to the Gospel. This is the only way in which missionary work can be done in Yemen, some Gulf States and Afghanistan. Pray for this ministry — that it may create opportunities for a witness to Muslims. There is continual cry for more medical workers. b) *Personal witness* by nationals and missionaries is the most effective way — but this needs a high degree of self-giving, much love and patience and a great faith.

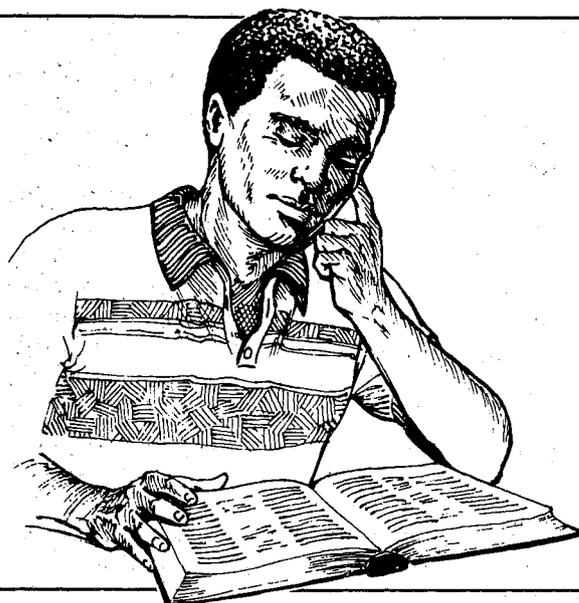
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I will sing of my Redeemer,
And His wondrous love to me;
On the cruel cross He suffered,
From the curse to set me free.
Sing, oh, sing . . . of my Redeemer,
With His blood . . . He Purchased me,
On the cross . . . He sealed my pardon,
Paid the debt . . . and made me free.

WEEK FIVE

—Tuesday—

All my going out and coming in is known to you. You love me in the details of life. Accept my worship as I bow before you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I keep thy precepts and testimonies, for all my ways are before thee. . . . Let thy hand be ready to help me, for I have chosen thy precepts” (Psa. 119:168, 173). Such a blessed statement of comfort is the last phrase of verse 168: “for all my ways are before thee.” There are no days without you. I may not care but you do! You indeed are the “silent observer” — in another sense you have spoken very eloquently for your precepts and testimonies are given for that purpose. I want to lift up this quality of yourself and praise you for your total involvement in all I am and all I do. My emotions are not always involved in my appreciation of this quality of yourself, but it is nonetheless true. Your hand is ever ready to lend assistance and chastening as needed. I review any week of my life and acknowledge the truth of these blessed words. What I say of myself is true of all men who love you and have made you their Father.

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 such a vital and essential connection between “keeping your precepts” or “choosing your precepts” and your direction in all the ways of my life or the moving of your hand to help me. I would not say the only way you take an interest in my life is in my willingness to follow the rule book you have left for mankind. This is far too cold and objective. At the same time if I am not ready to read and obey how can you help me at all? I am your child, you have given me instructions for life in your word — indeed, you have furnished to me all things for social and spiritual relationships. However, you are personally concerned in just how I carry out your instructions. If I falter you forgive, if I stumble you explain more closely. I believe the “wisdom” promised by yourself in James 1:5-7 is the best use of your instructions. I claim your presence and your help.

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is sad to have such a clear view of what can be done and fail to do it. In all my ways are instructions and directions from your precepts — it is up to me to ask for wisdom in the application of your word to a particular circumstance. This I have not done — dear God, I am the poorer. Your hand is ever ready to help me but I have not always chosen your precepts — how can you do your part if I will not do mine? You can't, i.e., you are limited by your own word not to. Forgive me! I purpose to spend much more time meditating upon your word.

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

Here, O my Lord, I see Thee face to face;
Here would I touch and handle things unseen;
Here grasp with firmer hand th'eternal grace,
And all my weariness upon Thee lean.

HIS WORD

²³So Jesus called them and spoke to them in parables: “How can Satan drive out Satan? ²⁴If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. ²⁶And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. ²⁷In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can rob his house. ²⁸I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. ²⁹But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.”

³⁰He said this because they were saying, “He has an evil spirit.” —Mark 3:23-30, NIV
Read also Matthew 12:25-37.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I want to do the very best I can in each of these expressions of worship, but especially in this area. Your Son seems here to confront opposition in the most basic form. Either he is who he said he was or he is controlled by the evil one. There is no neutral ground. The tree is good or bad. There is either gathering or scattering. The lines are drawn and the decision is at hand. Speak to all our hearts that we might guard well our choice!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. To say lightly, "Lord I believe you are the Son of God" and then not produce in our lives the results of that decision is a form of blasphemy. How wonderfully strengthening it is to identify all the figures of speech. (1) The king who is stronger than the great king of darkness: Our King, your dear Son, who has a kingdom and citizens. How tragic that Satan's subjects are so much more responsive to him — even if by terrible coercions — than ourselves as subjects of the King of kings and Lord of lords. (2) The strong man and the stronger man. Our bodies are the house of these strong men. How wonderful to read and accept that Jesus can bind and cast out Satan — or demons. This house and the throne in it can be made "good" or clean and Jesus can and will reign within. Even so come Lord Jesus! Welcome to the throne of my life!

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 ability of my Lord to know the thoughts of the hearts of all men. (2) Thank you that I know that Satan is an intelligent being and rules as sovereign over a kingdom of darkness. (3) Thank you that Jesus clearly confronts Satan's servants and makes all see — who have eyes — just who he is. (4) Thank you for the knowledge that I am no match for Satan and he can run and rule and ruin my house. (5) Thank you so much for the stronger man! (6) Thank you I can make the whole tree good. (7) Thank you that I am now ready to confess and do confess my Lord as your Son and my only Savior.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken." How often have these words haunted me! And then I can remember to whom they were spoken. At the same time the point is not lost on anyone of us. We would like to think that the idle or careless word could be easily overlooked as not the real measure of the speaker. It is just here our Lord points out to us

that it is out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. It is with the condition of the heart our Lord has special concern. The Pharisees had been cultivating the soil of their heart. They *were* responsible for what grew there.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Here are my requests from these verses: (1) Help me to give Satan no advantage in anything. (2) Divided loyalties kill incentive — how I like being whole! (3) Rule the whole of my life. (4) I am glad there is an end to Satan's rule — in some area of my life may his end be today! (5) Dear Lord, enter my house and tie up the strong man within me. (6) I am glad to speak for the blessed Holy Spirit — may He have free course in my heart. (7) Guard me from an insensitive attitude.

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 indeed bind the strong man — you cannot do it." (2) "All sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven — except one." (3) "My mercy and goodness should be as apparent here as the exception — of Holy Spirit blasphemy."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The Middle East — Points for prayer: (1) *Literature* — more and more good literature for Muslims, and Arabic teaching literature for Christians is now being produced. Pray for ex-Muslims engaged in writing these materials, for publishers and bookstores, etc., who seek to get this literature into the hands of those who need it. Much literature has been distributed all over the Middle East in recent years. Pray for fruit. (2) *Radio* — the most effective means of witnessing to Muslims in many areas. There are studios for the production of programs in Spain, France, Lebanon for broadcasting by Trans World Radio in Monaco and Cyprus, in Liberia, and in Seychelles. The response has been good, and very effective when able to be followed up by Bible correspondence courses and personal contacts.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

When my life work is ended,
and I cross the swelling tide,
When the bright and glorious morning I will 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 FIVE

—Wednesday—

Where is my confidence? It is in the alert omnipresent personal interest of yourself. I have read your signs and I want to buy your product — even your deity!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“He will not let your foot be moved, he who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep” (Psa. 121:3,4). In each of these verses from the psalms we are seeking attributes of yourself for which we can praise you. The imagery in these verses is of battle. As the enemy approaches we need not be full of fear. We can be confident that we shall not lose ground. What is the source of our confidence? It is the alert omnipresence or intimate personal interest of yourself. This is a promise made to the whole “Israel of God,” or to the whole army of the Lord. Praise your name! We are no match for Satan, but you not only fight with us — you fight in us and through us. You never tire or lose your vigilance. Thank you for this blessed assurance.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. If ever I needed such a promise it is now! There are days, and times in each day when it is easy to relax our guard. Dear Lord, remind me of Satan’s battle strategy. I do not want to be ignorant of his devices. Without your help I shall indeed be thrown to the ground and moved from my position of victory. Right now, for today, I claim your constant interest in the conflict. From time to time in this day may I catch a suggestion of just how you have helped me escape his awful thrust? Could I be helped to understand that my position was not won but by your help? Thank you for the desire to put on all your armor that I might be thus enabled to stand and not be moved. Praise you!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Ephesians 6:10-20 could well be a commentary on

Psalm 121:3,4. I have the promise of your vigilance while I take up the whole armor you have provided. I approach this passage in confession and repentance. How easy it is to forget my insensitivity to these burning words: “. . . against the *principalities*, against the *powers*, against the *world rulers of this present darkness*, against the *spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places*.” This is almost too much for me to assimilate. How I need truth on a gut level. How I need to go with the good news. Unless my faith is active in the battle of life I am losing ground. Help me, dear Lord, I am one needy 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

Sweetly, Lord, have we heard Thee calling,
Come, follow Me!
And we see where Thy footprints falling
Lead us to Thee.
Footprints of Jesus that make the pathway glow;
We will follow the steps of Jesus where’er we go.

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

HIS WORD

³⁸Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, “Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you.” —*Matthew 12:38, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It is with the purpose of asking we are concerned. Why did these Pharisees make this request? The next verse will tell us why they asked: They were evil and adulterous and only wished to trap our Lord by these words. We need to be very careful that we not condemn the desire for divine credentials. Our Lord did “many signs” and each of them was an evidence of his deity. These men had testimony, eye-witness

testimony of hundreds of signs our Lord had already given. Perhaps many of these teachers of the law had been present themselves. Jesus is going to say that there is a barrier that short-circuits the purpose of signs: it is sin! Moral failure shuts the eyes of faith.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How often have we heard someone say: "I would believe if . . ."? Just suppose our Lord would have said: "All right, what sign do you want to see?" And then he had performed according to request, what would have changed in the hearts of these men? They could easily have argued among themselves that the request was somehow not what they wanted. The point is that if we (myself) do not *want* to believe we will not. It is with my unwillingness to submit to your moral code I find my problem of faith. It is in your life and teaching I find the substance for faith. Signs will *confirm* what I already believe. Dear Lord, I *do* believe. I want to listen and learn more and more!

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 our Lord is first of all and last of all a teacher. (2) Thank you that I can sit at his feet as a learner. (3) Thank you that Jesus knew we needed our faith confirmed and he therefore gave us many miracles to do it. (4) Thank you that Jesus can and does read the thoughts and intents of our hearts. (5) Thank you that my goal in life need not be: "*one more miracle*" — I have the greatest miracle in my Lord. (6) Thank you for the sign of Jonah — the resurrection of my Lord. (7) Thank you that the case is closed on his deity — all the evidence is in and a verdict is given — "He is declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4).

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

" . . . we want to see a miraculous sign from you." What would the sign prove? If Jesus was the Sovereign God in human form or their Messiah, he would not act and react according to the beck and call of man. If he was not the Messiah a sign would only serve to deceive them. In either case, the request was out of order. Even if these men had not seen the many signs he had already performed they could talk to eyewitnesses who had. The number and variety of signs he had already performed was more than adequate to convince anyone who was truly serious about evidence. How careful we must be in our motives as related to the miraculous!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How this one verse calls forth requests in prayer! (1) The Pharisees were blind — open my eyes. (2) These men could not hear — open my ears. (3) These men must have had short memories — I do want to remember your power and love for me. (4) I want to see your signs as given by your biographers — that I might reinforce the faith I already have. (5) Read the motives of my heart and forgive me and purify my desires. (6) I need to be taught of you before I teach others. (7) I am so glad I have the product — even his deity — that all his signs advertised. Help me to appreciate him — even yourself — more and more.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In this one verse you can say several things I need to hear: (1) "Faith comes by hearing not seeing." (2) "Faith comes through the mind not the emotions." (3) "Faith that acts must affect the emotions."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The Middle East — Points for prayer: (1) *Bible correspondence courses* have been used of the Lord to win more Muslims to Christ than any other means. This is especially true of North Africa, Turkey and Iran. Pray for missions involved in this ministry. This witness is subject to much opposition by Muslim authorities — postal censorship plus harassment of students. Pray for these students, that they may be won for Christ and brought into living fellowships of believers. (2) *Gospel Recordings and Cassette Tapes* are proving a splendid tool of evangelism and Christian teaching in regions that can never be visited by missionaries. (3) *Muslims in other lands* are more accessible — pray for all involved in Europe and North America. Pray that converts from this ministry may become effective evangelists when they return home.

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 FIVE

—Thursday—

You are even now surrounding us with your love and mercy — We are delivered of every evil — Keep your house clean and occupied by yourself!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even forever” (Psa. 125:2). This has always been a favorite verse as it describes the geographical advantage of the city of Jerusalem, and compares such with the advantages of your children. The more we look at the verse the more it becomes apparent to us. This speaks of your protection. Jerusalem did have a good natural advantage against the enemy but it was often conquered. You have offered us your protection — that we have been overcome is not due to the failure of our Protector. It was usually internal strife that overcame the city. Bless and praise your name we need never lose your strong defense. This is a collective figure, i.e., it speaks of protection for a city. Each person is as complex as a city; you offer a bulwark for all our many needs. What you do for one, you do for all, and so in a sense this is generic as well as specific.

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 fact that Jerusalem was (and is) a fine place for a view of the countryside. Not only are the mountains round about it — Jerusalem is itself on mountains. What a beautiful perspective you give to life! Everything viewed from the holy city looked different: (1) Praise you for the view of the nations of the world I have as I see them from your perspective. If Jerusalem (in this figurative sense) was to be the capital of the world how different is our attitude toward all the nations? You love them all — you want to protect and bless them all. (2) Calvary can be seen from Jerusalem. Just outside the wall was the place of the death of your Son. Here I can see the power and strength of your protection. Here I can see the means of fulfilling your desire for the nations of the world. I want to sustain a universal view of your presence and power.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

To leave Jerusalem is to leave my protection. Why should I ever want to step outside? Why leave the care and goodness of your love? It is because such love has become so common that we fail to appreciate what we have until it is gone. The history of Jerusalem is the history of forgetting. Dear Lord, I do not want to forget. How easy it is to relax in a knowledge that you care and all is well. All is only well when there is a watchman on the wall! Dear Lord, I want to set up a watchman for my time of prayer. I am so glad for the inward protection I find in this time with you. Forgive me for my failure to set a watch on my lips. The citadel of my heart must be guarded by your very presence lest I begin fighting inside the city. Deliver me, 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.

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

HIS WORD

³⁹He answered, “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹The men of Nineveh

will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here. ⁴²The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here.

⁴³"When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. ⁴⁴Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. ⁴⁵Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation." —*Matthew 12:39-45, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It will be enough just here if I read and reread — and then read again the words of your Son. Whereas he applied them to the generation of which these Pharisees were a part I see many, many evidences of the same qualities in my generation. Speak to me, dear Lord!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

My Lord is saying that a different type of sign will be given — a sign to which all other signs will relate. "The sign of the prophet Jonah"! How wonderfully merciful was our Lord. He did not grant the request of these sign seekers and yet he did! He gave them promise of a sign that would convince all. At the same time, he warned that there was a deadly disease spreading in the hearts of men. And so it is today! My heart is not immune to this contagion. It is the terrible sin of *disbelief* not unbelief — he could deal with that — but blunt rejection of evidence — a stubborn refusal to accept the obvious. What a heart-break! The men of Nineveh did not do this, and Jonah did no miracles. This the queen of Sheba did not do and Solomon offered no sensible signs to convince her.

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 our Lord's acceptance of the historical incident of Jonah and the great fish. (2) Thank you for the wonderful promise of the resurrection. (3) Thank you for the clear word of life after death found in our Lord's words here. (4) Thank you for the sober fact that men are morally responsible before you.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"And the final condition of that man is worse than

the first." This is the tragic conclusion of an uncommitted life. Jesus came to cast Satan out of the land — indeed out of his generation of Israel. If Israel would have accepted him the evil one could have been permanently removed. The miracles and teaching of Jesus *did indeed* make an impression, but most of the Jewish population were not ready to commit themselves. The deadly danger of an uncommitted life is in the fact that demons are not dead. It *is* possible to apostasize. How eternally important it is that we commit our lives to him. The commitment our Lord wants and deserves is in worship. Personal devotion is the foundation upon which all other relationships are built. I commit myself to prayer and the ministry of the word in fear of hell.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In our Lord's words to an adulterous generation there is much about which we can pray: (1) The reason for sign seeking was based in disbelief — guard my heart! (2) How I thank you for the sign of Jonah. I want to appreciate it more. (3) Thank you for my Lord's stamp of approval on the story of Jonah. May I be willing to listen to him first. (4) How I do want to change my thinking to conform with that of your Son. (5) Open my heart to the wisdom of yourself found in the words of your Son. (6) Fill up my life with your worship and work. (7) I claim your overcoming power in any efforts of demons.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In my Lord's message to this generation he also speaks to me: (1) "You need to repent each day — this is an attitude." (2) "I yet need men who will preach repentance." (3) "There can be no vacuum in deliverance from sin."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The Middle East — Points for prayer; (1) *Unreached peoples* — many! Countless villages and towns have never welcomed a preacher of the Gospel; Muslim women in many lands are virtually inaccessible in their prison-like seclusion; the nomadic tribes of the deserts of North Africa, Arabia and Iran; the expanding student population; the expatriate Asian and Western communities, etc. (2) *Closed lands* — Mauritania, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, U.A.E., North Yemen.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread thro' all the earth abroad,
The honors of Thy name.

WEEK FIVE

—Friday—

Build my house dear Lord — or it will never be built! Awaken me to Satan's schemes. How wonderful to know I am a brother to your Son — you are my Father!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain” (Psa. 127:1). I love the blessed promise in this verse. Here is a plain, clear assurance that when we work you work with us, in us, and through us. I need to remember there is no sacred or secular work in your sight. You were with your Son when he made yokes for farmers, or houses for the residents of Nazareth as much as you were with him in his teaching on the hills of Galilee or the precincts of the temple. Unless you are made the superintendent of any and all our jobs we labor in vain. I go to work today with the calm assurance that I am a workman together with you in the task before me.

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. However well planned is a project, I will wait in vain for its fulfillment if you are not in it and through it from the beginning. “How can I find the will of the Lord?” is a question so often asked when all the time God’s will is being worked out in what we are and what we do. If we ask his presence — read his word, sense his presence in what we do his will is at work in and through us. We think we build the house — *wrong* — he built it through us. We thought we protected an investment — *wrong* — he protected it *through* us. I want to see again the twofold task of your will in this blessed verse: “. . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12b,13). Praise your name!

How do you personally relate to the will 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

My confession is so obvious. I have built many a house out of pure stubbornness. I could have cared less for what everyone thought including God! No wonder I was depressed when I finished. I have thrown up defences and become very negligent in my protection of some treasured city of my heart. Only to have the walls broken and the city destroyed. Dear Lord, I want to do nothing without you. I *can* do nothing without you. Forgive me for the times I have forgotten. Too many times it has been a willful lapse of memory. Forgive me! Ideals that are not given substance become nothing but idle dreams. I want tangible, nitty gritty, practical application of your presence in all I am and do.

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

⁴⁶While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. ⁴⁷Someone told him, “Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.”

⁴⁸He replied, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” ⁴⁹Pointing to his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers. ⁵⁰For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and

sister and mother.” —*Matthew 12:46-50, NIV*
 Read also *Mark 3:31-35*.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How very appropriate are these words! How often do we misunderstand our Lord and his purpose. We who are related to him and claim him as our Savior — and at the same time as our elder brother. He is the only begotten Son (i.e., in the unique sense of his birth), but we too are supernaturally born into the same family. We can so easily decide there is something unbalanced in the service he gives us to do. We are the body of our Lord, and he *does* work through us today. Here are some false rationalizations I have made: (1) He is making too much demand upon my time. He wants to dominate all my time. Does this make sense? (2) How is it that I am attacked more now by Satan than when I never served him?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

It is one thing to claim kinship with Jesus, and I do; it is another thing to realize that such kinship is conditioned by his words: “For whosoever shall *do* the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister and mother.” There are always well meaning friends and relatives who can tell us just what the Father’s will is for us. If we do not get our instructions from our Lord we can be sure it is not your will. How I *do* need to hear the word “whosoever” and apply it to someone besides my own little group. In the whole wide world whosoever shall do the will of the Father is my brother and sister.

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 respectful patient attitude of the brothers and mother of our Lord. (2) Thank you for our Lord’s willingness to cut earthly ties when they interfered with your will. (3) Thank you that Jesus knew ahead of time the purpose in the coming of his family. (4) Thank you that we can be the mother of Jesus — i.e., “Christ can be formed in us.” (5) Thank you that we can be a brother to Jesus and live in the same house. (6) Thank you that we can know your will and do it.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“ . . . he is my brother, and sister, and mother.” How beautiful is the thought that we can be as close to our Lord as his brothers and sisters were in Nazareth. Yea, we can be closer! What does Jesus mean by his expression: “. . . whosoever *does the will* of my Father in heaven”? He is saying his life ambition, his whole purpose was to fulfill his Father’s will in his life — all who have the same purpose are in

his family. However, it will be also easy to become as apathetic in this relationship as were his earthly brothers and sisters. They did not believe on him because of their familiarity. May we never lose the freshness and wonder of being his blood relatives!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Our Lord’s relation to his family teaches me about prayer: (1) Was Jesus insensitive to the needs of his family? — of course not! — give me his balance. (2) How could his family be so insensitive to Jesus? — am I in this class? (3) What an exalted value my Lord placed on our relationship with him. I do want to appreciate it. (4) How can I really *know* I am doing your will in my life? (5) Thank you for your imperishable word which contains all you want done in my life. How I need your wisdom in applying it to my life. (6) Give me the love that answers all problems of interpersonal relationship.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Did Jesus reach the hearts of his family? You can reach my heart: (1) “There are those who fulfill my will in their lives — seek them out and learn from them.” (2) “You must want me before we can be one in our purpose.” (3) “You are as precious to me as any son has ever been to his father.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The Middle East — Point for prayer: *Lands with no fellowships of national believers* — Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Libya, Yemen (though in each are communities of expatriate believers). 15 of the 22 lands have less than 1000 national believers. There are probably less than 10,000 Christians in the Middle East converted out of Islam.

There is a great lack of Christian workers to use present opportunities to the full. The Middle East has the lowest missionary/people ratio of any major region of the world, yet it is the area most needing pioneer work. These lands continue to defy our Lord Jesus and we cannot remain complacent about this state of affairs.

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 FIVE

—Saturday—

The words of the Psalmist are so true for our lives: "The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad." Here we can tell him so.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

"The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad. May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy! He that goes forth weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psa. 126:3,5,6). What powerful qualities of yourself are found in these beautiful verses! (1) You are interested in the success of your people. Success has become a bad word of late. When applied to what you do in your children, it is a delightful word. (2) If we sow your word in deep humility and sorrow (as we see the need of those with whom we work), we shall reap with shouts of joy! (3) To repeat the promise with enlargement: blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek in attitude as they plant your eternal truth in the hearts of men. They shall with no doubt come home with shouts of joy bringing their sheaves with them. The blessed harvest of eternal lives — people.

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 happened just last night; I could see a wonderful harvest in the lives of those who listened to your word. I can make the psalmist's words my words, "The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad." How I need to read again the conditions prerequisite to reaping! *"Those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy."* I do weep within for the obvious needs of men. But somehow I must identify much more closely with you as you see men. I rejoiced in the acceptance of your Son by a dear woman; I was happy as she was "baptized into Christ," but not as I should have rejoiced — there were no shouts of joy (inside or out). Dear Lord, I am so glad to find these blessed verses again and bow before you and allow them to find lodgement and growth in my heart!

How do you personally relate to the harvest of God, and God who is Lord of the harvest? Speak it

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

How shall I respond to the following? (1) You have indeed done so many great things in my experience. My sin is one of blindness and ingratitude. I really do not see all you have done — some of the most important have escaped my view altogether. I do not have the depth of appreciation I could have or should have for those I do see. (2) My sowing of your seed has not been with tears — humility and meekness simply do not characterize much of my work. Dear Lord, forgive me. (3) My happiness at the salvation of men and women is not nearly as full of joy as it should be. I forget to see people as the eternal residents of heaven or hell.

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

More about Jesus would I know,
More of His grace to others show;
More of His saving fulness see,
More of His love who died for me.
More, more about Jesus,
More, more about Jesus;
More of His saving fulness see,
More of His love who died for me.

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

HIS WORD

After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; Joanna the wife

of Cuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means. — Luke 8:1-3, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What a precious passage I find in these three verses! It says so much about my dear Lord: (1) He was involved in a very strenuous effort. To walk from one city and village to another and to keep this up for days and weeks — even months, was no little task. (2) He neglected no city or village. What an example for all us so-called preachers. (3) Jesus was a proclaimer — a preacher! He gathered all who would listen and spoke loud enough to be heard by all. What a communicator he must have been! (4) It was *good news* he brought: that God can rule in the hearts of men. Such is not many times communicated by us as "good news."

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. How I do hope I have represented your Son in the true light of what you have said through Luke. In this time I want to let you speak to me about these women that followed my Lord. These women (only three are named) followed him for two reasons: (a) They were so grateful for what he had done for them. They had been cured of evil spirits and disease. (b) They followed him because they had means out of which they could help him and his disciples. Does this say anything about women in your service today? Indeed it does! Women today are many times more grateful for salvation than men. Not one woman denied him — or left him. Women of means — and many who have but little have helped our Lord and his disciples when no one else did or could.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the example of energy expended in your service. (2) Thank you for elevating preaching to a place of prominence and importance. (3) Thank you for the systematic manner in which our Lord worked. (4) Thank you for the emphasis upon your rule in the hearts of men. (5) Thank you for the example of how to make preachers. (6) Thank you for the selfless devotion of these women. (7) Thank you specifically that Joanna and Susanna loved him and followed him. What a testimony to the power of my Lord to change all human relationships.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"These women were helping to support them out of their own means." It cost these women much more than money to follow our Lord. Such traveling interrupted whatever other schedule they might have had. Were the wives of the apostles represented in the little phrase "and many others"? The text does not specify.

Women were with Jesus throughout his whole ministry. Indeed, they were a very important part of all his life. The picture of devotion and love showed by the women is one we need to see again today. When Herod's household was opposed to our Lord's work it is amazing to read that the wife of the manager of the household has left all to follow him.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

This is a remarkable passage — it can teach us much. (1) There are villages in many nations of the world where the gospel would be good news — open my heart to know how I can help. (2) I do wonder how the apostles reacted to the preaching of Jesus — it is an example I want to follow. (3) Why did these women follow Jesus? It must have been out of gratitude and love. What an example they are to me! (4) Why were there seven demons in Mary Magdalene? Deliver me, protect me from demon attack today. (5) Joanna is such an unlikely disciple of our Lord. How I would like to know what led her to him. Deepen my humility and gratitude. (6) How could Jesus accept charity? Or did he? It took a degree of humility we will never know. How I love him for it.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Dear Lord, speak to me through these touching verses: (1) "The goodness of the news my Son preached has not lost its power." (2) "Demons are real today and attack people now. They cannot possess Christians." (3) "You can still support my service out of your means."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Algeria — Population: 22,475,000. Growth rate — 3.3%. People per sq. km. — 9.

Point for prayer: *The Government stopped renewing residence permits for missionaries in 1977.* Most of the missionaries have had to find secular employment in order to remain in the country. Both missionaries and unbelievers need wisdom in this tense situation. Much of the ministry of missionaries is in encouraging believers in personal contacts, little Bible Study groups and camps. Pray that they may have wisdom in their ministry so as not to offend unnecessarily, yet to use all possible openings to the full. Servants of God have wept for the yet unseen harvest of souls in this land. Pray for it!

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 SIX

—Sunday—

The fulfillment of your word is just as dependable as sunrise! How encouraging — how we need it! Sow your word in my heart today!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, indeed more than watchmen for the morning” (Psa. 130:5,6). Dear Lord, all of us can relate to these words; it would seem that most of our activity is in the inactivity of waiting. The context of these verses is the early morning — sometime before sunrise. We think it a most appropriate figure since the keeping of your word is just as dependable as sunrise. It could be an allusion to the sentinels on the wall who were waiting the sunrise for the changing of shifts. In your creative power to speak it is to have it. “God said, ‘Let there be light’, and there was light.” When we know what you have said we can eagerly expect the fulfillment. All of the above is true, but is this the real thrust of the text? I believe there is more here for which we can praise you.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. It is one thing to wait “on” the Lord, it is an entirely different thing to wait *for* the Lord. To wait *on* the Lord is to wait for *himself*. Ah, there is indeed a vast difference in these two little words. The enjoyment of a promise is one thing; the enjoyment of a person is something else. My whole being reaches out for yourself. You have promised your presence and your very self in us. We have come through a dark night of waiting — the dawn cannot be far away. Dear Lord, I *know* you keep your promise to come to me in the person of yourself. I read again the words of your Son and hold them to my heart: “If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home (in) with him” (John 14:23b,24).

How do you personally relate to the presence of God, and God who is Present? Speak it out or write it out.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Once again, it is not difficult to confess my sin in this regard. I can freely confess that my whole soul does long for you. I do reach out to you in the darkness of my need — like the watchman for the morning. At the same time, my Lord’s words are like a sharp two-edged sword. “He who does not love me does not keep my words; and the word which you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me” (John 14:24). How shoddy is my love! “Love is not irritable or resentful.” In my subconsciousness I resent your telling me what to do. Because of this I am irritable. Oh, to yield my whole self (soul) to your dear Son — to yourself. I am not what I want to be, but praise your name, I am not what I used to be! Forgive me, Lord, and keep on motivating me to love you totally.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now.

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

13 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. ²Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. ³Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed.” —*Matthew 13:1-3, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

This was on the same day that your Son was interrupted by the visit of his family. Jesus did go out of the house, but it was not to visit with his mother and brothers. He left the house to be able to speak to a larger crowd. Indeed the crowd was so large he had to get into a boat and teach them from the surface of the lake. How wonderfully well your Son did communicate! How I do want to follow his example in preaching. We are not told all he taught; there were many other things said than those here recorded. The form of teaching is just as important as the subject matter: “. . . he told them many things in parables.” How I do need to develop this capacity.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

It requires more time and thought to create a story in which the point can be made than to describe your point in abstract form. How often have I been content with the latter and neglected the former? Dear Lord, I am not like your Son when this happens. I want to so carefully examine every word he said that I can use the same devices of communication as I attempt to teach the same truths he taught. How wonderfully good it will be to discover that the power here described is the Son of man, my Lord himself. When I follow in his steps in sowing the seed of your word in the hearts of men it is really my Lord sowing all over again the seed of the kingdom.

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 spontaneous popularity of my Lord. (2) Thank you for his willingness to give himself to his teaching. (3) Thank you for Jesus' adaptation to the circumstances to meet a need. (4) Thank you for the power of parables — then and now. (5) Thank you for the unlimited number of familiar things out of which parables can be formed. (6) Thank you for my Lord seen in the farmer and his seed. (7) Thank you my heart can be his field.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“A farmer went out to sow his seed.” Mark uses the word, “Behold,” the farmer went out to sow his seed. It is possible that Jesus could have pointed to a farmer doing the very thing he described. Our Lord described himself as this farmer. Since he set an example for us how eternally important it is that we constantly make disciples. We must be reminded again and again that the seed is the word of yourself. Until and unless we plant your word in the minds and conscience of people we are not following our Lord's example. We think of the literacy rate in the days of our

Lord and we remember that most of the seed planting was verbal. In the wide expanse of our world such also would be true.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What a privilege it is to lift up our hearts in prayer as we listen to him teach. (1) What wonder must have been on the faces of many who heard him. May his words fall with fresh impact on my heart. (2) Since my Lord taught so much by parable how is it we so sorely neglect this form of teaching? Increase my desire to imitate him. (3) Jesus used the most common of everyday activities. I want to do the same. (4) How good to know who the farmer represents — even my Lord — I do want him to sow his seed in my heart each day. (5) Since the seed is your word may I receive it with a good and honest heart.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In this beautiful setting by the sea I want to hear you speak to me: (1) “All my Son taught necessary for life and godliness is found in the four gospels and in the divine interpretation of it by the rest of the New Testament.” (2) “The sower is still sowing his seed.” (3) “The harvest of this planting is unto eternal life.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Algeria — Point for prayer: The believers are generally younger and the little groups less strong than in Morocco. Many of the believers are young people, largely girls. There are therefore many pressures on these young people — early arranged marriages for the girls to Muslims, and hostility in schools and at work for the young men. There are many backsliders. Pray for the establishment of many strong, witnessing fellowships of believers all over the country. Many of those who seek the Lord are unable to have fellowship with other believers due to the hostility of relatives or husbands — pray for such. Pray that there may be a more courageous witness from among these believers despite the problems.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Praise Him! praise Him!
 Jesus, our blessed Redeemer!
 For our sins He suffered, and bled, and died;
 He our Rock, our hope of eternal salvation,
 Hail Him! hail Him! Jesus the Crucified.
 Sound His praises! Jesus who bore our sorrows,
 Love unbounded, wonderful, deep and strong:
 Praise Him! praise Him!
 tell of His excellent greatness;
 Praise Him! praise Him! ever in joyful song!

WEEK SIX

—Monday—

Keep us from occupying ourselves with things too marvelous — too large for our capacity! Give me a good and honest, humble heart!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“O Lord, my heart is not lifted up, my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and marvelous for me. But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a child quieted at its mother’s breast; like a child that is quieted is my soul” (Psa. 131:1,2). Dear Father, I shall never be equal to the task of expressing the meaning of these two precious verses. This is an expression of a soul in humiliation. David has been chastened and he speaks out of his sense of lowliness. The quality of Fatherhood, i.e., of being able to help a child see where he was wrong — how he hurt himself and others — and most of all his Father, is the attribute for which we praise you here. How often have we all been occupied “with things too great and marvelous” for our feeble fumbling efforts. But you have such a wonderful way of quieting our souls. The effort is ours but the quiet is of 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. One wonders how often you will need to teach this lesson. Of course you want us to attempt great and marvelous things for you, but you want the praise. When our motives are wrong you have various ways of upsetting our house of cards. To take the credit for any accomplishment is an absurdity. From whom did we receive our very self? i.e., our spirit? From “the father of spirits” (Num. 16:22). Who gives us the abilities resident in our spirit? Who gave us the opportunity to do what we have done? Who gave the wealth necessary to carry it out? The answers are obvious — where then is the room (or sense) in boasting? A child upon the mother’s breast would be much more appropriate than a mighty conquering hero. May such genuine humility be mine!

How do you personally relate to the eyes of God, and God who sees all?

CONFESSION OF SIN

I do not confess something of which I am not guilty to satisfy those who feel I am. In every single endeavor in which I have been engaged my heart has been “lifted up” too high, i.e., I have not been as conscious of your purposes and presence as I should have been. At the same time, I did not enter these enterprises to seek my own glory. Dear Lord, you know I do not know my heart as you do, but I am attempting an honest confession. I lifted my eyes to see the multiplied thousands (millions) of people who need your word and your Son. All of these efforts were too great and too marvelous for me. There were several of them through which you taught me more humility than I had and I needed.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now.

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

In simple trust like theirs who heard,
Beside the Syrian sea
The gracious calling of the Lord,
Let us like them, without a word,
Rise up and follow Thee.

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

HIS WORD

⁴As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. ⁸Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop — a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. ⁹He who has ears, let him hear.” *Matthew 13:4-9, NIV*
Read also Matthew 13:10-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Indeed! I want to listen to these words just as if I were in the crowd and could hear each syllable that fell from the lips of your Son. I want also to hear his explanation to what was said. My Lord is not here identified as the sower, but considering who is doing the teaching such is a fair if not obvious conclusion. I want to mark *every thing* he said about the different soils: (1) The same seed was sown in each place. *The first was "along the path."* This is described as "trampled on," as the place where birds feed.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. I am trying, dear Lord, to absorb each of your words as here related. When I have been a long time occupied with "other things" my ears are heavy and my eyes are dull. I neither hear nor see — I become *the path!* (2) *Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil.* This one receives the word with joy. The results are not good: trouble and persecution — *because of the word* he quickly falls away. In the time of testing they fall away. Dear Lord, I have been there — the price of discipline was too high — how many unfinished tasks or projects testify to this? (3) What was sown among thorns, or fell among thorns. The thorns represent: (a) the worries of this life, (b) the deceitfulness of wealth, and (c) present pleasures or the desires for other things. Luke says of these persons: "As they go on their way" such thorns develop. Dear Lord, if I do not chop out these thorns I will never mature.

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) I thank you that I am wholly responsible for the condition of my heart. (2) Thank you for the wonderful fertile seed — even your word. (3) Thank you that I can hear your word every day. (4) Thank you that my acceptance is related to my hearing. (5) Thank you I can be of your nobility. (6) Thank you for the ability to retain your word. (7) Thank you I know that only through perseverance can I produce a crop of thirty, sixty or a hundredfold.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it." Surely we are living in the fullness of time. How we need to keep our eyes open and our hearts attuned to all you are saying to us in these days. We see man being able to stand before you just-as-if he had never sinned — this no prophet could ever claim. We are always on service as your priests. This no righteous man could even imagine. We hear you say: "You have redemption through the

blood of my Son." To be bought and paid for by yourself is such a position angels would long to have. It is better to live today than even to walk with our Lord over the fields of Galilee — we have what he there promised. How blessed above all people we are!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How important it is that we link prayer with the sowing of the seed: (1) It would seem that sowing the seed is the one most essential factor in this whole story. Why haven't we sown more? (2) Help me to be able to identify the birds of Satan. (3) Am I responsible for removing rocks from some hearts? (4) I do believe I could help in hoeing out some thorns — help me! (5) Thank you for the promise of at least 25% of the sowing on good soil. Once again how I need help in sowing bountifully. (6) I have ears — increase my hearing capacity. (7) Who are those who produce a hundredfold? As compared with what or whom?

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

There is so much to hear in these verses: (1) "Seed, however good, does nothing unless planted." (2) "I sow with you, but you must throw out the seed." (3) "Do you really believe this parable or only read it?"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Algeria — Points for prayer: (1) *There is a critical lack of leaders* among the Algerian believers. Pray for the few and also for the calling of North African or other Arab Christians willing to minister there (possibly from among those in France). (2) *There is a reading room and student center in Algiers.* This provides useful contacts with non-Christians and a haven for believers. Pray for the growth of the student witness among one of the most enquiring and open sections in the nation. (3) *Literature in Arabic and especially Kabyle may not be imported.* The one Christian bookshop may only sell literature in other languages. Pray for an end to restrictions.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

More holiness give me,
More striving within;
More patience in suff'ring,
More sorrow for sin;
More faith in my Savior,
More sense of His care;
More joy in His service,
More purpose in prayer.

WEEK SIX

—Tuesday—

How sad — sad — sad it is that when you have made your wonderful provisions for all your children to live together in unity we are divided! Put your lamp on our lampstand!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!” (Psa. 133:1). You have made altogether adequate provisions for all believers to live together as brothers. To hold the same love and esteem you hold for your Son and your Son does for you is your provision. It is not right or necessary for brothers to divide and distrust one another. I want to lift my heart up in joyful wonder that it is clearly your will that all who believe on your name be one. If this is your will then surely you have made provision. It would be easy to say your provision is your word — and it is, but there must be something tragically lacking in my approach to what you have said. Humility and love are the unifying human factors. Dear Lord, help me, chasten me. I do want to see the unity for which your Son prayed.

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 have promised that when we are ready to accept your desire for our unity it will be as fragrant as the dew of Hermon. This should be a strong motivation. But more than this my dear Lord said that when we dwell together as one the world will believe you sent him — we shall have a turning to you like we have never seen! Dear Lord, for one I want to pledge myself to do all I can to make this true. No longer will I equate my understanding of the scriptures as equal with the scriptures themselves. How I hope I can persuade all my brothers to do the same. Bless your altogether adequate provision — may I be humble enough to receive it.

How do you personally relate to the oneness of God, and God who provides for our unity?

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, how terribly short of your will are we in

this area. The *we* is editorial — I am talking about *myself*! Has there ever been a person who studied your word as diligently as myself? Of course there has! Hundreds, thousands of persons have had the same concern — many of them have exceeded me in diligence. Has there ever been anyone who attempted to separate himself from all the creeds and dogmas of man and to approach every word of your book directly without bias? Yes, yes, there are multiplied thousands of then doing it this very minute! I want to confess my pride and bigotry in my estimate of my relation to you as compared with any other brother who loves you and your Son and your word with the same intensity that I do. How shall we ever be one if I do not repent. 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

“There shall be showers of blessing”:
This is the promise of love;
There shall be seasons refreshing,
Sent from the Savior above.
Showers of blessing,
Showers of blessing we need:
Mercy drops round us are falling,
But for the showers we plead.

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

HIS WORD

²¹He said to them, “Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don’t you put it on its stand? ²²For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open. ²³If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”

²⁴“Consider carefully what you hear,” he continued. “With the measure you use, it will be measured to

you — and even more. ²⁵Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him."

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

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

³³With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. ³⁴He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything. —Mark 4:21-34, NIV
Read also Matthew 13:24-35; Luke 8:16-18.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How good it would be to be alone with our Lord and listen while he explained everything to his disciples. Dear Lord, the best I can do here is to read these blessed verses several times out loud before your presence.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Do I have a lamp to be set on a stand? Indeed I do! What lamp stands have you given us today? We could immediately think of the mass media, but to a large extent this light does not shine where it is most needed. I believe literature is by far the most effective of the mass media. But is not the same lamp stand our Lord used available to us? I refer to the life of one person. When we set the light in the heart of one man or woman we have found the very best lamp stand. How eternally important it is to hear with the inner ear. It is equally important that we be selective in what we hear. For today and its many voices may I choose to hear your voice and may I listen really well. Thank you for the silent but inevitable growth of your word.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the lamp stand. (2) Thank you that I want to open my ears to what you say. (3) Thank you that I can hear with such an attitude that others will be blessed. (4) Thank you for the promise that if we will be and plant the seed it will grow. (5) Thank you for the description of growth — it is gradual and perfectly in keeping with your laws of harvest. (6) Thank you for the mustard seed parable — what an encouragement!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"He did not say anything to them without using a parable." There was at least a twofold purpose in this: (1) To prevent the Pharisees from trapping him in his words, "That seeing they should not see, and hearing they should not hear." (2) To attract the attention and interest of all. There is nothing quite so interesting as a story. *What an example our Lord is for us:* (1) There are persons who will not understand even if they hear again and again. Make the message attractive and interesting, but beyond that you need not go. (2) Never, never make a major point without an illustration. (3) Explain personally everything to those who want to know.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

We hardly know where to begin in the many requests we see in these verses: (1) If I am the light for my world set me on a stand. (2) Perhaps it is my task to get on the stand and shine. Give me wisdom. (3) The law of increase is operating. May I be ready. (4) Thank you for this needful reminder that the growth of the kingdom is sometimes imperceptible. (5) Keep my eyes open as to just where to put the sickle into the grain. (6) With only twelve members my Lord began his universal kingdom that now numbers millions. May this encourage my lack of faith.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I do want to hear for eternity from these verses: (1) "Consider carefully what you hear." (2) "Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him." (3) "Parables are best understood by meditation and prayer."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Algeria — Point for prayer: *Unreached peoples* — some specific groups ought to be mentioned: a) *The Kabyle* — these people number nearly 2 million. In the past a number believed, but most later emigrated to France. There are a number of independent missionaries working among these resistant people. There are increasing difficulties in the use of their language due to government pressures to Arabise them — pray that even this may cause some to turn to Christianity, which their forebears followed. b) *The Oasis dwellers* in the Sahara — many different Berber tribes still unreached. c) *The Tuareg* — these nomadic people are very difficult to reach.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Coming for me, coming for me,
One day to earth He is coming for me;
Then with what joy His dear face I shall see,
Oh, how I praise Him! He's coming for me.

WEEK SIX

—Wednesday—

I do so want to establish a daily habit of praise to you in song. Such will make us whole! Teach us how to live with those who do not sing.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing to his name, for he is gracious! For the Lord has chosen Jacob for himself, Israel as his own possession” (Psa. 135:3,4). How good and pleasant it is to praise you each day at this time; and to praise you often throughout the day. The term “good” would seem to be overworked as much as we use it. But it is *your* word. Having created the world and all that is in it you said, “It is good.” What did you mean? You meant it was complete or fulfilled. Wholeness is a part of the word *good*.

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 New Testament application of these beautiful verses should be evident to each of us. We are his chosen people, the new “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16). As a groom chooses his bride so you have chosen us. The little phrase “*for himself*” is so full of meaning. If there were no compatibility there would have been no choice. I know you created me for yourself because you shared your nature with me. But in a beautiful sense you also bought me for yourself. My highest joy and purpose is fellowship with you. As a groom owns certain things to complete his life so you possess each of us to complement and complete yourself. We are “your own possession.” To say I am glad to accept this relationship is a vast understatement; I am delighted!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

To praise you for your goodness or for my acceptance of your total completeness and then to read my track record is to admit there must be a third factor, or

Satan. My greatest sin is lovelessness. More songs of praise or grace would help so much as I attempt to acknowledge and repent of my sin. Sin is not *good* — why? Because it lacks the quality of completeness — it misses the mark of fulfillment. There is nothing of grace in sin; it seeks its own and cares not for your desires or the needs of others. Too often these words describe my attitude. Dear Lord, forgive me. I have not lost my relationship as your chosen or your possession, but just now I want to confess my lack of response to these two lovely relationships and be in truth your chosen and your possession.

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

²⁴Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

²⁷“The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’

²⁸“ ‘An enemy did this,’ he replied.

“The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and

pull them up?’

²⁹“ ‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them.

³⁰Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned, then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’ ” *Matthew 13:24-30, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

We have your Son’s own explanation of this parable (vss. 36-43) and I want to read it several times. How I want to carefully identify each part of this parable: (1) Your Son is the sower — he sows through us today. (2) The field is the world in which we live. The hearts of men are the field. (3) The seed is the message of our Lord. (4) The enemy is the devil who also has seed to sow. (5) There will be a harvest and an eternal separation.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Am I really prepared to receive the meaning of this parable? I am not at all sure that I am. Do I really believe there will be an end to this age? An end to this whole world? Am I prepared to see the angels separate the weeds from the wheat? The weeds are described as “all who cause sin and all evildoers.” If I do not plant the good seed — or my Lord does not plant the good seed through me, what will happen? I already *know* what will happen. The enemy has many who plant his seed — they are demons who are his servants. The whole field of the world is growing an abundant harvest of weeds to be gathered and burned. But these weed are people and when they are thrown into the fire there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Dear God, dear God, do I believe this? I am trying before your throne to assimilate the impact of these words — help me! Forgive me!

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you that we have such good seed to sow. (2) Thank you for the assurance that your Son will work through us as we sow. (3) Thank you for the wonderful liberty we have in sowing the seed. (4) Thank you for the warning that there is indeed an evil one at work. (5) Thank you for a description of the nature of his work, i.e., “at night.” (6) Thank you for the plain statement that we should concern ourselves with planting and not hoeing. (7) Thank you for the wonderful promise of shining like the sun in your eternal kingdom.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Let them both grow together until the harvest.” Our Lord is not recommending inaction. He suggests that the wheat is to grow as well as the weeds. Why is it that weeds grow more rapidly and profusely? We could easily answer that there are more of them, but

this is not *necessarily* so. How much wheat is planted is our decision. We could say that it is easier for weeds to grow, i.e., they are sturdier by nature. I do not accept that as a valid answer. Wheat seed has been cultivated until it is much more hardy than weeds. The simple answer is that weeds grow because we do not care as much about the wheat as Satan cares about the weeds. The awful tragedy is that there *will be* a harvest!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In this parable I find real areas for requests: (1) Thank you for the good seed — may I sow it today in the hearts of men. (2) Keep me aware that there always is an enemy. Keep me from the evil one. (3) It was while people slept the enemy worked. Keep me awake. (4) Good and evil grow together until the eternal harvest. Guard me from a premature harvesting. (5) How I want to be wiser than the worried servants. (6) I have tried pulling up some weeds. Forgive me. (7) Thank you for showing me who will be first to be removed at the end of the world.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Before the end comes speak to me: (1) “My harvest is growing — take heart.” (2) “Satan’s harvest is also growing — be patient.” (3) “I have the angel harvesters already for the last day.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Algeria — Points for prayer: (1) *The Algerians in Europe* — at any one time there are nearly 2,000,000 workers in France, Belgium, Holland, etc. Pray that many may turn to the Lord who will, in turn, become missionaries to their own people. (2) *Radio and Bible correspondence courses* with careful follow-up of those contacted by visits from believers is still the most effective means of outreach. Pray that literature may not be intercepted in the post and that those receiving Bible correspondence courses may be free from harassment.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I have found a friend in Jesus,
He’s everything to me,
He’s the fairest of ten thousand 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 SIX

—Thursday—

Your love is steadfast — your love endures — you alone have created all we are and see. Give us eyes to see and ears to hear.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“O give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his steadfast love endures for ever; to him who alone does great wonders, for his steadfast love endures for ever” (Psa. 136:3,4). The names of yourself are given so clearly in this psalm that I want to lift them up again to you as an expression of my own praise to you. (1) *“Lord”* or *“Jehovah — the Eternal, he who was, and is, and is to come.”* In the use here it tells us of your agreement with us as your redeemed ones. I hesitate even to write these words — so great is the meaning behind this expression! (2) *God of gods or Elohim* — in reference to your creation of the world and all that is in it. Keep my eyes open to see beyond your creation to the Creator. (3) In the verse before us is the beautiful name *“the Lord of lords.”* The sovereign One who rules all — the ruler of all rulers. (4) *The God of heaven* — the Almighty One. A reference to your strength and power. Amen and amen!

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. This lovely psalm is one of thanksgiving — and oh, how I want to make it my thanksgiving to you! The *wonders* you have wrought are outlined in the whole psalm: (1) *Creation* — You called into being the heavens. As we consider now what we know of the galaxies we fall back in amazement! What we have learned of the moon and the sun and the planets only serves to increase our praise for the One who set them in their place. (2) *Deliverance* — In the experience of your children in history we can see ourselves today. We were all in Egypt — we have all escaped the eternal death sentence upon our sin. We have all come through the Red Sea of Christian baptism into the Canaan of the new life. (I use the editorial “we” because I do not want to write “I” over and over again, but, dear Lord, you know I am the one of whom I speak.)

CONFESSION OF SIN

To approach you in confession all seems so natural. I am in need, so I come to the only One who can meet my need. All men can identify with the experiences of your people Israel in the wilderness. I have complained — (even yesterday) when all the while I have so much more than any one in Egypt. Dear Lord, forgive me! The daily — even hourly provision of manna (your beloved word and your Son) — is overlooked and misunderstood. Dear Lord, what a sin! Forgive me. Has there been any temptation or trial you could not handle? To ask is to answer — of course not! But I have acted and thought in such a manner that even I interpret my conduct as a contradiction — open my eyes, break my heart, forgive me: Dear Lord, “remember my low estate.”

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

³⁶Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.”

³⁷He answered, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The

weeds are the sons of the evil one,³⁹ and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

⁴⁰“As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. ⁴¹The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. ⁴²They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. —Matthew 13:36-43, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, give me ears to hear! I review again just what and who is involved: (1) The sower is your Son. (2) The field is this wide world. (3) The good seed is your word. (4) The bad seed is the word of Satan. (5) The enemy is Satan who sows. (6) The harvest is the end of the world. (7) The harvesters are angels. (8) The rewards and punishment are heaven and hell.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

(1) What a sobering experience this will be! In every class standing before me — or above me — is your dear Son co-planting the word. (2) How — oh, how I need to remember that the field is not the assembly of the saints. It is the wide expanse of all men in every nation. (3) It is not my cleverness or commentary that will produce sons of the kingdom, but *only* your word. (4) Satan works until now — God works until now *through me* and all others who sow — but *only when and not until*. (5) There will be a general judgment — *everything and all* are involved. What a shock it will be! (6) Angels already have a tremendous task assigned. (7) Heaven and hell are described: “fiery furnace” — “shine like the sun.” Dear God, this is too much for my dull 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 that Jesus gave us the meaning of this parable. (2) Thank you for the assurance that the good seed is fertile and able to overcome all weeds. (3) Thank you that his life is our life — we are his seed and his Son’s. (4) Thank you that we are not ignorant of Satan’s work. (5) Thank you there *is* going to be an eternal harvest of all wheat and weeds. (6) Thank you that the Son of man will make the separation.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“He who has ears, let him hear.” If we were to say “He who has an interest, let him listen” we would be saying the same thing — or would we? There is

something deeper involved than mere listening. Our Lord is talking about a heart condition; does the man inside really want to change? If he does I have a wonderful answer. But hearing in this context is equated with doing. It is like our Lord’s continual use of faith. To believe is to do. How dangerous it is to hear without doing!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

As your Son explains the parable of the weeds I find place after place for prayer requests: (1) What a powerful thought — as I sow you plant — keep me full of reverence. (2) The field is the world — all the world — every part of the world — open my concern. (3) Your seed produces sons — what a miracle of birth and growth. (4) Satan’s seed also produces sons — of the evil one. In both instances keep me awake! (5) The harvest is the end of the world. How can it be? But it is! When shall it be? Today? How I want to be ready! (6) Men will be burned as chaff — awesome, terrible! Teach me! (7) Men will cry and suffer in the fire. How mind boggling! (8) I have ears; I want to hear. What a joy to be a son of the kingdom!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You have been speaking to me in these verses: (1) “My angels are ministering to you now. They will minister to the lost later.” (2) “There is a bright eternal day ahead for you.” (3) “If you really have ears, hear now and for eternity.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Egypt — Population: 48,300,000. Growth rate — 2.7%. People per sq. km. — in fertile areas — 1,600. Point for prayer: *Pray that the promise of Isaiah 19:19-22 for Egypt may be fulfilled.* There are encouraging signs of a turning to God among Muslims, despite legal barriers. Several hundred Muslims are turning to Christ every year. Pray that Egypt’s troubles, and Islam’s emptiness may turn many to the Lord Jesus.

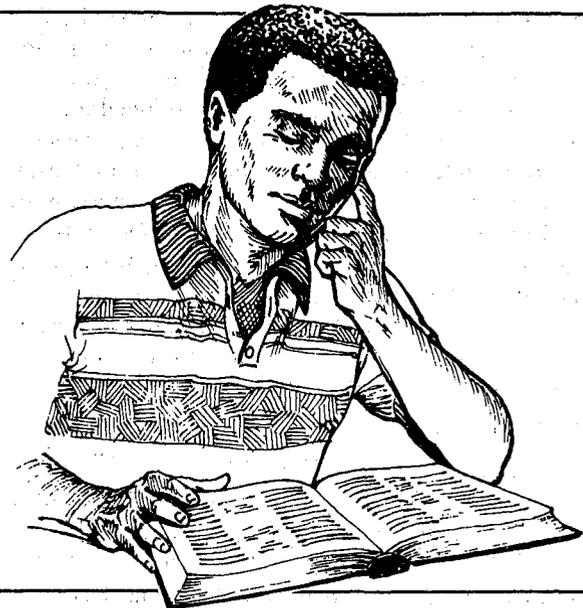
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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 SIX

—Friday—

You remember — and I remember because I am like you — how good it is to review your mercies toward me. You are my hidden treasure!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion”(Psa. 137:1). The capacity of memory is surely a part of your own image or nature. It is my constant purpose and joy to each day praise you for one more quality of yourself. I am sure I shall never exhaust the number. I want to say that I consider this time of praise representative of what all men should (and one day will) do. Not that all men will express themselves like I do — far from it — but all men of all time should join with the innumerable angels in adoration and wonder before you. I weep when I remember the joys and associations of childhood — how much more should I weep at my remembrances of all my Lord did for me as recorded in the good news.

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. Unless my relationship with a person has touched my conscience and has become a part of my inner being there are going to be no tears at remembrance. Even when the above is true I shall only weep if the memory is linked to some tangible object or subject. Tears came at the mention of Zion. Tears flowed when a song was requested. Poetry and music are wonderful catalysts for tears. I said all this, dear Lord, because I want to spell it out for myself. I want to keep my heart tender and open to you — I want to pause and read again how he died for me! I want to sing again: “Did ere such love and sorrow meet and thorns compose so rich a crown?” Will I weep when I lift the bread and the cup to my lips? “I too remember Zion!”

How do you personally relate to the personal interest 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

I wonder at my dry-eyed performance! Dear Lord, forgive. At times I am emotionally drained and there are no tears to shed. But lest deceit and hypocrisy take over — I ask myself — “Why am I so lacking in emotion?” Is it not that I have dissipated my emotion on some lesser thing or person? How much I need to guard my heart and hold for you my shouts of joy and my tears of remembrance! Dear, dear Lord, I repent, I ask for your cleansing. The blunting of my sensibility seems to me to be a terrible sin. Dear Lord, deliver me from overbearing temptations.

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 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

⁴⁴“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

⁴⁵“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it. —Matthew 13:44-46, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

My dear Father, over the years I have loved every

word of these three verses. I have loved more the One who said them. How I do want to express my joy and praise — my confession and thanksgiving to you through these words of your Son. "The kingdom of heaven" is simply your rule in the hearts and lives of men. Such a rule began long ago and will find eternal fulfillment in heaven. The most obvious expression of such rule should be in the body of your Son or his church. There are so many beautiful comparisons we can make: (1) The sudden surprise of finding a treasure hidden in the field. What was the man doing when he found the treasure? It was just an ordinary day with the usual routine when suddenly all heaven broke through!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I have assumed in the above expression that I do represent all men who encounter my Lord. What other comparison can I see here? (2) He had to sell all that he had to possess this treasure. Oh, how eternally true this is! Our Lord's treasures cost "everything," or "all he had." The total focus of interest and commitment is what is meant. (3) There are two types of persons who find salvation: those who are found by it and those who are searching for it. Dear Lord, I have been in both positions. Or is my Lord saying that within every man there is an indefinable longing or search and it is so hidden that when he finds it it appears as a sudden treasure?

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 wonderful possibilities of heaven ruling our hearts. (2) Thank you that your rule is the rule of a king. (3) Thank you that in any field — in every field (or life) the treasure can be found. (4) Thank you for the incalculable value of your treasure. (5) Thank you for the strong fact that unless I sell all, I have nothing. (6) Thank you for the joy expressed throughout these discoveries. (7) Thank you for the beauty of the treasure and the pearl — both representative of my Lord.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... he went away and sold everything he had and bought it." Even when we know this is true we wonder if we have done it. Have we sold all to buy the field? Have we really sold *everything* to obtain the pearl? I guess we would be in a constant flux and frustration if there was not another way of approaching this subject. The simple question is: "Do you have the treasure; do you have the pearl?" At times we could exclaim with a loud "yes." At other times we are not sure. Here is the secret of a victorious happy Christian life! We must sell out every

day. Every morning is a "go for broke" day. Of course, there was that glad day when we first sold out to him, but unless we sustain such an attitude and commitment we have lost "the pearl of great price."

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Hidden in these verses are wonderful petitions: (1) How good it is to know your rule in my heart is as common and near as my backyard. (2) I do want to search for the real meaning of your rule in my life — this treasure is hidden. (3) Just for today let me find another facet of how I can let you have your way with me. (4) Enlarge the deep joy I feel in giving you the throne of my heart. (5) I know I must sell all of my selfish interests to obtain your treasure — purify my understanding. (6) All of us are looking for the beautiful in life — open the eyes of my understanding to see my Lord! (7) Twice over you have told me I must sell all to have your Son. I want to hear him.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

How pointedly you speak to me here: (1) "The fields of life are full of treasure for those who are looking." (2) "Mark it again: You must 'go for broke.'" (3) "How beautiful and valuable is Jesus."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Egypt — Points for prayer: (1) *Unreached peoples.* Few Muslims have ever heard a Christian testify. Pray that the Christians may win opportunities to speak through their Christlikeness. The Desert Bedouin and Berber peoples remain unreached. (2) *The Nubian people* are now more receptive to the Gospel than ever before. Most are Muslim, but many are Coptic Christians. The great need is for more Christian workers to learn their language and to live and witness among them. (3) *Pray for the evangelization of the cities* — many rural people are being compelled by poverty to go to the cities. Pray that these uprooted people may be evangelized somehow. (4) *The Coptic Church* is largely nominal, but an extraordinary revival within it since 1930 has gained momentum and the present leadership is highly educated, articulate and Bible based. The present Patriarch gives weekly Bible studies to 7,000 people. These 5,000,000 Coptic Christians, if revived, could have a decisive impact on the Middle East.

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 SIX

—Saturday—

I want to lift my whole heart up in praise — my mind — my emotions — my will — my conscience. I lay before you my needs as well as praise.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

"I give thee thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing thy praise; I bow down towards thy holy temple and give thanks to thy name for thy steadfast love and thy faithfulness; for thou hast exalted above everything thy name and thy word" (Psa. 138:1,2). You have provided more than adequate reason for me to give my whole being to you in gratitude. It is a supreme joy to lift my mind through your word and present it before you as yours. I want to yield my whole desire and hold it up before your throne. My emotions, giving color and emphasis to what I say, are yours. How strong is the approval of my conscience as I thus praise you! I want to do this gladly in the presence of all men. If you have such a high estimate of yourself and your word (richly deserved and altogether appropriate) who am I to hesitate or be ashamed?

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 try to speak on behalf of all who come to you in praise, i.e., in the above expression, but here I review again these blessed words and make them altogether mine. As David had two basic reasons for this spontaneous expression of thanks so do I: (1) For your mercy, or as expressed in this translation "thy steadfast love." Dear Lord, without this quality there would indeed be for me no hope at all! But in your daily goodness I take great courage. Mercy is undeserved and non-reciprocal goodness. How often does my heart stray from a worship and recognition of yourself in my daily life. I believe it is possible to integrate your presence and your love into every day. I try but I need your mercy. How gladly do I acknowledge this gift! (2) For your *truth* — not only your propositional truth as seen in your word, but for the ring of reality in all my associations with you and your Son!

CONFESSION OF SIN

How do I sin against your mercy and truth? By not showing your quality of mercy to others. When someone lashes out at me for what seems to be no reason at all, how do I react? Have you deserved all the stupid outbursts of my selfish heart? — and yet you were kind and patient with me. May this time of joy and praise remain with me to remind me that only he who receives mercy can give it. Am I ready to exalt your truth — your word, in the presence of other gods? Dear Lord, I ask forgiveness for any and all hesitancy to speak up for what you have said. Men are so ready to tell what others have said or to advance their own opinions. Give me a voice for your word! Forgive me for my silence!

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, I my cross have taken,
All to leave, and follow Thee;
Destitute, despised, forsaken,
Thou, from hence, my all shalt be:
Perish ev'ry fond ambition,
All I've sought, and hoped, and known;
Yet how rich is my condition,
God and heav'n are still my own!

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

HIS WORD

⁴⁷"Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. ⁴⁸When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. ⁴⁹This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous ⁵⁰and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there

will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

⁵¹“Have you understood all these things?” Jesus asked.

“Yes,” they replied.

⁵²He said to them, “Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.”

⁵³When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there. —Matthew 13:47-53, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How well do I relate to these verses! My father and grandfather were commercial fishermen on the Columbia River of Oregon as the disciples of my Lord were on the Sea of Galilee. Dear Lord, speak these words into my heart. I read them with the deepest thought and meditation. Is the net the gospel message? Is the sea the world? Are the fish by nature good or bad? — we decide our nature by our choices. The separation *is* the end of the world!

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, I read these words like I never read them before! Underneath all men are not only “the everlasting arms” but the net of God! One day we will be taken up and appear before him in judgment. It is more than interesting to notice what my Lord *did not* say about the judgment. (1) He *did not* describe the size and weight of the fish — although this is man’s constant interest. (2) He *did not* describe the beauty or appearance of the fish. (3) He *did not* make an exception — there were *no* borderline fish. Dear Lord, all these words burn my heart! How I do want to awake before I am pulled up out of the water! Thank you for the confidence I find in the change of my nature! The emphasis of my Lord was on the *bad fish*.

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 you have called all your disciples to be fishers of men. (2) Thank you for the wonderful net we have to use. (3) Thank you that you intend for the whole lake to be involved in the catch. (4) Thank you that there will be an end — there will be a shore where the fish are separated. (5) Thank you for those who do the separating — it is not us preachers. (6) Thank you for this clear word that it is the *nature* of the fish that determines its destiny. (7) Thank you for the new and old applications we see in this parable.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.” Was Jesus

describing himself? Surely no one else could better qualify under this description. He alone is the owner of the whole house of this world and the world to come. What a storeroom he has! In him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Only our Lord knows everything and knows how to use such knowledge. How often did Jesus refer to the “old things” found in the history of his people?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How familiar were these words of Jesus to the four commercial fishermen he had called to be his apostles. What lessons in prayer are here: (1) There is a net in which we all shall be taken. How glad I am I can claim the new nature you offer. Somehow I want to express my gratitude. (2) Open my mind to a fuller understanding of the events at the end of the world. (3) How shall I determine I am righteous? Is his righteousness mine? Praise your name I *know* it is. (4) What a fearful thought: “. . . throw them into the fiery furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” May I have pity on these poor fish. They are eternal people! (5) If my Lord were to ask me: “Have you understood all these things?” I would have to answer “no, help me.”

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak Lord, thy servant heareth: (1) “My net is still down, but it might not be for long.” (2) “You are responsible for the nature of the fish.” (3) “Ask for wisdom.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Egypt — Point for prayer: *The Protestant Churches* have not grown much for many years. There is some nominalism in the older churches and a considerable drift back to the Coptic Church from where the original converts came. Pray for a deepening of the spiritual life and a more consistent life-testimony before the Muslims. There are many young people now coming into the churches. There are several interdenominational groups who seek to stimulate Bible Study and outreach among the young people. Pray that, despite the difficulties, Muslims may be reached and welcomed into the churches. One church actually gained 100 converts out of Islam in 1975.

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 SEVEN

—Sunday—

Your purpose for me is full of your love for me — and it will be fulfilled. I am full of praise for this fact. No storm ever ever takes you by surprise!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me; thy steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of thy hands” (Psa. 138:8). What an assurance! “Being confident of this very thing that he who has begun a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6). This is one of the most encouraging qualities we have considered. Our Lord specializes in “follow through.” Very simply expressed: his purpose for me is to bring honor to his Son and himself. This can be done in personal conduct. It can also be done through teaching others. I believe God is at work fulfilling a purpose for every life. We cannot always see just how this life or that one brought honor to him, but if it is our sincere intent to do so he will see to it such is accomplished. “None will ever be able to say of our Lord, ‘He was not able to finish.’”

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. This beautiful poem appears in Graham Scroggie’s book, *Psalms*.

“The work which His goodness began,
The arm of His strength will complete.
His promise is yea and amen,
And never was forfeited yet.” (p. 37)

Praise your name! How I rejoice to affirm this of your purpose in my life. My earnest desire has been — and is more so today: to teach and preach your word — most of all to *communicate* by teaching your own love and eternal goodness. I want to hold before all men the beauty of my wonderful Lord.

How do you personally relate to the follow through of God, and God who completes all he began? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

As I consider all the chaff amid a little wheat the

words of *J. W. Burgon* — quoted by *Graham Scroggie* — surely speak to my heart. He said: “His creating hands formed our souls at the beginning; His nail-pierced hands redeemed them at Calvary; His glorified hands will hold our souls fast and not let them go forever. Unto His hands let us commend our spirits, sure that even though the works of our hands have made void the works of His hands, yet His hands will again make perfect all that our hands have made.”

It is a rare joy to be able to speak to many people over many years. Only you can know how much wood, hay and stubble are mixed with the gold and silver. I can see more of dross than I care to admit to anyone but yourself. Dear Lord, forgive.

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

Only faintly now I see Him,
With the darkling veil between,
But a blessed day is coming,
When His glory shall be seen.
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!

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

HIS WORD

³⁵That day when evening came, he said to the disciples, “Let us go over to the other side.” ³⁶Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. ³⁷A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. ³⁸Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, don’t you care

if we drown?" — *Mark 4:35-38, NIV*
 Read also *Matthew 8:18,23,24; Luke 8:22-23.*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What a privilege it is to take up your word and expect you to be looking over my shoulder as I read it. A better figure would be for me to kneel before your throne of grace and spread out these precious words before you and ask you to open my heart as I meditate upon each word. What a long strenuous day your Son had! But perhaps no longer or more strenuous than many other days — we would not know from him as no complaint was registered. He left the crowd behind. All of us must ultimately do this. In the midst of a very busy schedule he "left the crowd behind." Does this say anything to me? Indeed it does.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I really never succeed in separating these two expressions. What I read to you I read to myself and what I read to myself I read to you. At the same time, I am glad for the two approaches to you in prayer. Jesus was in the same boat from which he taught the parables. I have been in several fishing boats — they all had the strong smell of fish. What a place to sleep! But when one is tired — as our Lord was, one sleeps. The Sea of Galilee is 60-70-80 feet deep in the area where they were. The squall was indeed furious. Swells twenty or thirty feet high would not be uncommon. With the wind lashing the water the plight of the disciples was desperate. How well does this describe my own need. It is not always that we are so in need, but it *does* happen. The storm did and did not affect 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 wonderful evidence of the humanity of my Lord. (2) Thank you that it was Jesus' choice to "go over to the other side." (3) Thank you for the example of retirement as well as involvement set by my Lord. (4) Thank you that Jesus made use of the very common items of life for his eternal purposes. (5) Thank you for the lesson that neither Jesus nor the disciples were immune from the storm. (6) Thank you for the reality and severity of the danger. (7) Thank you for the calm of my Lord in the midst of the storm.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion." How remarkably casual and natural are the miracles of our Lord! Did Jesus know there would be a storm when he requested that they sail to the other side of the lake? Did he also know that he would be tired and

would fall asleep? Was he actually anticipating the marvelous miracle he was to perform? This account could be read as a very ordinary narrative with a sequence of events not at all unlike what would have happened to anyone. Even the sleeping would have occurred to someone who was totally exhausted. The point is that God is at work in our lives amid the very ordinary routine of day by day living. God is not excited, nor seeking for the sensational. But at the same time he is not unaware or unprepared to save us either in or out of our peril.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

The holy awe that filled the hearts of the disciples should be ours as we attempt to pray from this text: (1) When the evening of my life comes I want to hear his words: "Let us go over to the other side." (2) On this sea of life I do want to be sure you are with me in the boat, even now I call upon you. (3) Even when Jesus was in the boat a furious squall yet fell upon them. May I not be surprised if such happens to me. (4) All seems so natural in this incident and yet it was all in the plan of your Son. I believe all of my life is so planned by you. Increase my faith. (5) How I do want to hear the voice of your Son in every troubled circumstance: "Peace, be still." (6) Thank you for this powerful example — teach me from it just who Jesus is.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

(1) "I am never indifferent to your need." (2) "I can handle any situation." (3) "All things are now being held together by the word of my power."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Egypt — Point for prayer: *The Christian witness among university students* is encouraging. There is now a group in every faculty of Egypt's four big university complexes; even in the Al Azhar Muslim University where Muslim missionaries are trained. Pray that these believers may find open hearts among the 300,000 students and win them in the relative freedom found there. Pray for the building up of these believers in the Lord for future usefulness in service.

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 SEVEN

—Monday—

I am encouraged — and full of wonder at your great personal interest in each of us. None of us will drown while you are in the boat!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me! Thou knowest when I sit down and when I rise up; thou discernest my thoughts from afar” (Psa. 139:1,2). How true is the beautiful statement from the heart of David. You *know* all men in a deeper more personal manner than they know themselves. David is no doubt referring to all the experiences of his early life. Dear Lord, how closely did you follow the rise and fall of King David! But I believe you have searched the lives of *all* men and see every one when they sit down and when they rise up. There is not a thought that enters the mind of one man anywhere without your knowledge. Even though the enormity of this concept has just struck me it has been your capacity from eternity!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I know I shall be in this psalm for several days in an attempt to praise you adequately. Ah, I shall never succeed in such a pursuit! But it is with genuine delight I attempt such an expression. It is so comforting and reassuring to know you have made and are making a detailed search of my deceptive heart. I am so glad you now have your findings and are relating them to my conduct during this day. Praise you for such an interest! Since you know me so much better than I know myself I am glad to turn over the throne of my heart to you. I believe if I meditate upon your word you will speak to me about the areas of my need that you see as you search my heart. Praise your glorious name for such personal help!

How do you personally relate to the search of God, and God who knows all?

CONFESSION OF SIN

Why should I ever want to hide from you, or ignore

you, or deny you? It is always because I am afraid. I am afraid of my guilt so I hide. I am afraid of my willful ignorance, therefore, I ignore you. I am afraid of the consequence of disobedience, therefore, I deny your presence. I now know I need not be afraid — you are love! (not indulgent nothingness). I do not fear to show you my sin for you want to bind up the hurt and pour on the oil of healing. I need not feel awkward in the presence of all knowledge — you teach me with no condescension — with deep personal interest in my growth. Most of all, I need not be intimidated by my disobedience — you gladly forgive with the very real motivation that I sin no more! Praise your wonderful grace!

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 noblest Brow and dearest,
In other days the world
All feared when Thou appearedst;
What shame on Thee is hurled!
How art Thou pale with anguish,
With sore abuse and scorn;
How does that visage languish,
Which once was bright as morn!

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

HIS WORD

²⁴The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Master, Master, we’re going to drown!”

He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm.

²⁵“Where is your faith?” he asked his disciples.

In fear and amazement they asked one another,

“Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.” —Luke 8:24,25, NIV

Read also Matthew 8:25-27; Mark 4:38b-41.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Oh dear Father, I am full of hesitancy as I attempt to read this text from heaven's perspective. Many of the men in the boats were seasoned fishermen. I am so glad you included more than one boat so there would be many who could testify as to this marvelous evidence of his deity. How typical this whole circumstance is. Did the disciples imagine the ship would sink and they would drown when the commander of heaven and earth was on board? The question is really out of place — in that desperate hour they were not thinking, they were acting. And yet our Lord expected them to think. He expected them to exercise their faith.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. I want to ask (and answer) with the disciples: "Who is this?" or "What kind of man is this?" — "even the winds and the water obey him." Jesus is asking me how long my faith will last. He is not asking about the quantity of my faith — as if I could have some faith but not enough. He asks me where my faith has gone? "How is it your faith has disappeared?" In this circumstance it would have been a trusting reliance upon the One asleep in the boat. He knew what he was doing even if we didn't. He knew also what he was doing when he spoke those strange words "Quiet! Be still." As many, many times as I have read this I really never will understand fully the power and majesty of your dear Son and my Lord.

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 very real danger present. (2) Thank you for the confidence of the disciples in Jesus — that he could do something. (3) Thank you for the rebuke of my Lord — it reaches me. (4) Thank you for the incredible power seen in the action of Jesus. (5) Thank you for the response of the disciples to his miracle — may I sustain such an attitude. (6) Thank you that even today Jesus has "all authority." (7) Thank you for his patience.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him." How revealing is the statement of the disciples: (1) It reveals their participation in a miracle. There were three boats with several men in each boat. These men were many of them fishermen who had been on this same water many times. (2) It reveals our Lord's dual interest: his compassion and his deity. Deity without compassion would not help man. It is only in One who is personally concerned about man's

plight we can find hope. (3) Most of all it reveals the authority of Jesus. When he was to say later "all authority has been given to me" (Matt. 28:18) it is to such occurrences as this he could refer for confirmation. We are glad to bow before him in acceptance of such Lordship.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

As our Lord awoke to the request of the disciples we want to awaken to the prayer possibilities of this text: (1) Keep me aware you are always aware of my needs. (2) I want to relate to the name "Master" in my relationship with you. (3) Rebuke the forces of the evil one in my life. (4) I must trust totally in you — I have no other help. (5) Where is my faith today? Is it in things and people or in him? (6) I need the capacity of fear and amazement in relation to the Person of my Lord. (7) I am glad for the promise that one day all the storms of life will be over and he will be Lord of all. May this thought calm today's squall.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In the midst of the storm speak to me: (1) "I am always ready to help you — you need but ask in faith." (2) "My rebuke can often be a blessing." (3) "The One who commands the elements is Lord of them — and of all men."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Egypt — Points for prayer: (1) *Missions* — there are only about 27 agencies with 150 missionaries serving in the land. There are now more opportunities for the entry of expatriate Christians for service than for many years. Pray for workers. Pray also for the growth of the missionary vision of the Christians in Egypt. Missionaries from Egypt would be more acceptable than Western missionaries in many Muslim lands. The greatest limitation is not the willingness of believers, but the difficulty of supporting them financially when they do. (2) *Christian literature* is freely printed and sold. Many Christian groups have moved their literature ministries from war-torn Lebanon to Egypt. There are many Christian Bookstores (10 in Cairo). Pray for the effective use of this literature, and also for the raising up of more local believers who are able to write suitable evangelistic and teaching materials.

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 SEVEN

—Tuesday—

You are way ahead of us — a long space down the path of life. Evil spirits are no problem for you. I take great courage in trusting you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Thou searchest out my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways” (Psa. 139:3). It is my constant purpose to look beneath these words of your book to yourself. How more than marvelous are the qualities. I see in this one verse: (1) You are a seeking, searching God. This presupposes a strong desire for and a personal interest in the one being sought. You never tire or fail in your search. Praise your name. (2) You have a plan for me — and all men — after you find us. If we are only conscious of being found then all will be well — dear Lord, open my eyes! (3) You really are only trying to get my attention. I was only lost from myself — you knew all my ways before the search began.

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 your wonderful interest in my life, in my person. During the day as I travel along the track of my waking hours, you are there to watch my feet and read my thoughts. You are there to take a closer and greater interest in all I do and think than anyone else. Nay, you have a greater interest in my performance than I do. And at night when I give myself to rest you are there. Oh, that I might further develop the capacity to sense your presence! I know the more I think your thoughts as found in your word the more real or tangible is my relationship with you. Keep me always aware that nothing is of little interest to you. You are concerned about “all my ways.”

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, as I write my praise for you and to you I sometimes have a sense of separation of the ideal

from the real. I freely confess that my high goals are missed by a country mile. But dear Lord, I know you do not want me to alter my desire. The more I give myself to your ideals the closer I will be to fulfillment. I am not what you want me to be, and not what I want to be, but praise your name I am not what I used to be. Since you are acquainted with all my ways you know what the graph looks like if my path were marked out on a chart. In this time with you I want to lay at your feet all my failures — and they are many. I am glad, glad to get rid of them! Take them — forgive them — forget them.

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

²⁸When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. ²⁹“What do you want with us, Son of God?” they shouted. “Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?”

³⁰Some distance from them a large herd of pigs was feeding. ³¹The demons begged Jesus, “If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs.”

³²He said to them, “Go!” So they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water.

—Matthew 8:28-32, NIV

Read also Mark 5:1-13 and Luke 8:26-33.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What a desperate situation met our Lord when he stepped out of the boat. It would seem he moves from one crisis to another. Praise his dear name he is well able to handle any and all of them. There is so much in this incident I want to learn. Most of all just now I want to praise you — confess my need of you and seek to worship you. Demon-possession is such a sad and serious influence of the evil one. I am impressed over and over again how appropriate are all your ways. The demon possessed lived in the place of death and decay. There was no hesitancy on the part of demons to worship our Lord. They called him: "Son of the Most High God" — and indeed he is!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

In so many ways you speak to me in these words! In so many ways I want to express my praise and worship to you. (1) I know I am attacked by demons — I know I am not possessed by them. I know you alone can protect me and give me deliverance. (2) The efforts of men will not avail. So many men have tried so many things to alleviate the ills of humanity. We have with us the record of such unsuccessful efforts. (3) Pigs are good companions for Satan's servants. Living on an animal level is all that is left this side of the bottomless pit. Dear Lord, keep my eyes open to the option.

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 willingness of our Lord to face Satan in his most violent form: (2) Thank you that "greater is he who is in me than he who is in the world" (I John 4:4). (3) Thank you for the clear lesson that men under Satan's control are not at all happy. (4) Thank you that we can live among life and light and hope. (5) Thank you that I know Someone who can command sin and evil to depart. (6) Thank you that Jesus considered one man worth more than many pigs. (7) Thank you for the wonderful results from this encounter.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"What is your name?" "Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him." The first question about demon possession is "How did the demons get into this man?" It could be expressed in other words: "What did he do or become that he opened himself up to these evil spirits?" It would be easy to say that he was so willing to give himself to the lust of the eyes — to the pride of life that finally Satan had total possession of such a one. However both sin and man are much more complex than such an explanation. It

is more than interesting to notice that our Lord never rebukes man (or woman) for their sinfulness. It is always the demon or demons who are addressed and condemned. We are not trying to exonerate the possessed, but we are trying to understand as much as we can about the circumstance. In no instance do we have Christians possessed by demons.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What wonderful lessons of prayer are in this unusual incident: (1) I wonder if I meet any demon possessed men today? Not having the ability to discern spirits I cannot say. (2) Why were these men near the tombs? (3) I do fully expect an answer to these questions one day. (4) In the spirit world there was no question as to who Jesus was. Why are men so unwilling today? (5) Evidently demons are limited in their understanding — at least they did not know the result of entering the swine. (6) In these realms of the spirit teach me the truth. (7) How dull of hearing were the people of the city — open my ears to truly hear what you are saying to me.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

(1) "There are yet men who think more of money than people." (2) "There is a wonderful deliverance for all who will accept Jesus as Lord." (3) "There were two men who would look back on this day as their greatest gain."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Arabian (Persian) Gulf States — Population: 2,520,000. Points for prayer: (1) This area is a strategic bridgehead for the Gospel — pray for a continued open door for Christian work. A strong Arab Church here could affect the whole Middle East, for few countries in the area do not have some of their nationals working here. (2) There are several lands that do not permit Christian work at all or among the local people. Pray that expatriate workers in these lands may shine for Jesus.

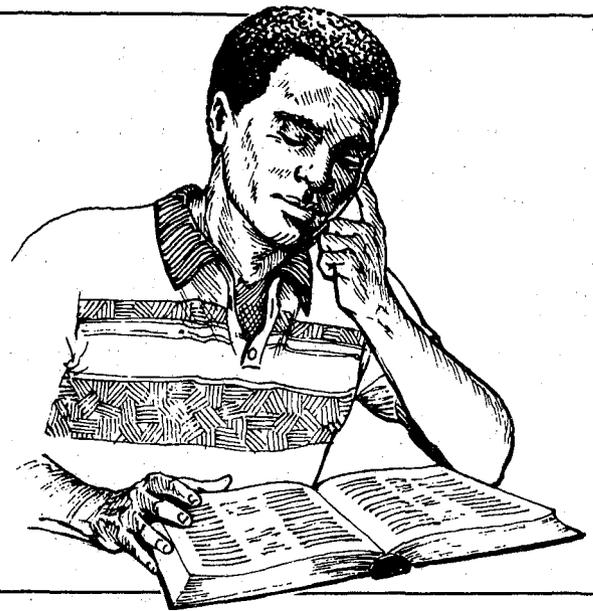
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Here I raise my Ebenezer;
Hither by Thy help I'm come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
Safely arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wand'ring from the fold of God;
He to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His precious blood.

WEEK SEVEN

—Wednesday—

How beautiful is this expression: "Thou dost beset me behind and before, and layest thy hand upon my head." I need nothing more!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

"Even before a word is on my tongue, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou dost beset me behind and before, and layest thy hand upon me" (Psa. 139:4,5). How delightfully good it is to come before you this day in praise of these lovely qualities of yourself! You are reading my mind and the minds of all men. The most sophisticated computer would not compare at all with such a capacity. Even as I write this — even now as I form these words in my mind before they appear on the paper you know them. Before the tongue pronounces them you have recorded them. When I remain aware of your nature I do not react to this quality as spying on mankind — rather as a total interest of a living loving heavenly father.

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 verse beyond description is Psalm 139:5! You are ahead of me searching out the hard places and smoothing them out for my feet. You are behind me gathering up the loose ends to weave a pattern of meaning out of what has happened. You are at present giving me immediate direction for my life. "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me." The words of Henry Ward Beecher are so full of meaning: "Before men we stand as opaque beehives. They see the thoughts go in and out of us, but what work they do inside of a man they cannot tell. Before God we are as glass beehives, and all that our thoughts are doing within us he perfectly sees and undertands." Dear Lord, it is an awesome but true comparison!

How do you personally relate to God's total knowledge of each one of us?

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is easy to pretend, but with you there is no

pretense! You know my thoughts in the split second before they are transferred from my mind to the pen. You say the words before my tongue can form them. The unexpressed thoughts are also known by you. Such knowledge is surely beyond my grasp, but you are teaching me so much by your Omniscience and your Omnipresence. You are teaching me *honesty!* I do not at all want to record on this page the thoughts that have formed in my mind — but then I need not — for you read them before they are expressed. At the same time, I also know to find forgiveness I *must* pronounce them. I *must* take full responsibility for my sin. Indeed I do! I also claim your cleansing freedom.

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 consecrated cross I'll bear,
Till death shall set me free,
And then go home my crown to wear,
For there's a crown for me.

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

HIS WORD

³⁴When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, ³⁵and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. ³⁶Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured. ³⁷Then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear. So he got into the boat and left.

³⁸The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, say-

ing,³⁹ "Return home and tell how much God has done for you." So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him. —*Luke 8:34-39, NIV*

Read also Mark 5:14-20; Matthew 8:33,34.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Each time I approach you and your word and attempt to relate this to you I am stopped at the enormity of the work. At the same time, I am drawn irresistibly to attempt it. The herdsmen became spontaneous evangelists! How I wonder what portion of this incident they emphasized? Was it Jesus' power? Was it the man who was demon possessed? Was it the loss of their pigs? Whatever it was it was told in such a manner that the people of the town had to come and see for themselves. How much more there is in this for each of us.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. The people of the country of the Gerasenes saw and didn't see: (1) They saw a man seated at Jesus' feet clothed and in his right mind. (2) They perhaps saw the dead bodies of 2,000 hogs floating in the lake. (3) They saw the amazement on the faces of the herdsmen. But then they really didn't see: (1) The man behind the miracle, i.e., the real purpose for which the miracle was performed. (2) They didn't see the value of the one man as compared with 2,000 pigs. (3) They couldn't see the conflict of emotions that struggled in the hearts of the herdsmen. Perhaps some of them ultimately became Christians. At least we know some of the earliest churches were in this area.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the obvious supernatural nature of the incident. (2) Thank you that no one can really be neutral in the presence of my Lord. (3) Thank you for the fact that clothing and sanity are associated here with being whole. (4) Thank you for the fear or awe that took hold of the hearts of these people — it no doubt led some of them to an acceptance of our Lord's deity. (5) Thank you that the power of Jesus was so obviously supernatural that it left no room for doubt. (6) Thank you for the wonderful word of our Lord to the man who was healed: "Return home and tell how much God has done for you."

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him." What a precious example this man was! Our Lord actually felt this man would serve him better by *not* following him. This man was so well known in his town that his deliverance would have a real effect on so many people. Evidently this deliverance was more than just the removal of evil. There was *much* our Lord had done

for him. We want to try to enlarge on his words and mention several things our Lord did for him (and us): (1) Our Lord delivered this man from terrible loneliness. He had made his home among the tombs. We can hardly consider a more separated cut-off experience. (2) Jesus delivered him from rejection by God and men. He was delivering him into the warmth of others who also would accept our Lord. (3) He delivered him from helplessness and a purposeless existence into a life of everlasting meaning. No wonder he got all excited and told everyone that Jesus Christ is King!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Suppose I was in the crowd of that day — I came out to see and returned home to pray: (1) It was more than remarkable to see the wild man well. I want to know the One who made him so well. (2) What are the owners of the pigs worried about? Are not men of more value than many pigs? (3) I do not blame the man who was delivered — he wanted to go with Jesus — I would too. Send him my way again. (4) I am going to leave this place and follow him — I must hear what he says — I must be with him — direct my steps. (5) Does my family really know what great things you have done for me?

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Thank you for what you have already said to me in this record — speak to me again: (1) "You have been delivered from eternal punishment — what does that mean to you?" (2) "My Son did not send the demons into the pigs — it was by his permission — but their choice." (3) "Superstition and reverence are not the same."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Arabian (Persian) Gulf States — Point for prayer: *Unreached peoples* — specific mention must be made of the following: *Local Arabs* — very few have been clearly presented with the claims of the Gospel. *Baluchis* from Pakistan are many, but there are no Christian workers available to witness to these Muslim people in their own language. *Iranians* — very few of these Muslim people are Christian and little is done to win them for the Lord.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Jesus is all the world to me,
My Friend in trials sore;
I go to Him for blessings,
and He gives them o'er and o'er.
He sends the sunshine and the rain,
He sends the harvest's golden grain;
Sunshine and rain, harvest of grain,
He's my Friend.

WEEK SEVEN

—Thursday—

Your omnipresence is one amazing — powerful — comforting quality! — and yet I need your forgiveness. I bow before you with my need!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Wither shall I go from thy Spirit? Wither flee from thy presence?” (Psa. 139:7). Here I am before you again full of amazement at this single attribute of yourself! *Your omnipresence!* There are surely mixed emotions clamoring for expression as I contemplate this quality. (1) I am full of wonder that you have such a capacity. There is utterly nowhere that is apart from your presence. (2) We feel unclean and unworthy since we know you are holy and altogether worthy. (3) We feel exposed because we know you are seeing us as spirit beings and read our inmost thoughts. (4) We cry for forgiveness and cleansing for we want to remain before you in worship. (5) I am totally fascinated and want to stay here to learn all I can of your essential being.

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 more I consider myself as standing in your presence the worse I feel. It is only as I turn the eyes of my heart to you that my sorrow turns to joy. Let me respond personally to the burning words of this verse: (1) I do indeed feel like the psalmist David! David ran from Saul and really could never find a hiding place without your help. So it is with me. Unless you hide me in the cross of your dear Son — unless I find protection in his blood and righteousness I will be running frantically for cover all my life. (2) I am glad you have startled me out of my comfortable home and made me aware of yourself as the eternal king of all. This was the experience of David. He would never have appreciated the throne of Israel without the realization that Saul was seeking his life. You have sought my life to make me a king and a priest with you!

How do you personally relate to the pursuit of God, and God who wants to make us a king? Speak it out or write it out.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Confession can be self-defeating if all that happens is an admission of my own failures and inabilities. Renewal along with the acceptance of forgiveness *must* be a part of my confession. Dear Lord, I am expressing the deepest thoughts of my heart in this prayer (it is redundant to say so). David had to look beyond his fleeing and beyond the fact he could not escape. David hid in the midst of a battle against his enemies. It is in the midst of the battle I shall find fulfillment. I have not changed the fact of your omnipresence, or of my weakness and vulnerability, but I have found release from the terrible tension of introspection. At the same time, I freely confess my hourly need of forgiveness. I claim your interest and investment in me! Make me all over new just now!

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

Joy to the world! the Savior reigns;
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

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

HIS WORD

²¹When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him. While he was by the lake, ²²one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet ²³and pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” —Mark 5:21-23, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What a beautiful scene greets our eyes as we read this text. Jesus is back in the district of Capernaum. Was there a conversation in the boat as they sailed the several miles? The progress across the lake was slower than now. I have had several conversations on the waters of this lovely Sea of Galilee. Is it possible to travel with him today and talk with him on the way? To ask is to answer. How I do want to open your word often today. I see the large crowd assemble on the shore even before he arrives. When Jesus steps on shore and begins to walk up from the lake a large crowd moves in around him. Dear Lord, I am in that crowd! While my Lord is still close to the shore a prominent man is pushing his way toward Jesus. Perhaps when several noticed who he was a way was opened for him that he might fall at Jesus' feet.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. I see the earnestness and longing on his face as he says: "My little daughter is dying!" It was for their physical needs the crowd came. Even this wealthy prominent man came for this purpose. The needs of men and women are for the whole person. Dear Lord, how easy it is in this culture of plenty to forget this. Somehow, dear Lord, help me to relate as my Savior did to these needs. Hear Jairus again: "Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." The presence, the touch of Jesus was so much needed. How tragic that I want to operate by remote control. Send me to people to touch them to share their burdens and thus fulfill the example of my Lord.

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 popularity of my Lord — then and now. (2) Thank you that he is setting an example of ministering to man's whole need. (3) Thank you for the urgency found in paternal love. (4) Thank you that priorities become really clear in the face of life or death. (5) Thank you that Jesus is always ready and responsive. (6) Thank you that Jesus was so approachable. (7) Thank you for reminding me all over again of the real needs of real people.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." This could be the cry of every father in all the world who loves his daughter. Only our Lord has the answer for the sickness unto death. Jesus has no hands but our hands to do his work today. He has no feet, but our feet to walk in his way. He has no help, but our help to bring men to

his side. He has no voice but ours to tell men that he died. The whole world is to be won, one family at a time. It is friend to friend, father to daughter, husband to wife relationship or it will never happen. Dear Lord, may the need of the daughters of men and your love constrain us to allow you to express your love through us.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In this tender scene surely we can find areas for prayer: (1) Teach me that I might have the sensitive compassion Jesus gave to this synagogue ruler. (2) How is it that physical need always seems to take precedent? Perhaps because the needs of men are all homogenized. May I look on men through such a perspective. (3) It is good to fall at Jesus' feet with this ruler. I hope I can be as urgent as this one in my needs — help me. (4) We all either have a "little daughter" or had "a little daughter" — or know one — so we share with this man the urgency of his request. Will we learn the same lesson he did? I want to. (5) Jairus thought it was necessary for Jesus to touch his daughter to make her well. Only when we relate to Jesus in our conscience can he help us. I do want to so relate.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As I read of the ruler's prayer I want to hear you speak to me: (1) "There is no little child I do not know and love." (2) "Kneel before me, I love you." (3) "I go with all who come to me in need."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Arabian (Persian) Gulf States — Point for prayer: *The churches are growing* and a large number of Indians and Pakistanis are being won to the Lord. There are strong churches in Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman and U.A.E. Most of the churches are composed of some local Arab believers and many of the immigrant minorities — Indian, European, Jordanian, etc. Pray that the unity of the Spirit may be maintained in all this diversity. Pray that these believers may have a clear testimony to the non-Christians around them.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood!
To ev'ry believer the promise of God;
The vilest offender who truly believes,
That moment from Jesus a pardon receives.
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear His voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father thro' Jesus the Son,
And give Him the glory — great things He hath done.

WEEK SEVEN

—Friday—

Heaven is in another world — apart from and different than here. My spirit is also apart from and different than my body. You see each of us as individuals!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“If I ascend to heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in Sheol, thou art there!” (Psa. 139:8). Such a lovely verse. There are several things said about you and all mankind in this one verse. (1) Heaven is apart from and different from this earth. Heaven is above for ascent is suggested. (2) Man can be separated from his body and yet retain his consciousness and identity. Sheol is the world of spirits or the unseen world after death. The psalmist is not suggesting an escape from God, he is only saying in poetic language that if he did want to escape he could not. Dear Lord, our escape is in you not apart from you! True freedom as well as unlimited understanding is in yourself — 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

Just for me. My Father, it is a pleasure to appear before you — or to address you as the all pervasive One — you are everywhere at the same time. Your total Being is present right here right now. Such an awesome thought! I cannot run from you without running into you. For how many years have I loved the beautiful words of Francis Thompson:
 I fled Him, down the nights and down the day;
 I fled Him, down arches of the years;
 I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
 Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears
 I hid from Him, and under running laughter
 Up vistaed hopes I sped;
 And shot, precipitated;
 Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,
 From those strong Feet that followed, followed afar,
 But with unhurrying chase,
 And unperturbed pace,
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
 They beat, and a voice beat
 More instant than the Feet —
 “All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.”

CONFESSION OF SIN

To suggest that I am not full of a deep sense of unworthiness as I consider your omnipresence — to say nothing of your omnipotence — would indeed be an absurdity! I fall before you like the four and twenty elders and cry “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.” Most of all and first of all I cry “Woe is me for I am undone.” “I am a sinful man O Lord!” I name my particular transgressions of your law. But my sin is one of my life style — sin has become a contagion — a cancer. I am glad to be this moment forgiven and declared “just as if I had never sinned,” but your forgiveness *must* include the next moment too. You must look upon me in grace at all times or there is no hope for me at all. I am glad you do! More than glad you do! Dear Lord, accept my poor stumbling words.

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 Lord is ris’n today, Alleluia!
 Sons of men and angels say: Alleluia!
 Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!
 Sing, ye heav’ns, and earth reply. Alleluia!

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

HIS WORD

²⁴So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed around him.

²⁵And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. ²⁶She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. ²⁷When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” ²⁹Immediately her bleeding stopped and she

felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

³⁰At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"

³¹"You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'"

³²But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. ³³Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. ³⁴He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering." —Mark 5:24-34, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Because of the length of this text it will be well enough for me to read it several times to you with thought for every word. Dear Lord, I do want all you say here to become a part of me.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Indeed, indeed! How beautifully typical is the experience of this woman. (1) Her request and contact with Jesus were parenthetical. It would seem that everyone is in a rush to go somewhere without us. How we can take heart that Jesus is never too busy to meet our need. (2) She had a problem that defied solution. For years she had tried unsuccessfully to solve it. This does so well describe our inward bleeding. (3) All men do is to make our problem worse and deplete our resources in their efforts to help. (4) The need will not decrease; it will increase. We shall and do grow worse and worse. (5) Someone told us about Jesus — nothing anyone could say could adequately describe his wondrous power. (6) She felt she *must* make some kind of *personal* contact with 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 that a large crowd is no problem with Jesus. (2) Thank you there are no impossible cases with Jesus. (3) Thank you for the ministry of suffering. (4) Thank you for the seriousness of the need — it moves me to act. (5) Thank you that we need not be conventional in our approach to our Lord.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace, and be freed from your suffering." It was the healing power of Jesus that freed her from her suffering. It was the miracle of healing accompanied through her contact with our Lord. But it was also her faith in what our Lord could do, and in particular just who

he was that set her free. Jesus was unable to heal in Nazareth (at least to the extent that he wanted to) because there were so few in his hometown who would accept his Messiahship. It is important to see that persons believed in him *before* the healing and the healing only became a visible evidence or confirmation of what they already believed. This dear woman believed Jesus was the Christ long before she touched him. Her healing settled her conviction for the rest of her life.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

It would seem the gospel accounts are almost a running commentary on how my Lord met human needs. This is such an encouragement to prayer: (1) This dear woman is only typical of all women who have some physical need — not one lives and hurts without my Lord's knowledge. How I do want to encourage such to talk to my Lord. (2) Whereas we all appreciate doctors and their help to us we also recognize their limitations. Help me to encourage doctors in their good work. (3) For the wonderful daring faith of this woman I come to you. (4) Feelings are *not* everything but they *are* something. I want to feel in my body the healing of my whole being by Jesus. (5) Jesus responded to a feeling in his body — he identified it with human need. He is presently also "touched" with our needs. How encouraging this is to me. I pause in wonder!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As you found and spoke to the woman so I want to fall at your feet and hear you speak to me: (1) "I yet need to be told 'the whole truth' to make you whole." (2) "Freedom is acceptance of my Lordship." (3) "My eyes yet run to and fro over the whole earth to find someone like this woman."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Arabian (Persian) Gulf States — Point for prayer: Pray for new programs of *out reach* being started for more effective evangelism. Pray for the effective use of house visitation, literature and personal work to win Muslims. There is now considerable interest in Christianity among educated Arab young people.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

We would see Jesus, the great rock foundation,
Whereon our feet were set by sov'reign grace;
Nor life, nor death, with all their agitation,
Can thence remove us, if we see His face.

WEEK SEVEN

—Saturday—

“You have found us to set us free!” I continue to be amazed before your omnipresence and omnipotence! How wonderful to depend on your unerring direction in our lives! When we do not see — you do — when we do not understand — you do!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me” (Psa. 139:9,10). Once again I stand back amazed. In this beautiful figure of speech the psalmist is sweeping up the expanse of the morning sunrise and like a bird he disappears in the burst of light on the horizon. He disappears from human sight, but when he arrives at that distant point in “the uttermost parts of the sea” there you are! It has been your presence that has charted his flight. Like a frightened bird in the hand of the owner so man finds himself. Here the figure must be left and the facts revealed: You hold us as intelligent beings capable of knowing how much you love us. You have found us to set us free!

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 always to remember my purpose in coming before you. It is to praise you for one or more of your characteristics. Just here I praise you for your omnipresence and omnipotence. Your omniscience is also a part of my adoration. Such qualities are related to two needs of my life: (1) My need for guidance, “thy hand shall lead me.” Dear Lord, I hear you say to me that as I fly from your presence — aware or not, you are directing my flight. The unerring instincts you have created in birds is here a comparison of your constant interest and involvement in my life. (2) My need for comfort and protection, “thy right hand shall hold me.” In whatever circumstances — even *now* I can look up and know you are encircling me with your loving personal interest! Praise your name.

How do you personally relate to the guidance of God, and God who is Protector? Speak it out or write it out.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Surely it is not difficult to see who loses if I lose this sense of your presence. I have often taken the wings of the morning (or night) and have sought to dwell in the uttermost parts of someplace — anywhere but the place where I found myself. It wouldn't have been at all necessary if I had just awakened before I took flight. But how infinitely good you have been to me! Through all the wonderful means of grace, best known to you, you found me and awakened my heart to your love and concern. What a confession I must make! I have sinned — it was my sin that I wanted to be lost! Forgive me. Tell me again of your love and acceptance. I love 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

Nearer, still nearer, nothing I bring,
Naught as an off'ring to Jesus my King;
Only my sinful, now contrite heart,
Grant me the cleansing Thy blood doth impart,
Grant me the cleansing Thy blood doth impart.

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

HIS WORD

³⁵While Jesus was still speaking, some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher any more?”

³⁶Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, “Don't be afraid; just believe.”

³⁷He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. ³⁸When they came to the home of the synagogue ruler, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. —Mark 5:35-38, NIV.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It is so good to read this text in your presence. I can know several realities in this lovely passage: (1) We are reminded that this tragedy happened to "a synagogue ruler." We are sure he must have asked himself many times "Why me?" — of all people surely God would be especially merciful to such a leading servant of worship. (2) We are introduced to the blunt hard fact of death. This sentence is never easy to write or hear: "Your daughter (or mother, or father, or wife, or husband) is dead." (3) We are told that even Jesus could do nothing about this desperate situation. (How often have we felt the same way?) (4) We are shocked and amazed as we see the attitude and hear the words of our Lord. Jesus ignored the words of death and said: "Don't be afraid; just believe." Have I represented the whole situation as it is? I want to.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

(1) There *will* be a time when I must ask "Why me?" and I have an answer: "death came to all men." There are no exceptions. It is only in the choice of time that we have any variables. Whenever you decide my appointment has arrived I will be ready for the news. Indeed, from my viewpoint I have a great desire to depart the body and be at home with yourself. (2) I am so glad to know what death is: "To be absent from the body is to be at home with my Lord." (3) I want to be as blunt with those who came with the report of death as they were with the ruler. "Only Jesus — my teacher can do anything about this situation." I do believe — and even more than Jairus I believe. I *know* you will deliver all men from death even to die no more! Praise your wonderful name!

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 multiple testimony of the death of the daughter — it adds depth to the actions of my Lord. (2) Thank you for the note of finality and hopelessness we hear in the words: "Why bother the teacher any more?" It is just the contrast we need to appreciate the resurrection. (3) Thank you that our Lord ignores the pessimism of men. (4) Thank you for the assurance of Jesus that we need not fear death. (5) Thank you for the confidence Jesus placed in Peter, James and John — or was this the reason he asked them to accompany him? (6) Thank you for the obvious respect in which the ruler was held. (7) Thank you for the power of my Lord to turn tears to joy.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Don't be afraid; just believe." How full of applica-

tion these words are for any and all situations! When our Saviour speaks we listen and when he addresses our particular need we give him our total attention. However, in this situation it was not at all easy to turn the heart of the father from this scene of sorrow and death. He did have confidence in our Lord's power or he would never have left home to get him. While his daughter was sick, he felt there was hope, but now after she is dead what can be done? And yet there are the words of Jesus. How he does give us hope where there is no hope.

There are so many situations where we are afraid. When we open up his word and read what he has said we can hear our Lord say again to us: "Don't be afraid; just believe."

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Despair turns to hope and hope to life. How full of prayer possibilities. (1) My Lord was constantly interrupted — it didn't bother him — how I want to be like him. (2) Jesus had to ignore what seemed the obvious and the impossible. Show me where I should do the same. (3) In so many situations his words: "Don't be afraid; just believe" are sorely needed. When I face the death of a loved one; when there is a sharp disagreement with those near and dear; when a cherished plan has fallen through. (4) Why did Jesus want Peter, James and John with him? Perhaps they needed this reassurance. I am like them, I want to find strength from this experience.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As you spoke to the ruler, to your followers and even to the dead, speak to me through this text: (1) "What seems dead is only awaiting my coming for life." (2) "Fear not; only believe." (3) "I see and hear all the commotion of life."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Arabian (Persian) Gulf States — Point for prayer: Pray for the Christians who have gone to witness for Christ in a secular job. There are unlimited opportunities in this line for Western Christians where Western skills are so needed to develop these countries.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long;
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long.

WEEK EIGHT

—Sunday—

You turn darkness to day — and night to morning — Men laugh at such thoughts but it is only because they do not know you — I gladly now will worship you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“If I say, ‘Let only darkness cover me, and the light about me be night,’ even the darkness is not dark to thee, the night is bright as the day; for darkness is as light with thee” (Psa. 139:11,12). How often indeed have I said these words of the psalmist. How often have all men wanted to “crawl in a hole and pull it in after them”? “Let me go somewhere and get lost, disappear.” In marriage this is called “desertion” — in personal life it is called “escape.” You let us know in these two verses that there really is no hiding from you — and we might add — from ourselves. You are saying something even more important: *“There is no darkness with you”!* Praise 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

Just for me. Dear Lord, if all I received from these verses was a knowledge of omniscience and omnipotence apart from a knowledge that you are love and goodness, I would cry out against you and curse you to your face! You are only telling me this to help me not to hide from myself. I cannot hide from you, but I *can* hide from men and from myself. You want me to work and worship in the night and the light. Oh, praise your lovely name and your eternal all-present person! Even when my senses tell me nothing of your presence, you are present. “Could my heart but see Creation (and all of life) as God sees it — from within: See his grace behind its beauty; see his will behind its force; see the flame of life shoot upward when the April days begin; see the wave of life rush outward from its eternal source” — I would no longer have a desire to hide. (Edmond G. A. Holmes)

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

The reasons for hiding are guilt and fear. Your perfect love casts out my fear. It is not my perfect love, for I do not have it. It is also your perfect love that removes my guilt! Oh, wonder of all wonders, I need not hide! I can freely and openly show you all the sores of my leprous heart. You are not repulsed — you do not say, “Too bad, how sorry I am for you.” You alone can do something for me. My Savior is known for touching lepers! My Lord reaches out to touch blind eyes and deaf ears. Even my sin, my blindness, my dull hearing. Somehow, beyond my poor understanding in the touch of forgiveness is also the touch of wholeness.

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

³⁹He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.”

⁴⁰But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹He took her by the hand and said to her, “*Talitha koun!*” (which means, “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”). ⁴²Immediately the girl stood up and walked around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. ⁴³He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat. —Mark 5:39-43, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What a wondrous record is this! How unusual are the words and actions of our Lord. He first confronts everyone with the fact of death in the daughter. Not all the mourners were of the family of the ruler; some of them were paid for mourning. Their pay depended on the child being dead — no wonder they laughed at the words of Jesus: "The child is not dead but asleep." They misunderstood his words. He said Lazarus was asleep but meant he was dead. Why did Jesus use such an expression? Was it because in death a person does indeed look as if someone could come and awaken them from their sleep?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How tender and thoughtful are the actions and words of Jesus. All those who were not personally involved were put out. Jesus wanted Peter, James and John to learn of his deity and humanity from what he was about to do. Dear Lord, how I want to be a silent observer of all that is happening inside the home of Jairus. Let me look as closely as I can so as to catch every blessed message there is here: (1) They moved into the room where the dead body had been laid out. I do believe there has never been a gathering around the body of a loved one who has died in the Lord but that our Lord was also present. (2) He took her by the hand — and a cold dead hand it was — or was it? Not when Jesus touched it. (3) He spoke to her in a most loving manner — "Little girl, get up"! How beautifully poignant is all of this to 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 Jesus' rebuke of those who grieve when he is present. (2) Thank you for the totally believable situation described by all three writers. (3) Thank you that with Jesus there is no death. (4) Thank you that Jesus does not want those present who will not understand. (5) Thank you that we can be present to understand and worship him. (6) Thank you for the personal interest in each of us given us by our Lord. (7) Thank you for the food taken by the little girl — evidence that she was completely restored.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat." Eating, sleeping, walking, talking — all the very common pursuits of life were a real part of the Lord's concern. The humanness of the One who came as God is such an attractive quality. Several things were accomplished in this little gesture: (1) The completeness of the healing would be apparent. She was not weak and sick but well and strong. (2) It would give the parents and loved ones something they could

do for their daughter. They all must have felt so very helpless in the presence of death. (3) It would place the little girl back in the mainstream of life and would remove some of the embarrassment that must have been a part of so much attention. How very thoughtful and kind was our Lord.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In this astonishing miracle I can find much reason for prayer: (1) My Lord was full of wonderful surprises. I want to receive from him today. (2) Jesus, the Lord of life steps into the presence of death — how typical of his presence in us today. In the above statements I ask your perception. (3) What a kind, tender gesture it was for my Lord to take the mother and father with him into the presence of the dead. What they saw and heard they never forgot. Etch this scene upon my heart! (4) I wonder why Jesus did not call her by name? Is it not because he wanted all girls of this age to relate? (5) The miracles of Jesus were always so totally believable — she didn't get better; "she stood up and walked around." Lord, I believe. (6) Mark recorded this miracle that I might learn and believe — and teach it to others — fulfill your purpose in me.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me: (1) "Many will never believe — some will never doubt." (2) "Perhaps you fit neither category." (3) "These things are written so that you might believe."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Arabian (Persian) Gulf States — Point for prayer; *Christian missions* — long years of pioneering work by the U.S. through medical and educational work has opened the lands for other missions. There are now about 80 Protestant missionaries serving the Lord. Most are using medical evangelism to reach the hearts of the people. There are now about 9 medical centers run by missions, and in all there is complete freedom to evangelize the patients. There is a critical need for dedicated Christian workers (especially men) to use the many opportunities. This is a wonderful opening for Arab missionaries. Pray for the health of missionaries working in this very hot and often humid climate. Pray for eternal fruit in a field that is unusually hard and discouraging.

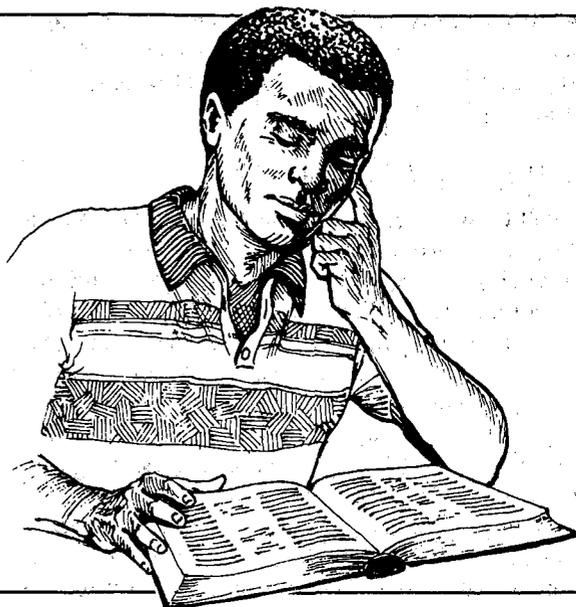
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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 EIGHT

—Monday—

How perfectly did you form us and knit us together — We are fearfully and wonderfully made — Open our eyes that we may see and appreciate your creation in us and about us.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“For thou didst form my inward parts, thou didst knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise thee, for thou art fearful and wonderful. Wonderful are thy works! Thou knowest me right well; . . .” (Psa. 139:13,14). These precious words have been available for man’s reading for more than 2,500 years. You set the laws of growth in operation and such laws carry out your will whether you are around or not. Like a machine on an assembly line. No, no, no! This is *not* the meaning of this text. You are in the act of crea-

tion all over again each time a child is formed in the womb of his mother. Like a weaver at a loom, like an artisan in his shop, like a doctor at work on the most delicate of an operation, so you are involved in the creation of every unborn child.

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 qualities of yourself for which I praise you relate to your creative abilities. I have found some lovely words from one who worshiped you long ago. I want to make these words of *Andrew Fuller* mine. In your creation of man I am full of awe and wonder: “Man: how poor, yet how rich, how abject yet how august. Man: how complicated, how wonderful in your highest creation. How passing all wonder is the One who made him such. You have mingled such strange extremes of different natures, all marvelously mixed. How helpless, yet immortal, how like an insect yet infinite, as humble as a worm, yet a god — I tremble to consider your creation. Our life contains a thousand springs, and dies if one be gone: strange that a harp of a thousand strings should keep in tune so long.”

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, I believe you have not left one man since you began your marvelous creation in the womb of his mother. It is not only the body that receives your concern, but the man himself. You are “the Father of the spirits of all men” (Num. 16:22; Heb. 12:5-8). Since this is true I claim your concern in the struggles of my every day. I am indeed full of fear or awe and wonder, but I also believe you know me so much better than I know myself. It is a relatively simple thing for me to confess my stupid mistakes. I hide nothing from 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

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

²⁷As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!”

²⁸When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?”

“Yes, Lord,” they replied.

²⁹Then he touched their eyes and said, “According to your faith it will be done to you”; ³⁰and their sight

was restored. Jesus warned them sternly, "See that no one knows about this." ³¹But they went out and spread the news about him all over that region.

—Matthew 9:27-31, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How well these two men represent all of us today! The blind men had to depend on what others saw of the miraculous work of your Son. They were indeed those who not having seen yet believed. How abundant then must have been the evidence for their faith! They reached the obvious conclusion that even a blind man could see: Jesus was the Christ or "the Son of David." Our Lord apparently ignores these men and goes indoors. Why? Is it because such a proclamation was dangerous? This was Galilee where opposition to Romans was strong! Why did Jesus ask these men such an obvious question? i.e., wasn't it evident that they already had faith? Was it because he wanted them to examine their own heart? Jesus didn't want them to only repeat a popular opinion.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Ultimately each of us must meet Jesus all by himself. Our Lord wants to know from our own heart: "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" It is one thing to accept him in public; it is quite another to probe our own conscience and confess our personal faith in him. My dear Lord is ever asking me each day: "Do you believe I am able to help you teach this class?" "Do you believe I am able to solve the problem you have with this man or that woman?" "Do you believe I can supply the means of meeting this obligation or that?" Over the years it has indeed been done "according to my faith" — at the same time, more often it has been according to his mercy. Dear Lord, today I feel like asking you to again open my eyes to all you have for me.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for those who did not see yet believed. (2) Thank you for their persistence and boldness of faith. (3) Thank you for the personal encounter arranged by our Lord. (4) Thank you that Jesus will not let our faith stand on what others believe. (5) Thank you for the wonderful personal touch of my Lord in the blind areas of my life. (6) Thank you for the power of faith. (7) Thank you that my Lord always knew what he was doing and when it should be done.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"See that no one knows about this." When Jesus had told the demoniac that he was to tell all he had done for him these words could sound strange. It obviously had to do with the region. In Gadara there was no danger of making him king, but in Galilee it was a different matter. Galilee was a hotbed of revolt against the Roman rule. In the mind of the patriotic Jew in Galilee the appearance of the Messiah was the

appearance of the deliverance from the Roman occupation. It would appear that even these blind men had a twisted view of his Lordship. When Jesus warned them sternly they should have heeded him. Their direct disobedience says something about their attitude. Their own predisposition toward the kind of rule the Messiah would bring was so strong they could not hear the words of Jesus.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In these two blind men we can represent the whole human race: (1) All men must follow him in order to see — I am one of them. (2) It is indeed mercy that we need. (3) An acknowledgement of his deity is so important. How gladly I give it! (4) A personal encounter must be present to give us our sight! I bow before you — I open my ears. (5) A total confidence in his willingness and ability is essential — I have no question here. (6) "According to your faith will it be done to you." Faith comes by hearing and believing your word. What an opportunity we have for faith — may I take it! (7) Why was Jesus so stern in his command that no one know of what was done? I do want to know when to be silent.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I am in constant need of healing for the eyes of my heart: (1) "In following me you will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (2) "Total trust opens your eyes." (3) "It is time to tell everyone about the One who healed you."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Arabian (Persian) Gulf States — Points for prayer: (1) *Christian Radio* — reception from Seychelles is now quite good. Pray that the daily Arabic broadcasts may bear fruit in the hearts of many. (2) *Christian literature* — there are little Christian bookstores in Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain and Abu Dhabi that are performing valuable service.

Israel — Population: 4,300,000. Points for prayer: (1) *The Jews in Israel* are more resistant to the Gospel than those of the Dispersion. Pray for this hardness to be removed. Pray for the removal of social and legal barriers to their conversion. (2) *Pray for the peace of Israel* and for all Arab and Israeli leaders in this critical time that there may be an equitable peace with justice for all peoples.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

WEEK EIGHT

—Tuesday—

I bow before your omniscience as a child before a very wise father. I marvel at your abilities. Nothing man has made can compare — we are indeed your children.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Thou knowest me right well; my frame was not hidden from thee; when I was being made in secret intricately wrought in the depths of the earth” (Psa. 139:14b,15). It is with real happiness I come to praise you this day. The various facets of your omniscience are here under constant consideration. I can truly never exhaust the possibilities of relationship. I do open my heart in praise for your knowledge of my deepest needs. To say “thou knowest me right well,” seems a real understatement. When we remember it is your knowledge we know “right well” means every and all relationships of life. The term “frame” is a poetic description of the whole person. Even when to men’s eyes all was hidden and too intricate to be defined and far away in the depths of the earth it was to you known “right well.” Praise your name. It is comforting to rest in your absolute knowledge of my deepest needs.

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 marvel is the human body! What a marvel is *my* human body. Just the thought of what keeps me a resident in this house is worthy of praise and meditation. I know when you want me to separate from this tabernacle I shall leave. But while I am here, what is it that keeps me here? We know that the body is dead when we leave it, but why do we remain? It would be easy to say that the health of the body insures occupancy, but we all know persons whose health has fled but they remain. The house in which we live is so intricate that the most complicated of human machinery seems monstrously awkward in comparison. Just the movements and capabilities of the human eye is a testimony to your creative genius a million miles beyond human achievement.

How do you personally relate to the knowledge of God, and God who knows our frame?

CONFESSION OF SIN

If I am so important to you that such thought and care is devoted to my creation, how is it that you are not *much* more important to me? How sad beyond words is our preoccupation with the house in which we live. We are so concerned about the place that we have forgotten the person — not to even mention the Creator. Dear Lord, forgive me! Even worse it is to proceed in my life as if I was responsible for the creation of myself and all about me. The basic sin of man is to “play God.” We all know what we think when one of our children begins to play daddy or mother. It can be a source of amusement as long as they are not teenagers or older. My dear Father Creator, I want to read your rules and accept your personal help in implementing them.

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, look down from Thy throne in the skies,
And help me to make a complete sacrifice;
I give up myself, and whatever I know,
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

³²While they were going out, a man who was demon-possessed and could not talk was brought to Jesus.

³³And when the demon was driven out, the man who had been dumb spoke. The crowd was amazed and said, “Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.”

³⁴But the Pharisees said, “It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons.” —Matthew 9:32-34, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It would seem that right after leaving the house of Jairus this incident occurred. Was this a response to the testimony of the two blind men? Did the multitude know of this hard case and bring him to Jesus as a test? Dear Lord, I wish I knew. There is something wonderfully intriguing about this man: (1) He was not insane — the whole multitude and all who knew him could say this. But there *was* something other than madness that troubled him. *It was a demon.* (2) He was not physically unable to speak, i.e., his vocal chords were present and operative. There was something else that hindered him. *It was a demon.* (3) The whole crowd knew he was demon-possessed — the Pharisees agreed to this. Most of all, our Lord so identified his problem. I do want to try as much as possible to project myself into the circumstances of this text.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. This encounter in the spirit world has serious lessons for me. It is so easy to not hear and to become dull of hearing. How I need to be reminded over and over again that Satan is real today. There are demons abroad in the land *now*. Real genuine spirit beings under the control of Satan do even *now* attack us and vie for our attention and interest. We *are not* saying that men are today possessed and held under demon power. At least demons have no such influence in the lives of Christians. The important emphasis must not be with our association with demons but with our Lord. Do we feel our personal need of him? If we do we will come to him often and in the same attitude as this poor man who could not speak.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the compassion of someone for the poor possessed man. (2) Thank you that the miracles of Jesus did accomplish their purpose in some lives. (3) Thank you for my Lord's present power over Satan today. (4) Thank you for the character of the miracle — it could not be denied by anyone. (5) Thank you for the superior quality of this miracle — better than anything anyone had seen. (6) Thank you for the cumulative effect the continuous miracles of Jesus was having. (7) Thank you that even the Pharisees associated our Lord's work with the spirit world.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel." We might add: or in any place else. Let's get a few things straight about who Jesus really is. He is, in human form, the visible image of the invisible Father. He is high above everything in creation, and, as a matter of fact, he made everything in the whole universe. The whole spirit world as well as the material world was made by him for his own use. He existed before

everything he made and he still keeps it together. He's also the head of his spiritual body, the family. He created physical life; he created the new forever life — from death — and as we share that life with him, the whole universe will see that he is the true "Supreme Commander." In that human body was all the nature and power of the living God. The Father then took all that perfection and crucified him for every being in the dying universe to live in him. And we who were his enemies and in our minds hated him and were going our own way have been welcomed into his own family.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Casting out a demon evokes thoughts for prayer: (1) Why are the organs of sense affected by demons? Deliver me from demonic attack even now. (2) It is good to see the disciples relating men beyond human help to my Lord. I carry one of these same kind to you now in prayer. (3) I wonder what were the first words of this man? The power of speech is such a blessing — may I use it to praise you! (4) The crowd was *amazed* — did it go any further? It does with me — deepen my awareness. (5) How is it that the greatest of great events is somehow overlooked? Lest I become only one of the crowd may I take the place of the man who was delivered.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me through these verses that I might speak for you. (1) "Until men are brought to me Satan has hindered their speech." (2) "The crowd is still waiting to praise me for my power through my Son." (3) "Do you really care that men are attacked by Satanic powers? Then show your concern."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Israel — Point for prayer: *The legal position* is not helpful to believers or missions among the Jews. It is not allowed to see the conversion of a young person without the written permission of the parents. The legal position of a Jew who becomes a Christian is very difficult. It is hard for the Protestant Churches to gain government recognition.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long;
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long.

WEEK EIGHT

—Wednesday—

It is a high privilege to bow before One who knew all my days before I arrived. This is too great a thought for me — But I can marvel and rejoice in it — as I do right now.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Thy eyes beheld my unformed substance; in thy book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them” (Psa. 139:16). Your creative genius and omnipotence are beautifully seen in this unusual verse. You see me as no one else ever has or could. Intent and intentional is your observation. It is easy for man to define the elements out of which our bodies are made — these are the same as those in the soil beneath our feet. “Dust thou art” is a scientific fact. But before there was a sculpture in the hand of the artist there was a picture in his mind, there was a desire in his heart. All the elements of man’s whole being were recorded as well as every day he would live upon this earth. (This is not an easy verse for translation — dear Lord, is this what you are saying?)

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. Your wonderful intimate personal interests in me are most clearly stated. How I rejoice in your involvement in my life while I was still in the womb of my mother. When you sent spirit into the embryo of the unformed fetus you knew the reaction or response of the union of spirit and that genetic combination. In your book was written a full description of myself before I was even born. The number of days of my life were also there recorded. All of this is a total amazement to me; I stand back with my head and heart bowed before you in praise and wonder.

How do you personally relate to the foreknowledge of God, and God who knew us before we were born? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

How often do I think these thoughts? Dear Lord, you know it is not as often as it should be! How aware

am I that all of my life is in your hands? How fragile and temporary is my life. In the same breath I can say my life is full of your very self! That I should spend so much time and thought on your house and neglect both the occupant and the Maker is one of the mysteries of the evil one. Dear Lord, deliver me! Open the eyes of my heart! Since my days are numbered and limited, give me the grace and chastening to use them as one who knows at least from whence they came!

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,
My Friend in trials sore;
I go to Him for blessings,
And He gives them o’er and o’er.
He sends the sunshine and the rain,
He sends the harvest’s golden grain;
Sunshine and rain, harvest of grain,
He’s my Friend.

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

HIS WORD

Jesus left there and went to his home town, accompanied by his disciples. ²When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. *Mark 6:1,2a, NIV*
⁵⁴Coming to his home town, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. “Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?” —*Matthew 13:54, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Amazement of all amazements! The young boy who grew up in the carpenter’s shop and lived with us for years is now become a popular teacher and miracle

worker! When our Lord returned, followed by his twelve apostles and possibly other disciples, what a commotion must have occurred in Nazareth. His brothers and sisters no doubt crowded around him and were full of questions. What poignancy must have filled the heart of his mother. He must have stayed a day or two before the Sabbath day arrived and then he went to the synagogue service. What a rare privilege it was to hear him teach. What profound thoughts were presented that Sabbath day in the little synagogue in Nazareth!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Have I become so familiar with Jesus that I like those in his hometown really do not know him? It is possible. Dear Lord, forgive me. Why did Jesus return to his home? Was it to give his friends and relatives and all the townsfolk one last chance? I believe it was. How easy it is to allow unrelated matters to deafen our ears and close our eyes! There was no question as to the amazing wisdom by which he taught. There was no denying the multiplied miracles he had performed throughout Galilee. No one said a word about sinless conduct. And yet — he was only the carpenter's son; we knew his mother, brothers and sisters. They knew him and they did not know him. How is it with 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

(1) Thank you for the popularity of our Lord that followed him even to Nazareth. (2) Thank you for his devoted followers who came with him. (3) Thank you for all of the tender associations that must have crowded his mind as he again walked the streets of the city. (4) Thank you for the unknown renewal of acquaintances that must have occurred before the Sabbath. (5) Thank you for Jesus' wisdom in placing his two visits to Nazareth nine months apart. (6) Thank you for my Lord's custom of attending the public services. (7) Thank you that I can be amazed all over again at the wisdom of my Lord.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . and many who heard him were amazed.” This is on a home town level. We wonder if Joseph or his brothers were present. Somehow they could not overcome the familiarity of previous association. Even their amazement was superficial. Is it at all possible that we have become so familiar with the records of his life that we too are only mildly amazed? Were the men in the synagogue in Nazareth really listening when he spoke? Did they *really* know him? The very thing they claimed is what they did not have. They knew his family, i.e., by name and where they lived,

but they had not taken the time to really get acquainted with our Lord. It takes time and undivided attention to learn from him or about him. Surely he merits a priority of time and thought.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I want to be a silent observer in that synagogue and be led to prayer: (1) Dear Lord, I would like to make all my associates a welcome committee for you. (2) How can I better make you feel “at home” in me? (3) Isn't it too bad we do not have what he taught that day in the synagogue — perhaps we do in the rest of the record. (4) I want the amazement that filled the hearts of these people. (5) I ask in faith for the wisdom I so sorely need in teaching your word today. (6) I want to examine the miracles of my Lord again that I might learn all there is of his deity. (7) Did those who asked about the source of his wisdom and power ever get an answer?

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me through your Son: (1) “I am still teaching those who will listen.” (2) “You now know the answer to their question.” (3) “Accept in your conscience what I am saying to you.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Israel — Point for prayer: *The Hebrew Christians* are considered almost traitors to their nation, and suffer ostracism and some discrimination from other Jews. There are about four Hebrew assemblies that meet on an interdenominational basis, and some other believers that fellowship with some of the many small mission groups. Some of the latter are all too ready to “sponsor” promising believers — often not for the best motives. Pray for the planting of strong independent churches all over the country.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Come, Thou Almighty King,
 Help us Thy name to sing,
 Help us to praise.
 Father, all glorious,
 O'er all victorious,
 Come, and reign over us,
 Ancient of Days.

WEEK EIGHT

—Thursday—

“How precious indeed are your thoughts! How vast is the sum of them!” How intricate — how full of purpose! But only those who want to believe see any of these qualities — I gladly believe — life has no meaning without you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“How precious to me are thy thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I would count them, they are more than the sand. When I awake, I am still with thee. (Were I to come to the end I would still be with thee.)” (Psa. 139:17,18). It is with eager anticipation I enter your presence. I am so glad to be able to express praise for all you have said in your word. And yet such words are only the smallest fraction of your thoughts. When we take time and thought to concentrate on any branch of your creative genius we are startled at the intelligence behind such design and purpose. But when we refer to your thoughts concerning our lives it is then we must prostrate ourselves before you in silent amazement!

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 would seem David was in a dream, or he thought of himself as dreaming and in the dream he was capable of counting your thoughts. Even if somehow he succeeded in this impossible endeavor when he awoke he would yet be in the presence of an equal number. To remember that God expends immeasurable energy in one single concept! The whole galaxy and millions like the one of which we are a part are all for man's enjoyment. The vast complexity of the earth is here to exercise and expand the spirit of man. How costly and how valuable are your thoughts; how precious is your perpetual attention.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

That you should think of me so often and I should think of you so seldom is a sin of giant magnitude! It would be impossible to convince my dear wife that I

loved her if my thoughts were never upon her welfare or were never expressed in deeds or words. Dear Lord, in this one area I find the solution for all my needs! To return the concern you have for me is to relate you to all of my life all the time. How powerful are your words: “. . . his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law (and the Lawmaker) he meditates day and night.”

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

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.

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

HIS WORD

⁵⁴Coming to his home town, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. “Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?” they asked. ⁵⁵“Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother’s name Mary, and aren’t his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? ⁵⁶Aren’t all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?” ⁵⁷And they took offense at him.

But Jesus said to them, “Only in his home town and in his own house is a prophet without honor.”

⁵⁸And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith. —Matthew 13:54-58, NIV

“Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles! ³Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joses, Judas

and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" and they took offense at him.

⁴Jesus said to them, "Only in his home town, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor." ⁵He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them.

⁶And he was amazed at their lack of faith. —Mark 6:2b-6a, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What a privilege beyond privileges to read these words in your presence. Here I see and sense the response men gave to your dear Son. If this passage touches my heart I know you are even more involved. Wasn't the answer to their question obvious? Our Lord's wisdom was so superior to anything they had heard before that heaven must be its source. The mighty miracles were of such a nature and were so numerous that no one could miss their origin — or could they? Perhaps it was your Son's insistence that they accept or reject — honor or refuse to honor him, Dear Lord, you are speaking to me in these words. Give me the faith to accept his Lordship.

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 a strange circumstance: Those who should have known him best — and even thought they did — did not. Did Jesus discuss his mighty works? There were thousands to testify to the truthfulness of his words. At least they should have seen God behind the words he spoke. The teachings of my Lord are so superior to all the words of men that only a contrast appears as we relate them. It strikes me again and again how very common were the names used here. How many men were called James in the days of our Lord? We have four such persons in the New Testament accounts. Joseph and Simon and Judas are also very ordinary names. Perhaps we lose him as they did in the humbleness of the package for God's gift.

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 heaven's wisdom in the life and words of my Lord. (2) Thank you for the fact that Jesus was indeed the adopted son of a carpenter. (3) Thank you for the patient consistent example of Mary. (4) Thank you for the epistle of James that teaches me that faith that does not act — even as James had when he lived with Jesus — is of no value. (5) Thank you for the epistle of Jude that teaches me to "contend for the faith" — which is hardly what Jude did until after the resurrection. (6) Thank you for the unnamed sisters of my Lord — I would like to believe they accepted him as so many do today. (7) Thank you that your prophet can have today the honor he did not have in Nazareth.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief." What a sad commentary on human nature! Until or unless someone fits into our presupposition we will not accept him. It needs to be emphasized here that our Lord expected the Nazarenes to believe on him before and without the miracles. "Faith comes by hearing and hearing of the words of Christ." It does cause us to wonder why he did *any* mighty works in his home town if such unbelief prevailed. There are always a few that will believe. Praise God for those few persons who had the courage to believe against popular opinion.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How could those who were "his own" take offense at him? (1) How humble an estimate: "the carpenter's son." He was and he wasn't — help me to understand both concepts. (2) My Lord was one of the crowd — an ordinary citizen of Nazareth. Dear Lord, I want to be like him. (3) How I wish I could have shared a meal or two in the home of Mary and Joseph. It is wonderful to consider that Jesus can share every meal with me! (4) I want to read again the words of James and Jude (Judas) the half-brothers of my Lord. I want to get behind the words of the writers. (5) I would like to know the names of the sisters of Jesus. I believe I have met some. Keep me aware of his definition of just who are his relatives.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You did not have the ears or the hearts of those in Nazareth — but you have mine — speak to me: (1) "Faith both precedes and succeeds signs." (2) "The principle still holds for some teachers and preachers today."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Israel — Point for prayer: The Arab believers have some fine, lively fellowships in Jerusalem and Galilee with a considerable outreach. Pray for their witness in the present difficult political situation. Pray for a greater outreach to the less evangelized West Bank, and especially the 350,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Pray for closer links between the Hebrew and Arab believers.

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 EIGHT

—Friday—

How good it is to ask you — from my heart to search me — try me to forgive me! You can heal every hurt, every need — I bow before you just now and ask that it might happen to me.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psa. 139:23,24). Dear Lord, I make the words of the poet James Montgomery my prayer to you: Searcher of hearts, to thee are known The inmost secrets of my breast; At home, abroad, in crowds, alone, Thou mark’st my rising and my rest, My thoughts far off, through every maze, Source, stream, and issue — all my ways. What I say of myself I say for all. It is one awesome thought to invite you to so search me! Requested or not such is your power and prerogative.

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. Only you can know my heart. When I feel I have discovered the last room in my heart I suddenly stumble on a door that opens to a whole undiscovered area. I want you to search me. I do not want one hurtful thing in my heart. There are three I can hurt — yourself, others or myself. David was so concerned that there be no rebellion in his heart against you as his king. This too is my concern. This is offered as a praise to the quality of your nature that immediately makes us introspective, i.e., your omniscience. Because of the great deceiver it is essential that we often refer to this quality of yourself.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

To praise you for your ability to know us better than we know ourselves is to confess our sins. I want to remember that unless there was something of value

there would be no search. It was a *son* who was lost. It was a *Son* who was sent to save. Both were precious to the Father — and the Father was the same in both examples.

When you do find wickedness or hurtfulness in me, what will you do with it? It is as if you had found the spot under the yoke that had hurt for so long — you now apply the healing balm and remove the hurt.

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

³⁵Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. ³⁶When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”
—Matthew 9:35-38, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How delighted I am to read this word to you. I want

to see your dear Son as he trampled up the incline of this town or he walked down the hill to another village in Galilee. How many synagogues did he enter? I know not one is missing in your knowledge. Not one lesson was taught that has not been recorded in heaven. The good news of your rule in the lives of men was the message of your Son. How I want to receive such rule as *good news*. It is more than startling to read these words . . . "healing *every* disease and *every* infirmity." There were no impossible cases with him. Since Jesus is alive at your right hand and sees not the few people of the hills of Galilee but the whole wide teeming multitude of this world — and *he sees each one* — how *much more* do his words mean today, "sheep without a shepherd — harassed and helpless." Dear Lord, open my eyes!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. I hesitate to read these words! I cannot bear to open my heart and receive them, but I must. Dear Lord, you have no one else today but each of us who love you: "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few." I am so glad Jesus described you as "the Lord of the harvest." It would seem from the way we act and think that we fancy ourselves the harvest Lord. You also described us with that powerful word: "*laborers*." Until we have taught someone we have not worked for you. Yes, yes, there are various ways of teaching, but teaching we *must* do. Unless we have watered what we have taught (or planted) we are not your laborers. There are times when we do indeed need to "dig around" the soil of the heart of those who have been planted and watered. Dear Father, I want to hear it again: "He that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully." There are such wide needy fields. Open my heart and mouth!

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 general and specific interest my Lord has in men. (2) Thank you that Jesus was a preacher. (3) Thank you that Jesus used the synagogue as a place of worship even when it was not "a house you built." (4) Thank you my Lord was also a teacher. (5) Thank you for the unlimited power of healing present in your Son. (6) Thank you that I can be a citizen of the kingdom he described. (7) Thank you I can be that laborer for which he asked us to pray.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest. . . ." How beautifully unique are all the words of my Lord! Wouldn't it be much more natural to say: "Enter into the harvest field"? Why pray? Because our heavenly

Father is the only one we know who knows all about the total process of harvest. Another very large reason has to do with the harvester: If we put our labor with people on a divine level, i.e., we truly pray about it, the possibilities of our continuing and being fruitful are so much higher. Is the harvest still plentiful and are the laborers yet few? To ask is to answer. Both the harvest and the laborers are enlarged immeasurably and in both directions: we have four billion people on earth and so very few laborers. At the same time, the means of harvesting are so much more manageable. We now can reach every person on earth so much easier. There is also an equally greater need for prayer.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

This is indeed an all encompassing statement of his work. There is much to pray about in it: (1) Dear Lord, I do not believe it is your will that even one village in this world be without the teaching of your Son. How, oh, how, can I help? (2) Keep me always aware that what I have to offer is "good news of the kingdom." (3) How amazing that Jesus healed "*every disease and sickness*." This really says something about his compassion and power — open my heart to receive it. (4) Sheep are stupid animals — how like us — Gentle Shepherd, lead us, chasten us. (5) Dear Lord, I want to take up your solution for workers for your harvest. Teach me to really pray this prayer.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Since the workers are still so few I need to hear you in meeting this need, (1) "My compassion comes to men through you." (2) "If you pray I will send." (3) "The harvest is greater and whiter than it has ever been."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Israel — Points for prayer: (1) *The hostile environment* for both Arab and Hebrew believers with limited opportunities for the future tempts many to leave the country. Many young people emigrate and the witness they could bear is lost. (2) *A large proportion of the Israelis have immigrated* from countries all over the world. Each group comes to Israel with its own language and culture and each must be reached with the Gospel in a meaningful way. Especially needy are the over 120,000 (often atheistic) Jews now coming from Russia, where they are suffering considerable persecution. Pray for the reaching of these *Immigrant Jews*.

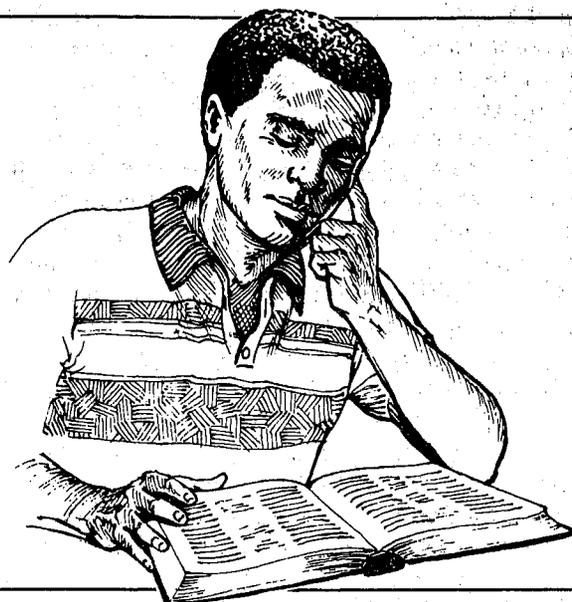
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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 EIGHT

—Saturday—

We have a strong, strong Deliverer! We have on our heads the helmet of salvation that can protect us from all hurt! I worship you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“O Lord, my Lord, my strong deliverer, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle” (Psa. 140:7). Every day is indeed a battle to be fought. The hand-to-hand combat of David’s day presents a very good metaphor in our fight with Satan and his forces. There is so much in this one verse descriptive of all you are and do for each of us each day: (1) The movements of our forces are under your control. We pause just now to ask for your strategy. We ask in confidence of your interest in our fight. We ask aware that the movement will seem to be our choice and our effort, but are aware all the time that *you are the deliverer*. (2) You are our armor-bearer. It was the task of David’s armor bearer to do this, i.e., to cover his king’s head in the battle. You can and do guard our thoughts and move both the will and the choice — praise your name — I claim such help for today’s battle.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. As in the above expression I have become a large part of it. Even so there is so much more I want to say in praise of your presence in the thick of every encounter. (3) You make yourself responsible for a knowledge of the enemy’s moves. Surely I am no match for Satan. If even Michael the archangel did not want to personally encounter him (Jude 9,10) who am I to engage him in hand-to-hand combat? (4) You ask me to do all I can in the fight but recognize you are there deflecting Satan’s blows and covering me with your love and personal concern. Dear Lord, how I do hide behind this shield of faith! (5) What a mutual respect and love grows between the warrior and his armor-bearer. Yea, when I know who he is I gladly give him all the credit for every victory.

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 surely seems incongruous that in the midst of the promises of conquest we admit defeat! But such is the record of our life. We do not really lose *any* battle in which you are accepted as a companion in the fight! The only battles I have lost have been those I engaged in the loneliness of my own selfishness. The strategy of triumph is as clear as I could ever want it. (1) Admit I cannot win by myself. (2) Ask for your presence — claim and identify your presence when once I ask. (3) Confess my sin and failure. (4) Ask your forgiveness — essentially I am asking forgiveness for trying to fight alone. (5) Take up the sword of the Spirit and the shield of faith — fully aware of who fashioned the sword, and in whom my faith is placed. Help me, dear 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

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 pow’r 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

10 He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

⁵These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. ⁶Go rather to the lost

sheep of Israel. ⁷As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' ⁸Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. ⁹Do not take along any gold or silver or copper in your belts; ¹⁰take no bag for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandals or a staff; for the worker is worthy of his keep.' —Matthew 10:1; 5-10, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What concern must have filled the hearts of these unlearned humble men! Was the authority Jesus gave them arbitrary? I do not believe it was! Are we aware of the total inclusiveness of his words: *every disease* and *(every) sickness*. It included *all manner of demons*. To even *raise the dead*! How did they relate to such words and such authority? How did they express the thought that these persons were lost sheep? — even if they were citizens of the twelve tribes of Israel? What hospitality must have been present! I want to walk with them.

Please express your response to this powerful text.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

These men were very ordinary! We can therefore relate to them. We have been sent to the lost — we have a message — "the rule of God in the hearts of men is so *very* near!" Could I apply these words to the members of your present flock? Can I expect hospitality at their hands? I have surely been the recipient of such kindness. What credentials do we offer as to the truthfulness of our message? *Our example of your rule in our own hearts!* How freely — openly — uncomplainingly — do we give? Do we accept your standard or criteria of giving?

It is so important that you pause in his presence and write or speak your response to him.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for Peter, James, John and Andrew — all of them the first disciples he called — and all of them very poor weak men — commercial fishermen. My father and grandfather were just such men as are ten thousand other very ordinary men and women. (2) Thank you that my dear Lord practically *forced* them into believing him and putting their whole trust in him! (3) Thank you for the record of their success — the confirmation of his authority! — help me to receive it as it was given and apply it to my acceptance of the authority of my Lord via the twelve! (4) Thank you for the united record of this account by the gospel writers.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Freely you have received, freely give." How wonderfully true this is! For us in the USA we have *so freely received!* I want to pause and absorb this into my in-

ner heart! How freely and fully have I received your word! — how freely have I given it? Ah, dear Lord, forgive! What I say here for myself I say for all members of your Son's body here in America! What will happen if we do not freely give? We are the loser! Help us all dear Lord!

Pause — wait — think — then express your praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

(1) I want to tell of your rule for the hearts of men. *Why* is it so difficult to do it? Please open my understanding. (2) Why am I so worried about money where your servants were told not to give it a thought? What missing ingredient is here? (3) Am I really worthy of my being supported by others? Enable me, dear Lord!

Right here add your own personal requests.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

(1) "Is your heart open or are you acting only on impulse?" (2) "If you will let me I can change you." (3) "I love you — I can and will use you."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Israel — Point for prayer: *Israel needs more men and women who humbly and simply live for Jesus* and witness personally to the very many who have not responded to the Gospel. Pray for all groups seeking to help and encourage the national believers in this ministry of personal evangelism and distribution of literature. There are surprisingly few Christians doing this and the opportunities for this ministry are many.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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.

WEEK NINE

—Sunday—

Dear Lord, so often our prayers are full of our own selfish ignorance. But you can adjust such and give meaning. Fix our desire for you — establish our time with you. Increase our faith in you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“May my prayer be counted (fixed) as incense before thee; the lifting up of my hands as the evening offering” (Psa. 141:2). Here are the personal prayer needs of David. He comes to you with confidence that you can and will meet his needs. I want to consider the requests, but I want also to look behind the requests to the One who answers: (1) David wants his prayers to be established, to be made firm — as a receptacle fastened to receive the incense. How this does speak to all our hearts. You alone can crystallize our commitments to prayer. (2) Our prayer is compared to incense — so does John in Revelation so symbolize our prayers (Rev. 5:8; 8:3,4). Incense was made of a mixture of several spices. Incense must be consumed or it is of no value — it must be burned.

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, there is much in this for me: (1) I want to establish my time of prayer so firmly that I expect it even as a permanent fixture in my house of service to you. (2) I want to combine the elements of prayer in their proper order — praise, confession, thanksgiving, intercession, petition. (3) Most of all I want to ignite the incense. I want to give my energy and life to this wonderful experience. Indeed, I want to be consumed with this fragrant act of worship. (4) The whole ceremony of worship is here described in a single verse. Following the incense is the sacrifice. David lifts his hands up to you, and in the gesture he is offering his whole self to you as a living sacrifice. Such sacrifices were offered at least twice *every day*. Dear Lord, oh my Lord, I do want to lift up my whole self to you — and I do it every day. All of these pious pretty words will be as meaningless as the sacrifices of the Old Testament without you!

CONFESSION OF SIN

How easy it is to admit my missing your target here! How is it that I have been a worshiper of you for all these years and have not *fixed* or *established* my prayer as incense before you? And even now I know that without your presence and power I will not continue. But, oh my Lord, I do so want to! Forgive my vacillation. The elements of the incense were beaten before they were burned. Until I am ready to allow my praise, thanksgiving and intercession to be purified by your discipline I cannot pray as I should. As you know my heart you know this is my sincere desire. When will I daily hold up my body as a living sacrifice to you? My sin is that I believe this is an unreasonable, impossible request. I am wrong! Paul used the strongest appeal possible to affirm such a request. When will you hear it, oh my soul? (Romans 12:1,2) I repent — 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

“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

⁶And he was amazed at their lack of faith. Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. ⁷Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits. ⁸These were his instructions: “Take nothing for the

journey except a staff — no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. ⁹Wear sandals but not an extra tunic.

¹⁰Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. ¹¹And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave, as a testimony against them."

—Mark 6:6-11, NIV

Read also Matthew 10:1-25

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Talk about the "great commission"! Here is a commission fraught with such warnings it would stop the stoutest heart. How I do want to gather around with the apostles as they listen to the words of your Son. Jesus commissioned them, but he also equipped them. "He gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to cure every kind of disease and sickness." I want to follow carefully his words as found by those who went or talked to those who heard him. (1) They were divided into teams of two. (2) "Do not go to the Gentiles or Samaritans" — go rather to "the lost sheep of Israel." (3) This was a preaching mission — the message was "the kingdom of heaven is near." (4) Their message was to be confirmed by the signs that followed. Such signs were to be done freely.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. I am going to continue my journey with these twelve men. (5) The twelve were to depend upon the hospitality extended by strangers. Such hospitality was considerable: (a) No money was needed. (b) No lunch bag was needed, i.e., no meals would be missed. (c) No one will need to sleep out in the open — so no extra tunic is needed. (d) One pair of sandals and one staff will be adequate. (6) Such hospitality would not be immediately available, but if they looked they could find someone to treat them as described. (7) The reception given to these men would be very important. The peace of yourself or your judgment would be the result. (8) The whole demeanor of your servants is described: (a) As shrewd as snakes, as harmless as doves. (b) Wary of men who could and would hand them over to local councils for a flogging in the synagogues. All this and much more. How easy is your service in comparison.

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 gave these men before he sent them out. (2) Thank you for the supernatural equipment our Lord gave to these men. (3) Thank you for our Lord's priority concern for the lost sheep of Israel. (4) Thank you for the degree of faith it took to even go as the Lord had commanded. (5) Thank you for the wisdom of serpents and the innocence of doves granted to his servants. (6) Thank you for the promise of "the Spirit of your Father" speaking through them.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... shake the dust off your feet when you leave, as a testimony against them." It is altogether remarkable that our Lord had such compassion on everyone and now makes this statement of what seems to be the rejection of some men. Jesus does not recommend a casual indifference. It would seem he wants a positive reaction to every situation. Why such an attitude? We need to first of all recognize just what it is our Lord recommends. In the first place, he is not rejecting men — he is simply accepting their rejection of him. In particular he is registering his disapproval of their refusal to understand his message. He wants those who disbelieve to know how serious their decision is.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Dear Lord, send me out into my world — yea, you already have! I now ask for your grace in these requests: (1) Develop my perception in accepting your word — the source of my faith. (2) Jesus still walks the streets of many villages today, i.e., in the person of his servants — teach your word through me. (3) I have no authority of my own — how I do want to let your authority be known. (4) Who is the one with whom you will send me out? Give me wisdom in choosing a partner. (5) Even in the hospitable culture of my Lord's day it took real faith to start out in total dependence upon others. Forgive me for my little faith. (6) I do need the courage to rebuke in the spirit of love those who need it.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these verses speak to my heart: (1) "I speak to you through my word before you can speak to anyone else." (2) "You can usually get more done by working with others than doing it on your own." (3) "People accept me or reject me — not you."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Israel — Point for prayer: *The missionary force* is variously estimated to be 350-1500. Pray for the Lord's servants who labor among the Jews where there is so little encouragement that they may not succumb to discouragement, and that they might know the Lord's will as to how best to minister.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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.

WEEK NINE

—Monday—

“If any man sin not in word the same is a perfect man.” I am NOT that man — but I want to be! Set a guard over my mouth! I bow before you for help!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord, keep watch over the door of my lips” (Psa. 141:3). There could hardly be a quality of yourself more needed by man, at least by *this* man. If you could somehow provide a protection against the many words we wish could be retracted — oh, that we could but return them. “The watch does not stand with his back to the mouth, to challenge what would come out.” There is a profound thought in this statement from *Graham Scroggie*. Dear Lord, you know how vulnerable we are to evil thoughts. In the midst of verbal exchange between men so many thoughts form in our mind. But if they never get out of the mouth then at least no sin in word has occurred. Why do some words never escape the mouth? Because of your guard, because of your 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 am constantly embarrassed at the hasty words that stream from my mouth. I need a clutch between my thoughts and my lips. It is this *guard*, it is this *watch*, it is this *clutch* provided by yourself! In what form or guise will this powerful ally appear? Dear Lord, I can think of several. (1) *Personal loss* — when it is a great loss, it produces a thoughtfulness — at least for a time — to set a guard on our lips. Whom you love you chasten — and this is part of the fruit of such chastening. (2) *The rebukes of men and women.* The exact opposite might occur at the moment of rebuke, but afterward it does yield this peaceable fruit. (3) *Memorizing your word* — and a constant review of it. Somehow it becomes easier to pause and wait before I answer when I have been thinking and repeating your thoughts. (4) Most of all, there is the promise of the blessed Holy Spirit who guards my heart and my thoughts in ways best known to him. Praise your dear Self.

CONFESSION OF SIN

In the nature of the praise there is confession. Is it with what men think or with what you think I am concerned in my words? Even as I write these words I want as much as possible with my deceitful heart to be totally honest with myself and yourself. “I do not know” is the answer to such a question. It really matters not at all to the real need just here — the need for forgiveness. In hasty words there is such a need for forgiveness! How well do I relate to these words of *Amos N. Wilder*:

*“Speak quiet words — the constellations wait,
The mountains watch; the hour for man is late
Likewise to still his heart and supplicate.”*

*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

²⁶“So do not be afraid of them. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. ²⁷What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the housetops. ²⁸Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot destroy the soul. Rather be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground

apart from the will of your Father. ³⁰And even the very hairs of your head are numbered. ³¹So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. ³²"Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. ³³But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown before my Father in heaven. —*Matthew 10:26-33, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Shall I ever lose my hesitancy as I approach this monumental task of reading the words of your Son back to you? This would indeed be the height of folly were it not for the purpose behind it. I am only telling you how very much these words mean to me — or I want them to mean to me. How often men have died in despair thinking that truth died with them. How comforting are his words! "There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known." The deep convictions of the heart — "get out in the sunlight before everyone and tell it!" How I do need to hear these words! Jesus here promises that men will violently oppose us (at least if we approximate the circumstances here described). What a power promise: "Do not be afraid. . . ." They cannot kill the real you!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. I do receive these words just for me. There will be a spiritual body in which men will live. How awful it will be to enter that body and be cast into hell! Love and kindness and personal concern are here, but the mind-jarring thought of everlasting punishment is also here. Wake up! *There is a hell to fear!*

If there ever was a verse I treasured to my heart it is Matthew 10:29: "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father . . . You are worth more than many sparrows." The kind of intimate interest indicated here is just marvelous! I have seen some tragic things happen to sparrows. But God has a way of balancing out their population. Sparrows will not live forever — we will!

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 constant assurance given by our Lord that there will be justice and equity in the total perspective of life. (2) Thank you for the urging of our Lord to speak out and not to hold back in declaring the good news. (3) Thank you that all fear of physical punishment can be removed by a more significant fear. (4) Thank you for the plain statement of the separation of the person from his body.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"I did not come to bring peace, but a sword." You

also defined the sword you came to bring — or at least the consequences of your sword: "For I have come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother . . . a man's enemies will be members of his own household." How sharp a sword is this! We all know just how heated a disagreement can become among members of the family. In attempting to project ourselves back to that day and time, we wonder just how the conversation went in the homes up and down the length of Canaan. It must have been over two basic points: (1) That his teachings were revolutionary and demanded much more than some were willing to give. (2) His humble station in life as a Nazarene was a barrier in the minds of many to his Messiahship. It hasn't changed from that day to this.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Surely these strong words of warning and encouragement lead us to prayer: (1) May I believe with my Lord that truth will ultimately triumph in every situation. (2) How I need to remember that there are really no secrets not known to you. (3) The courage of my Lord in the face of opposition is amazing — what excuse do we have for not proclaiming his word from the housetops? (4) My Lord expected opposition and triumph. How I want to adopt his attitude! (5) I really do not know how I would react to physical torture for your cause — I thank you I have not had to find out. (6) I am glad there is no death for the man inside — keep this truth ever bright!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in these words: (1) "Fear is an ever present threat." (2) "I know you better than Satan." (3) "Trust — not fear is the answer to your problems."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Israel — Point for prayer: *Missionary work among Jews* could be legally stopped. Unwise methods and tactlessness by certain more extremist groups has stimulated Jewish demands for the ending of all Protestant mission work. Pray for humility and tact for all serving the Lord from other lands.

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 NINE

—Tuesday—

How glad I am to ask for help from One I know is more anxious to give than I am to ask. You are indeed "the Lord of circumstances." Enable us to speak for you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

"Incline not my heart to any evil, to busy myself with wicked deeds in the company with men who work iniquity; and let me not eat of their dainties" (Psa. 141:4).

This is such a good verse to describe both your work and my work, both your involvement and mine in the development of character. This is a prayer to you but I am very much a part of the action. How do you incline my heart? How do you prevent inclination of heart? I am the active agent in busying myself with wicked deeds or seeking the company of men who work iniquity. Dear Lord, I have found through careful observation that I find circumstances being altered and environment changed because I prayed. It is *not* only my attitude that has changed. I praise you for being the Lord of circumstances!

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. In this time I want to spend it all on praise and very little on philosophy. For today and its needs: guard my heart and my desires. Arrange the circumstances of my life in such a manner that even now all my events are planned and arranged by yourself. May I be taught by trials and not overcome by them. Keep me busy about your interests. Deliver me this day from busy work, i.e., from the deadly danger in meaningless activity. Even if I am attracted to men who gather to talk and waste time make it possible for me to choose not to be there. In the fulfillment of the desires of my body give me your direction — you already have — but in the immediate application of what you have said I lean heavily upon the promises made in this verse.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

I think again of that blessed verse in Romans 13:14: "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *make no provision for the flesh*, to gratify its desires." It is in the provisions made ahead of the circumstance we find our greatest problem. Nay, more than a problem — *our greatest sin!* Do we really *want* deliverance from the inclination to sin? We have been such a long time in the world that we easily become a part of it. It is in the capitulation to the presence of evil that we sin. *It is not inevitable that evil shall conquer!* I can not and will not eradicate the desire to sin but I can decide to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" ahead of the temptation instead of deciding that I will enjoy the pleasures of sin. It is in this last decision I have sinned. Forgive me. I am repenting — help my continuing repentance.

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

Here, O my Lord, I see Thee face to face;
Here would I touch and handle things unseen;
Here grasp with firmer hand th'eternal grace,
And all my weariness upon Thee lean.

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

HIS WORD

¹²They went out and preached that people should repent. ¹³They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them. —Mark 6:12,13, NIV

⁶So they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere. —Luke 9:6, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Here we read of the fulfillment of the commission. It

is so good to see a plan carried out. Our Lord planned his work and worked his plan. This is the first commission accomplished. What we refer to as "the great commission" was also accomplished. Colossians 1:23 says ". . . the gospel which . . . has been preached to every creature under heaven. . . ." Not since these days has any generation taken our Lord seriously enough to do it again. Dear Lord, I want to do what I can to tell the world of your love. I notice the apostles were quite systematic in their efforts: they "went from village to village." If Jesus was a preacher, i.e., a public proclaimer — and his disciples were also preachers — then it ill behooves us to say a disparaging word about this means of communicating. Indeed it is your ordained manner of getting the job done.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Healing was as much a part of the apostolic preaching as the preaching itself. I can see how it was essential to the confirmation of what was said. Dear Lord, there are several wonderful truths here I want to embrace to my heart: (1) No restrictions were placed on either the preaching or the healing. All needed both, either for their physical needs or their spiritual needs. (2) The message is described as "good news" — how I do want that one basic attitude to pervade all I say on your behalf. (3) The message's purpose is described in the one word "repent." How very far short I fall in this area you know. Teach me, dear Lord, how to so speak that men will change their minds about you. (4) I am so glad for this plain all inclusive statement that demons could not stand before the authority of your "sent ones."

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 moral courage of the twelve. (2) Thank you they made no exceptions — "they went from village to village." (3) Thank you they made no distinction as to who would be healed. No mention is here made of faith or lack of it. (4) Thank you these men were telling glad tidings. (5) Thank you for the one word message that covers the whole spectrum of revelation: "repent." (6) Thank you for the power of the good news over demons. (7) Thank you for the oil, representative of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the healing of the sick.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

". . . and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them." We do not believe the oil was used to accomplish the healing but rather to offer comfort after the healing. The oil could be symbolic in representation of the presence of the Holy Spirit. The three

static characteristics of the healings of the New Testament are present here also: (1) *Instantaneous*. No progressive healings here. (We will comment on the one progressive healing in the ministry of our Lord when we come to it in our prayer time.) In the nature of the healer even Jesus, who has all authority, we preclude any other type healing. (2) *Permanent*. We do not read of those who lost their faith and therefore their healing. No faith is mentioned here. (3) *No failures*, or unsuccessful attempts. Since our Lord gave them authority to perform such miracles their confidence in his power prevented any failures.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I want to be a participant in the healing ministry of my Lord: (1) Is it easier or more difficult today to tell the story of his power and love? No matter — it *must* be told. (2) Teach me how to preach repentance. (3) How did these twelve men get the attention and interest of the people? How can I move men to hear? (4) I am glad we serve One who can defeat every effort of the evil one — give me the boldness I need. (5) Increase my compassion for the sick. (6) Deepen my awareness of the Holy Spirit's presence in all I do. (7) May I never lose the wonder of the goodness we have to tell.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in these few words as you send out to preach and teach: (1) "My message is still goodness — it just hasn't been told." (2) "There were just as many disbelievers in our Lord's day — he didn't stop." (3) "I am now omnipresently alive to give you the same commission to preach."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Israel — Point for prayer: *The Jews of the Dispersion*. There are about 13,000,000 Jews living in other lands. These people are more receptive to the Gospel than those in Israel. Many societies work specifically among the Jewish people in the U.S.A. and Britain, but little work is done in Argentina and France. Pray for this ministry — usually more in personal witness and patient caring for individuals — that it may bear fruit in the conversion of Jews to their Messiah. There are reports of many Jews now seeking the Lord in the U.S.A. and in the U.S.S.R., especially young people.

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 NINE

—Wednesday—

You are my portion in the land of the living. Each of us is given an inheritance — an allotment. Teach me how to use what you have given. John the Baptist is a very good example as to how you want us to use our portion.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

"I cry to thee, O Lord; I say, Thou art my refuge, my portion in the land of the living. Give heed to my cry; for I am brought very low!" (Psa. 142:5,6a). How very, very often I need a refuge — it seems the longer I live the more I need a refuge. There are so many distracting and unsettling circumstances in life. But there has never been a man born of woman that did not need a hiding place for an escape. David thinks of the dividing of the land of Canaan under Joshua and the portions given to the separate tribes. Each man is given an allotment in life, a *portion* of life in the land of the 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. The last portion of this verse does indeed describe my response to life in the land of the living: ". . . I am brought very low." Am I ready to say with the psalmist or the song writer "other refuge have I none"? What a solace it is to come to One who never changes! You are like a great rock in a weary land. I think of you also as a Father who offers the warmth and understanding of his love as my refuge. When my father was alive there never was a problem greater than his love. What I found in my earthly parent I can find multiplied a thousand-fold in you! Praise your name! "Christ is our life" — i.e., all of life — "For me to live is Christ" — Thou art my portion in the living of this day.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is always good to enter this area of worship as I am forced (at least at times) to think of how I have failed to fulfill what I have just affirmed. I have fled here

and there for an escape. I found I was more exposed to the battering of life than if I stayed where I was. Indeed, I can agree with the song writer: "other refuge have I none." My sin is in forgetting and yielding to the pressure about me to "try this" or "try that." How always disappointing they have been. Forgive me! How easy it is to be caught up in the flow of life "in the land of the living" and actually find very little time or place for yourself in my experience. "A *portion*" of the land of Canaan was where the person lived. I want to live in you! Just for today this shall be true!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Sweetly, Lord, have we heard Thee calling,
Come, follow me!
And we see where Thy footprints falling
Lead us to Thee.
Footprints of Jesus, that make the pathway glow;
We will follow the steps of Jesus where'er they go.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁴King Herod heard about this, for Jesus' name had become well-known. Some were saying, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him."

¹⁵Others said, "He is Elijah."

And still others claimed, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of long ago."

¹⁶But when Herod heard this, he said, "John, the man I beheaded, has been raised from the dead!"

¹⁷For Herod himself had given orders to have John arrested and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, whom he had married. ¹⁸For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." ¹⁹So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But she was not able to, ²⁰because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a

righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled; yet he liked to listen to him.

—Mark 6:14-20, NIV

Read also Matthew 14:1-5.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How poignantly does this text speak to me, I do want to attempt an approach that lifts these words into your presence. How slow and ignorant are men! Such would seem to be a reasonable reaction to the words of men about your Son. How is it some men knew more of John the Baptist than they did your Messiah? I cannot answer; I can only ask. Even in this mistaken view John did no miracles (John 10:41) so why imagine he is doing so now? It would seem men are intent on misunderstanding. Satan's efforts are to get us to choose any option but yours! How is it Herod would not come face to face with the issue of your Son?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Our estimate of John only increases the more we know of him! How courageous he was! Even in high places he did not hesitate to identify and condemn sin. Didn't John know that Herodias was a very dangerous woman? Did John know the depth of her evil designs? If he did it did not change his message. Dear Lord, how I want this courage today in every relationship of my daily living. I do believe there are evil men in my town who have a conscience much like Herod. Dear Lord, open my heart and mouth to them. Men and women on all sides live in a state of fornication or adultery without any thought of marriage — legal or otherwise. What would John say about the society of our day? We already know! Dear Lord, keep me from insensitivity!

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the willingness of Herod to believe with others in life after death. (2) Thank you for the tacit admission of the miraculous nature of our Lord's works. (3) Thank you for the anticipation of the coming of Elijah — however distorted. (4) Thank you for the courage of John even while in prison to preach to Herod. (5) Thank you for the rebuke to the heart of Herodias. (6) Thank you for the clear lesson here that until men and women know they are sinners they can never be saved. (7) Thank you for the attraction of the truth for all men.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... he was greatly puzzled; yet he liked to listen to him.” There was something strongly attractive about John the Baptist. When we remember Elizabeth and Zechariah — it all seems so long ago. We wonder if they are still alive; we would not imagine they were. What of all of John's disciples? We know how deeply our Lord felt about John. Herod had had contact

with the life of our Lord and his work from the beginning. The puzzlement of Herod was not as to who John was or what he represented. He was non-plussed over someone who did not fear the consequences of opposing Rome. How we would all have liked to listen to John. When one is totally full of the subject and the subject is the message from heaven he becomes a very interesting speaker. How sad to remember that Herod died in his sins and was lost!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What a section for prayer requests in our own life: (1) People in our Lord's day believed in life after death and the resurrection — our Lord taught the same — can I believe less? (2) Thank you for the large place the supernatural had in the record of his life — this is truth — this reality — keep me tuned in. (3) There are so many fine lessons from the life of Elijah — help me to learn at least one for today. (4) It is so good to agree with Peter that my Lord was indeed “the prophet” like Moses — open my ears to hear him! (5) What strange tricks a guilty conscience can play! Cleanse my conscience that I might look at all of life without fear. (6) John did no miracles (John 10:41), his life was his miracle — how I want to be like him. (7) There was something wonderfully strange about John — even for a man like Herod — it was John's courage and faith and wisdom — how much such men are needed now!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In this vortex of conflict speak to me: (1) “He that is the newest member in the body of Christ is greater than John the Baptist.” (2) “A burning message will attract attention anywhere.” (3) “My laws of adultery have not changed.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Iran — Population: 45,100,000. Annual growth 3%. People per sq. km. — 27.

Point for prayer: The 1979 Revolution has been a blessing in disguise. Islam has been shown to be a system worse than that which it replaced. Muslims are seeking answers. May the tragedy, hatred, cruelty, bloodshed and religious fanaticism open hearts to the Prince of Peace and doors for the gospel.

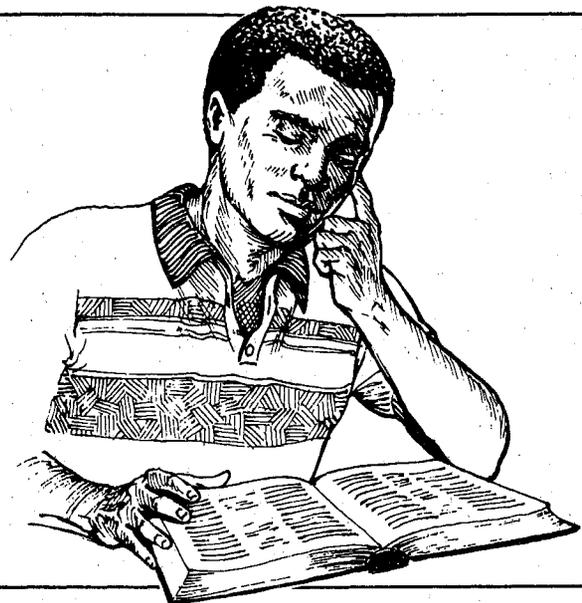
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK NINE

—Thursday—

I delight in your goodness — in both your general interest in all men and your personal interest in me. You have declared all your children righteous — “Amazing grace, how sweet the sound!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Hear my prayer, O Lord; give ear to my supplications. In thy faithfulness answer me, in thy righteousness! Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for no man living is righteous before thee” (Psa. 143:1,2).

The attributes of yourself seen in these two verses are so strong and helpful to me — and to all men. They are most of all just a source of praise and wonder. Just for yourself we praise you! Here is how I see you in these words: (1) You are listening to all our general requests in our *prayers*. (2) You take a personal interest in our personal needs as expressed in our *supplications*. (3) You have already pledged yourself to answer us. It is not at all because we deserve an answer — other than a blunt, “No!” (4) Your righteousness includes a means of declaring us righteous. Praise and exaltation to your glorious self!

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 know you hear all our prayers — however poorly or selfishly expressed. But in my personal intimate needs I ask your particular attentiveness. I know what a presumption this is, but I am emboldened to thus speak since I know of your character in the person of your Son. “It was in thy righteousness that thou didst make all your promises, but it is thy faithfulness that will keep each one.” Since I know what you have promised I know also what you will fulfill. Dear lord, I do have such sore needs — I bring them to you and claim your interest and love.

At the same time, I do not at all want justice — “no man living (beginning with me) is righteous before thee.” Give me mercy, O Lord!

How do you personally relate to the righteousness of God, and God who is merciful? Speak it out or write it out.

CONFESSION OF SIN

What a true term to describe myself, “*thy servant.*” Not “*thy good servant*” or even “*profitable servant.*” But just and only “*thy servant.*” You have already entered into judgment with your Son, your good and profitable *Servant!* Only because of your judgment with him can I at all take courage to even appear before you. I want to enter into judgment with myself that I be not condemned before you. How futile do all my efforts to reform become! It is only in your goodness that I find hope and motivation to repent. May this never, never become a license for disobedience. May my repentance be of yourself that it will produce the fruit of service.

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

When Jesus as Lord I had crowned,
My heart with this peace did abound;
In Him the rich blessing I found,
Sweet peace, the gift of God’s love.
Peace, peace, sweet peace!
Wonderful peace from above!
Oh, wonderful, wonderful peace!
Sweet peace, the gift of God’s love!

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

HIS WORD

²¹Finally the opportune time came. On his birthday Herod gave a banquet for his high officials and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee.
²²When the daughter of Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests. —Mark 6:21,22a, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How strange it seems to read these two verses in your presence — i.e., just for your benefit. On second thought, isn’t this what happens every time we read your word? How tragically pathetic all the efforts of

these men must appear to you! We wonder just which birthday Herod was remembering. You were there for every one of them from the first day until now.

Herod, or no man, will have one more birthday than you decide. Here is a celebration of the brevity of life and the certainty of death — i.e., from eternity's perspective. What important persons were in attendance that day? We are sure you know them all by name. What was in the mind of the girl as she danced? Whatever it was you read it. Herodias was really responsible as the source of this whole fiasco. And so it is that you watch the absurdities of men in high places.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Such sensationalism is more than prevalent in our day. To watch such a performance one need but flip the dial of the TV set or step into the Cinema. Such prostitution of your purpose for the appetites of men and women! There is such a pervasive attitude of hedonism in our day we are surely tempted to say in exasperation: "If you want to go to hell, go to hell!" But this is *not at all* the way you see man. Your satisfaction for the strange desires of man is so much more meaningful. We do not know the daughter's name; she is just "the girl" in the narrative — a "sex symbol" — "a thing." But you know her name. How much more you had for her than she found at Herod's party. How much more you have for all men than they can find at any of the parties of life.

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 this plain example of the contemporary value of all we see here. (2) Thank you for the warning of the serious consequences of living by the desires of the body. (3) Thank you for the futility seen in the efforts of man to please himself. (4) Thank you that this word has been kept until this day to say over and over again to us happiness is not in pleasure. (5) Thank you for your enjoyments that do not leave a residue of regret. (6) Thank you for the deliverance of John. He had a good conscience.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and the leading men of Galilee." This "stag" party was so very, very typical. (1) It gave no thought to the value of anyone present. It was "every man for himself." (2) It was based on pride and would easily explode into argument upon argument. (3) It was only an excuse for sex, food and other expressions of greed. The birthday of Herod was wholly incidental to their purpose. Probably most

of the men present hated Herod and wished "no happy returns of the day of his birth." (4) It was over too soon and left the regret that they had ever attended.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In Satan's opportunity there is a great need for prayer: (1) Guard me today that I might detect the evil one's devices. (2) Give me the wisdom to not give place to the devil in any area of life. (3) Satan gets much more credit than he deserves — I resist him. I need your grace to overcome. (4) I am no match for Satan — but with you and in you I am "more than a conqueror" — make this a reality today. (5) The lust of the flesh is multiple in its appeals — I want to be vigilant on all fronts. (6) Pride and ego can lead us into death-traps — deliver me! (7) I know my task in temptation is to get up and leave the dinner party and the sensual entertainment — I decide now so I will fulfill my commitment when the time comes.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me: (1) "Temptation is not sin — only your wrong choice is sin." (2) "Sitting in the seat of the scornful is an open door for Satan." (3) "Even evil men do not respect weakness."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Iran — Point for prayer: Unreached areas and peoples: a) Of the land's 66,438 villages, only half a dozen have a Gospel witness. b) Many sections of the population are unreached — the nomadic people, the middle class, university students, women and children, etc. c) The linguistic minorities — the 200,000 Muslim Baluchi and Brahui are more open now, but no one is working full time among them. Many other minority peoples have never been evangelized and have nothing of the Word of God.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine,
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine.
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His spirit, washed in His blood.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.

WEEK NINE

—Friday—

My total trust is placed in your person — this gives me a joy too wonderful to express! “Come, thou Almighty King, help us your name to sing!”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Let me hear in the morning of thy steadfast love, for in thee I put my trust. Teach me the way I should go, for to thee I lift up my soul” (Psa. 143:8).

In this beautiful verse I see you from several perspectives: (1) You speak to us through your word — as I meet with you this morning I can confidently expect to hear you speak to me. I am never disappointed! Praise your name. Each of the varied expressions I receive from you (and I am but a poor representative of all men who love you) is an expression of your steadfast love. (2) It is more than just *good* to put my trust in you — it is *glorious*. My trust is placed in your total person and this is more wonderful than I am able to express.

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. Once again the objective and the subjective aspects of my worship before you have overlapped. Morning seems to be a favorite time for David — and for David’s illustrious son. It is surely *the* very best time of the day for me. When I am rested and fresh and all the world is new and bright with prospect. None of this would be true if I did not arise with the purpose of hearing your voice as I open your word. How blessedly true is the next phrase: “Teach me the way I should go, for to thee I lift up my soul.” It would be a simple matter if I would pause before your throne and you would give my instructions for the day — to some extent this is what happens — but in the larger sense I am given but the small part of the larger lesson.

How do you personally relate to the steadfastness of God, and God who is love?

CONFESSION OF SIN

Why is it so easy some mornings and so difficult

other mornings to come to hear of your steadfast love? I know it is the fluctuation of my spirit and not of yourself. You have not changed or moved — I have! But I am glad to acknowledge that there has never been a time when I did not hear your voice as I read your word, if I acted on conviction and commitment and not only on the joyous feelings I have at times. It is my sincere desire to repair the changing moods of my heart so that all times I can lift up my whole inner being before your throne of grace.

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

Come, Thou Almighty King,
Help us Thy name to sing,
Help us to praise:
Father, all glorious,
O’er all victorious,
Come, and reign over us,
Ancient of Days.

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

HIS WORD

The king said to the girl, “Ask me for anything you want, and I’ll give it to you.”²³ And he promised her with an oath, “Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom.”

²⁴She went out and said to her mother, “What shall I ask for?”

“The head of John the Baptist,” she answered.

²⁵At once the girl hurried in to the king with the request: “I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a platter.”

²⁶The king was greatly distressed, but because of his oath and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her. ²⁷So he immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John’s head. —Mark 6:22b-27a, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

There could hardly be a more tragic place in the events of men. When life is in the balance all heaven pauses to see the outcome. How many millions of times such a decision has been made! No life is unimportant. No life is expendable like so much chaff. How much more was this true when the life of your prophet John was in the balance. There was no love involved in the whole transaction. Lust is not love — there is indeed “strong desire” (or lust) in love — but strong desire directed toward our own selfish ends cannot be described as love. Love is giving to others. Love is doing for others what is best for them. Lust is wholly selfish. All present were selfish: (1) The daughter was a pawn but selfish. (2) Herodias was the essence of selfishness. (3) Herod was there to do nothing else but satisfy his lust.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How easy it is to condemn someone else — and forget how very much we are also involved! This little scenario could be repeated in one form or another in many a life. Dare we say it? in *my* life? in *your* life? Dear Lord, thou knowest! Forgive me. Does lust always result in embarrassment and regret? When it gets out of hand and goes public it can indeed repeat the embarrassment of Herod — but even if we find no regret in this life there is all eternity ahead. The total consequence of our utter selfishness can be played back to us. Dear Lord, I want you to permanently erase ten thousand of my tapes! I am glad for the promise that you already have. I find it increasingly easy to not remember. Praise your name!

It is so important to 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 impulsiveness of Herod — in it we see ourselves and our weakness. (2) Thank you for the hateful scheming of Herodias — it tells us that there have always been such people, but they were no happier then than now. (3) Thank you for John’s release from this life — he was glad to enter your presence. (4) Thank you for the shock given to Herod — maybe somebody spoke to him about our Lord while his conscience was tender. (5) Thank you for the man who wielded the sword or ax in cutting off John’s head — how I hope he too began to evaluate the whole circumstance. (6) Thank you for Herodias — she could have remembered ere too late the enormity of her sin. (7) Thank you for the daughter — perhaps she learned from this episode and decided to serve someone better than her mother.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Then the king was sorry, but he was embarrassed to

break his oath in front of his guests.” Mark seems to suggest that if it were only a matter of breaking his oath with the daughter of Herodias or with God he would not have hesitated. Peer pressure is an awesome power! Was it wine that prompted the oath at the beginning? Was it the enflamed power of lust that put him in this embarrassment? It was all of this, but beneath it all it was Herod’s weak character that did it. How often have we found ourselves in almost the same position? Just as often as we allow what “everyone” else thinks to mean more to us than what our Lord has said.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Herod must have been very drunk to open his mouth with such a rash promise — there are various ways of being intoxicated — set a watch on my lips: (1) How easy it is to boast in the presence of our peers — humble my heart. (2) What a pawn was this daughter of Herodias! — but no more than some of us under different conditions — open the eyes of my conscience. (3) Why did Herod make such a foolish promise? — pride? — lust? — glory of men? Today the evil one will tempt me in these same areas — I want to be “slow to speak.” (4) How totally unexpected was the request — how it hurt Herod — *sin does have wages!*

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in a very personal way: (1) “Resentment demands a terrible price.” (2) “Mothers carry a heavy responsibility.” (3) “Wake up — sin is here.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Iran — Point for prayer: The minority ethnic Christian groups have not been singled out for harassment. Churches have continued to function despite fear and uncertainty, though many Christians are emigrating. Armenians and Assyrians are 95% of the Christian community, but most are nominal. Pray for a work of the Spirit in the Eastern, Catholic and small Protestant churches.

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 NINE

—Saturday—

What a marvelous teacher you are — so kind — so knowledgeable — so full of desire to communicate! How vastly important are the lessons you have for us. We look up in eager anticipation



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Teach me to do thy will, for thou art God! Let the good spirit lead me on a level path” (Psa. 143:10). I praise your name this morning! Such important qualities of yourself are suggested in this verse — you are a teacher — your Son came to teach and preach. Implicit in this designation are other attributes: (1) You have a great store of knowledge to share with men. (2) That you *want* to communicate with us is so important. (3) You have direction and instruction especially suited to our needs. (4) You have the right by reason of your nature — we would expect you to so instruct us. (5) It is by your spirit you lead men on a level path.

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 cast myself upon you in thanksgiving and praise and expectation. I want to relate each of the above qualities of yourself to me: (1) *Indeed, indeed* you have a great store of knowledge you want to share just with me (and I am only representative). You have two books out of which to teach me: (a) your Word; (b) my experience. (2) I believe, like most teachers, you are far more interested in communicating than we as students are in learning — I want to be that eager student on the front row. (3) The lessons you will teach me each day are especially prepared for my needs — praise you for such interest. (4) You are my God — and therefore you have my total respect and interest as a student.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

How like the poorest students I have had I do appear to you! There are several kinds of poor students —

and I see myself before you in every one: (1) There is that student who comes because his parents insist that he must. A sense of duty brings him to the classroom, but many times it is an unwilling sense of duty. (2) There is that student who already knows what he wants to do, and does not come to be taught but to teach. (3) The student who sits in class because that is where he has sat ever since he can remember. When one graduates from high school one enrolls in college and sits in another class. Dear Lord, dear teacher, forgive me! I am glad that these same students can suddenly (at times) become the open, willing learners we all want to be. Some loving words directed by your Spirit can lead us on your “level path.” Speak to me; I want to learn!

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

⁶On Herod's birthday the daughter of Herodias danced for them and pleased Herod so much ⁷that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. ⁸Prompted by her mother, she said, “Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist.” ⁹The king was distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he ordered that her request be granted ¹⁰and had John beheaded in the prison. ¹¹His head was

brought in on a platter and given to the girl, who carried it to her mother. ¹²John's disciples came and took his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus.

¹³When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns.

¹⁴When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. —*Matthew 14:6-14, NIV*

Read also Mark 6:27b-29; Luke 9:7-9.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Here is the whole sad incident again before us. Dear Lord, I want only to read it several times and make a few expressions of praise and wonder as related to the closing words. I do wonder what the guards thought as they went to perform their grisly job. What did they think of John? of Herod? of Herodias? of her daughter? of themselves and their task? Will we ever know? How sad must have been our Lord when he received the news, but was it really news to him? All such questions serve to open my heart to you.

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 a purely personal view I want to try and answer some of these questions: (1) What did the guards think of John? If they were in his audience as unrepentant sinners they probably thought "It's good to get rid of him and his message against my sin." If they believed John they must have thought: "How sad, Herod is the one who should lose his head — as a matter of fact, it is because he lost his head that we are on our sorry mission." (2) What did the guards think of Herodias and her daughter? If some women could only know what some men think of them it would shock them to see how far removed these thoughts are from what these women thought these men were thinking. The physical attraction was not ignored but the character of those involved was much removed from the lust of the moment.

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 your promises that are never made in haste. (2) Thank you I can be warned by this incident of the tragic consequences of selfish lustful decisions. (3) Thank you for reminding me again that there are men and women who will lie and cheat and steal regardless of the consequences. (4) Thank you for the beautiful record of John's life. (5) Thank you for the tender love John's disciples had for their teacher. (6) Thank you for the message John's disciples carried to Jesus. (7) Thank you for the hope mingled with grief in the death of John.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"And his disciples came and took the body and buried it; and went and told Jesus." What fond memories must have flooded the hearts of the men who came to take the body of John! People will make an evaluation of all of us shortly after our death. Will they remember us for some of the same qualities we see in John? (1) He was disciplined. From his birth he lived as a Nazarite — i.e. he lived apart from the ordinary lifestyle. He did have a different wardrobe and diet, but his distinction consisted most of all in his attitude. Do we care or dare to be different? (2) He was clear in his ethical code. There was never any doubt about what John believed about right and wrong.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What a sad day it was for the disciples of John and for our Lord. It should indeed lead us to prayer: (1) Help me to be as ready to buy up the opportunity for good as Herodias was for evil. (2) What did the guests think of Herod? Deliver me from the need of the approval of men. (3) What did Herodias think of her offering on the platter? Such revenge really never satisfies — do I really believe all vengeance belongs to you? (4) What thoughts were in the hearts of John's disciples as they prepared his body for burial? A good life provides a good death. (5) Our Lord himself delivered the eulogy for John — may I be as ready to give credit where credit is due.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In this sad incident there is much I can hear for my own heart: (1) "You can expect daughters to be very much like their mother — for good or evil." (2) "My Lord needed prayer as he thought of his dear friend John — can you do less in the loss of loved ones?"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Iran — Point for prayer: The events of the last few years have dynamized many of the Protestant churches. Low church attendances, personality clashes, lack of vision and witnessing characterized them in past. Many Protestants have fled, but their numbers have been more than made up by conversions in churches that fearlessly preach the gospel. Christians have been challenged to stand for the Savior and have had remarkable freedom to distribute literature and testify.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK TEN

—Sunday—

No man can tell of all your greatness and goodness — but here is one man who wants to try! In love, kindness, longsuffering, mercy — protection — in all these ways you are great and good! Let us worship him!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall laud thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts” (Psa. 145:3,4).

In this generation I want to lift up my voice and heart in adoration. Your greatness is so manifold it will be difficult to express. Yet this is my purpose. You are great in the care and love you supply to all men. There are primitive people whose life appears to us as most difficult. Upon a careful investigation you have somehow given them the ability to cope. It isn't that we should not attempt to help, but I want to acknowledge your provision of courage and survival. In this land of plenty how easy it is to be selfish and forgetful. I want to return praise for every good gift of this day.

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 great in so many ways, in each of them I want to praise you: (1) Great in love: how very kind and longsuffering you have been to me; bless your name forever. (2) Great in mercy: ten thousand times ten thousand you have given me good things undeserved. (3) Great in protection: over the millions of miles I have traveled I have not been injured. It is not because of my superior position or person; it is because of your goodness. (4) Great in hope: for each day my hope is in you. For all the days ahead and for eternity my hope is in you. (5) Great in purpose: if I could not open your Word and find my reason for living and dying life would be useless. Surely, “great and greatly to be praised” describes yourself.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, why do I find it sometimes difficult to praise you? It is because my capacity for praise is prostituted on myself or someone or something else. Dear Lord, forgive me! Awaken me to the terrible need to laud your works to the next generation. We are always just one generation from paganism. How I do want to delight myself in your word — in your Son. Forgive me for apathy and business that absorbs the time that should be and could be given to developing the motivation for praise. Ungratefulness is a serious sin. Keep me aware of this.

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 whole world was lost in the darkness of sin;
The Light of the world is Jesus;
Like sunshine at noonday His glory shone in,
The Light of the world is Jesus.
Come to the Light, 'tis shining for thee;
Sweetly the Light has dawned upon me;
Once I was blind, but now I can see;
The Light of the world is Jesus.

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

HIS WORD

³⁰The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. ³¹Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”

³²So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. ³³But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. ³⁴When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them,

because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. —Mark 6:30-34, NIV

Read also Matthew 14:13,14; Luke 9:10,11; John 6:1,2.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How beautifully thoughtful was our Lord! Jesus had been just as busy as his apostles, but when they returned he suggested they go to a quiet place and get some rest. The apostles had been busy — they reported to our Lord all they had done and taught. How I would like to hear their words! How long did it take for this report? We do not know the length of time, but we do know that during it there was such a press of people with so many to be healed and taught that there was not even time enough to eat. Luke tells us the apostles and our Lord decided that Bethsaida would be a good place for rest.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. There was no escaping the crowd and their needs. Indeed, Jesus really did not want to avoid the crowd. Our Lord struggled with the same problem every busy preacher or teacher has: how shall we find enough energy to meet all the needs? How shall we avoid a collapse? Jesus managed it. We are sure our Lord was calling on his Father for strength and grace equal to the task. But we are also sure Jesus was not calling on any resources of strength that are not available to us in overcoming the weaknesses of the flesh. Jesus was relaxed in the midst of his work. It is a clear conscience that gives us the needed confidence and through this the strength to do what needs to be done.

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 spontaneous joy in the hearts of the apostles that prompted them to share with our Lord: (2) Thank you that Jesus did not ignore anyone, but he did decide who would get his attention. (3) Thank you for my Lord's plain statement that rest is necessary. (4) Thank you for the ability of Jesus and the apostles to decide a course of action in the middle of constant demands upon their time. (5) Thank you for the persistence of the crowd — without it they would not have been helped. (6) Thank you for the continual compassion of my Lord. (7) Thank you for the healing ministry of Jesus — so full and complete and satisfying to all.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"He welcomed them and spoke to them about the

kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing." What an incredible example of unselfishness is our Lord! It was because of the fatigue and lack of rest he and his disciples had started on this journey. When their plans were frustrated Jesus remained calm and allowed the need of the crowd to overcome his need for rest. Fatigue is very largely mental, most especially in the kind of work in which our Lord and his apostles were engaged. The rule of God in the hearts and lives of men was more important than personal comfort. The little phrase ". . . those who needed healing" is most interesting. Jesus did not heal those who deserved healing or those who expected healing, but *all* those who needed it. What a wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How soon after the death of John did the demands of life crowd in upon our Lord — how like our own life — he needed prayer — so do we: (1) It was important for the disciples to tell Jesus of what they said and did — dear Lord I am glad for this example. (2) The "coming and going" of people was such a drain on the energies of my Lord he needed rest — so do I! Help me to recognize this need. (3) How glad I am to find each day a quiet place where I can talk with you and my Lord — I want to guard it closely. (4) They were not able to find the "solitary place" — but there was a little rest in the boat with him and it was enough. (5) The needs of people took precedence in the life of my Lord — give me grace to follow him.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me from these busy days of Jesus: (1) "Deepen, oh, deepen your compassion for the sheep without a shepherd." (2) "Teaching — not only food and healing will meet their needs." (3) "Variety in teaching is so important — remember to give it!"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Iran — Point for prayer: *Leadership training* is virtually non-existent. There is a small program that has now been launched. Pray for the raising up of strong, spiritual men of God to lead the churches into a new era of growth.

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 TEN

—Monday—

You are a rock amid a sea of sand! You are a fortress in a land of chaos! You are my deliverer when I have been defeated — my shield when I have no protection. I gladly worship you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Blessed be the Lord, my rock, who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle; my rock and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield and he in whom I take refuge, who subdues the people under him” (Psa. 144:1,2). In this psalm of David he is thinking of physical combat. With us we think of the battle of life. We are in a war, we are fighting the good fight of faith. You are described in these two verses as: (1) my rock; (2) the one who trains us for war; (3) the one who prepares our fingers for battle; (4) my fortress; (5) my stronghold; (6) my deliverer; (7) my shield; (8) in whom I take refuge; (9) the one who subdues the people under him. In each of these relationships I lift up my heart in 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. I should begin with the full acknowledgment that you are *Lord* — and then follow each of the nine relationships. I have praised you before in each of these qualities, but since those days you have not changed — praise your name! You are the One solid, unchanging Person I find in this life. I believe that even now, right now you are training me to rout the enemy of my soul. In a particular sense you are refining my preparation so I will be able to overcome in the personal encounter I have with the evil one. I must admit often that the battle is too much for me — I *must* have a resting place — I must find a fortress of meditation and quiet.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

All of the above is true — yea more than true. But none of the above is as full and complete as it should

be, and can be. You are my rock, but I have been lost in many a swamp. You can train me for war, but I have been late to class or absent without excuse. You can prepare me for hand-to-hand combat, but I wasn't listening when you spoke. You are my fortress and stronghold, but I would prefer to lay out in the field and complain that I had nowhere to go and it was not my fault if I was overcome. You are my deliverer and shield but I would rather do it myself. Dear, dear Lord, what a terrible admission of my sin. Thank you for opening my eyes. Turn repentance to joy!

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 whole world was lost in the darkness of sin;
The Light of the world is Jesus!
Like sunshine at noonday His glory shone in,
The Light of the world is Jesus.
Come to the Light, 'tis shining for thee;
Sweetly the Light has dawned upon me;
Once I was blind, but now I can see;
The Light of the world is Jesus.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁵As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.”

¹⁶Jesus replied, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

¹⁷“We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered.

¹⁸“Bring them here to me,” he said. ¹⁹And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he

gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. — *Matthew 14:15-19, NIV*

Read also Mark 6:35-42.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I am truly hesitant to take up this narrative in your presence! Even your Son used this incident as the basis of a lesson on the bread of life. Truly evening has come and we all are in a remote place! For how many hours had my Lord taught them before supper time? It was a crucial hour — if the crowds were not now sent away they could not get to a village before sundown or in time to eat. What a total shock it was to hear the words of your Son: “*They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat!*” We are sure Jesus did this to open their eyes to their insufficiency and his sufficiency.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How we would like to have been the little boy on that day! Perhaps we can. As our Lord continued to break the loaves and fish they continued to appear in his hands. Ah, but *before* he did it he prayed. Jesus looked up to heaven. What did he see? The same white clouds and blue sky, but it was all so different to him. He saw also the canopy of space he and his Father had created for these people — and all others who lived under it. Now the same Father and Son were about to create food to feed this hungry multitude. This creation was to be just as subtle as the present one on which and under which these people lived. If those who ate did not look very closely they would hardly know from whence it came. Indeed, some never did! But one little boy did!

It is so important to 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 obvious extremity which became your opportunity. (2) Thank you for the practical interest of the disciples in the welfare of the people. (3) Thank you that Jesus opened the eyes of the disciples as to just how all needs are met: by himself. (4) Thank you that Jesus asks us to feed the multitude — through him. (5) Thank you that Jesus alone can feed the world, but he cannot feed the world alone. (6) Thank you for the little boy and his lunch — so like all of us. (7) Thank you for the orderliness of this whole incident — so like God!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Then Jesus directed them to have all the people to sit down in groups on the green grass.” Our Lord knew what he was doing at all times. His total confidence amid every circumstance is an evidence of his

deity. It is also good to see how Jesus did not himself do everything; he gave instructions to others and trusted them with the task. The orderliness of the feeding of this multitude is not the last of its features. Mark indicates they were separated into groups of fifties and hundreds. It must have been a beautiful sight. With the variety of colors in the robes of the people as they were seated in groups they would look much like so many flower beds spread across the hills in the green grass. How beautiful are all his ways!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the preparations for this miracle of creation there is much about which to pray: (1) The disciples were concerned about the needs of the crowd — even as I want to be — but I want to look beyond the physical. (2) Indeed, “it is already getting late” — for me and the generation of which I am a part. If ever they are to have the bread of heaven it must be now! (3) Jesus never sent anyone away empty — Lord, make me such a teacher! (4) My Lord asked the disciples to feed the crowd, even when he knew and they knew they could not do it — “. . . apart from me you can do nothing.” (5) Five loaves and two fish in the hands of Jesus are more than enough for a multitude. (6) Love is doing what my Lord says — even when I do not understand.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to my heart again: (1) “Even Jesus pleased not himself — but those who did not appreciate what he gave.” (2) “Giving of thanks is always in order.” (3) “One of the disciples — yea, *two* of the disciples who distributed the loaves gave their eyewitness account.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Iran — Point for prayer: *Missions* — There are no longer any missions working in Iran. Pray for those laboring among the Irani diaspora, and for others to be called into this key ministry. Pray open the door to the many unreached peoples in Iran. How else can they hear?

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Come, Thou Almighty King,
Help us Thy name to sing,
Help us to praise.
Father, all glorious,
O'er all victorious,
Come, and reign over us,
Ancient of Days.

WEEK TEN

—Tuesday—

How wonderful to have God for my King — and have a King for my God! I have found 365 attributes of yourself for which I can praise you and yet there are more!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I will extol thee, my God and King, and bless thy name for ever and ever. Every day I will bless thee, and praise thy name for ever and ever” (Psa. 145:1,2).

What are the characteristics of yourself in these verses for which I can praise you? (1) The fact that it is possible to find qualities of yourself for which I can lift words of praise is in itself an attribute of yourself. (2) You are my God, the one before whom I bow and to whom I gladly give obeisance. (3) My king — the ruler of all. The present reigning monarch — the One who shall reign eternally. (4) It will be possible in eternity to continue our praise — throughout the endless life of heaven we shall have no problem finding reasons to lift our voices in wonder and adoration. (5) Each day I am alive on this earth I can extol your goodness.

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. In this song of praise David is setting an example of continual praise. The qualities I see in your word for praise shall never fail. Should I live to the advanced age of one hundred I shall never exhaust the reasons for adoration of your very self. I am growing in my understanding of all it means to worship you as my God. In you I live and move and have my being, but totally outside of myself are the worlds you have made. (1) You have created such a lovely world of plants and trees. To know the One who has created the leaf I hold in my hand is a true source of wonder. (2) You have created the animal world. Our little dog is a curious and interesting example. I bow in amazement before you as Creator.

How do you personally relate to praising 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

In eternity — in the world and life to come I will indeed extol thee forever and forever. It is also very possible to praise you several times during this day. Will I do it? If the yesterdays are any example it could be that I will not. But yesterdays *are not* the examples. It is in David and in the lives of many others who worshiped you daily I have an example. The attitude of praise and gratitude is such a wonderful way to live. Forgive me for living below the plane of joy.

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

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!

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

HIS WORD

¹²Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, “Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here.”

¹³He replied, “You give them something to eat.”

They answered, “We have only five loaves of bread and two fish — unless we go and buy food for this crowd.”¹⁴(About five thousand men were there.) But he said to his disciples, “Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each.”¹⁵The disciples did so, and everybody sat down. ¹⁶Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to set before the people. —Luke 9:12-16, NIV
Read also John 6:3-12.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

This is surely one of the most impressive of all the miracles your Son did during his whole ministry. I do want to allow each of these blessed words to enter my heart. The twelve came to Jesus to give him an order. "Send the crowd away. . . ." Were they a little impatient with the interruption of the proposed rest? It was Andrew who found the boy with the five loaves and two fish. Andrew brought the lad to Jesus. This seems typical of this man: he brought his brother Peter to Jesus, he brought some Greeks to Jesus and now here a little boy. I am sure we shall never be able to appreciate the total impact of this miracle, but we can praise you and thank you for it.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

John says all who were there that day ate all they wanted — or ate until they were filled. Did anyone but our Lord thank the creator of all for what they were eating? The attitude of the crowd in throwing the fragments on the ground would indicate something of their carelessness. We wonder if when the apostles came to collect the partially eaten pieces did they have any help from the crowd. It must have taken some time to walk over the hills where each of the groups had been gathered and search out the broken pieces. Dear Lord, had I been there would I have helped them? I would like to think I would have. At least I want to do so 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

(1) Thank you for the countermand of Jesus in his words, "You give them something to eat." (2) Thank you for the little lad — he never forgot that day. (3) Thank you for every single group — how I want to take my place in this picnic! (4) Thank you that all four biographers recorded this miracle. (5) Thank you that with my Lord nothing is wasted. (6) Thank you that nobody argued with my Lord. (7) Thank you that this miracle was so prominent no one ever thought of doubting it.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"They all ate and were satisfied." How typically beautiful is the feeding of these people and our Lord's response to the needs of the whole world. I believe there is not only more than enough food to feed the whole world, there is an abundance! There is more than enough to serve bread to the men and women of the earth. If the several million followers of our Lord would unite in their efforts to meet the needs of mankind we would soon have all eating and satisfied. How abundantly our Lord would satisfy the hearts of

all men! When Jesus created the physical world he did so in a most lavish manner. Consider just the leaves for one tree — or the stars of one galaxy! It is the tragedy of all tragedies that the bread of life is held to the pantry while the world starves to death.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

We shall look through the eyes and hearts of Luke and John at this same miracle: (1) John says the Passover was near — indeed it was part of the Passover crowd he fed — am I as blind and preoccupied with my own affairs as were some of these religious folk? (2) Test my understanding and faith today — may I learn as well as Philip. (3) Andrew was "Mr. Nobody" — but it was Andrew who became very important by finding the boy with his lunch — may I learn this lesson. (4) There is something wonderfully orderly about all the actions of Jesus. Can I learn something here?

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me out of this miracle: (1) "Jesus blessed both the loaves and the fish — so must everything be brought to me." (2) "Jesus gave more than enough — how do you give?"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Iran — Point for prayer: *The Kurdish people* in the north west need to be evangelized. Their number has greatly increased with a large influx of Iraqi Kurds fleeing their land since the Iraqi government crushed their uprising with great ferocity in 1975. There are just a few seeking to reach these unfortunate people — pray for the planting of churches.

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 TEN

—Wednesday—

I can and want to tell of the beauty of your rule in the hearts of men. It is like a treasure hid in my backyard — like a beautiful pearl — like a wedding feast. Like a great meal you have prepared!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and tell of thy power, to make known to the sons of men thy mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of thy kingdom” (Psa. 145:11,12).

If ever there was a fulfillment of these verses it is today! Of all men we can tell of the character of your kingdom. Your Son came announcing the soon coming of your kingdom. Since the beginning your rule in the hearts of men is your one glorious purpose. The fulness of this kingdom is found in the acceptance of the Lordship of Jesus. Your dear Son described your kingdom as a treasure hid in the field — a pearl of great price — like a mustard seed. Your “mighty deeds” as seen in the ministry of your Son are surely a source of good news. How men today need to hear of “the glorious splendor of thy kingdom.” What a privilege to tell of such a king and of such a rule.

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 shall I tell of the glory or essence of the body of your Son? — even his church. All of the kingdom is not seen in the church but the ultimate is here. I want to say that your kingdom is like a wedding feast. All who participate should be happy, but also related to what is happening. We can be happily engaged in our own interests and not be prepared when the bridegroom comes. I want to say your kingdom is like the return of a wealthy landowner to ask for a reckoning with his servants. Those who used what the master gave them to the master’s advantage were rewarded — those who didn’t were thrown out as unprofitable servants. The kingdom is like a gathering of all before the throne of the king of the universe. He will then tell us that when we served others we served him!

How do you personally relate to the kingdom of God, and God who is King?

CONFESSION OF SIN

In all these familiar relationships I rejoice — and I also am moved to repentance. In each of the above areas I do want to change my mind: (1) I want to discover anew today the beauty and value of the forgiveness of sin and the eternal home. (2) I do purpose to sell all I have that I might have the one pearl of great price! (3) How I do want this day to fill up my vessel with the glad oil of gladness — may I be that kind of a light to someone. (4) Use whatever you have given me to your advantage. Give me thoughtful decisions in the use of all your goods. (5) I do want to see your Son in the person of those with whom I live today. Most of all, forgive me for not telling those who need to hear of the glorious splendor of thy kingdom.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now.

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Thou, my everlasting portion,
More than friend or life to me;
All along my pilgrim journey,
Savior, let me walk with Thee.
All along my pilgrim journey,
Savior, let me walk with Thee.

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

HIS WORD

¹³So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

¹⁴After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to say, “Surely this is the Prophet who is come into the world.” ¹⁵Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again into the hills by himself. —John

6:13-15, NIV

Read also Matthew 14:20,21; Mark 6:43,44; Luke 9:17.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It is in the recovery of the fragments that Matthew and Mark indicate how many were fed. Counting the women and children along with the men there must have been no less than 15,000 fed that wonderful day. I am sure no one ever ate a better barley loaf or tasted a better piece of fish than the ones created by my Lord. The baskets used for the gathering — small baskets would not have permitted the rapid distribution of that day. Dear Lord, I am trying to enter the scene and sit with the crowd. I want to move over the hills and help the apostles gather up the leftovers.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. The people who followed him did so because of his miracles. When they had shared in this miracle some of them were ready to take him by force and carry him to Jerusalem at the Passover as their king! Dear Lord, you *are* my king. I need to ask myself just *why* I want you to be my king. Do I follow you for the bread and the fish? Supposing I were suddenly placed in the harsh environment of one of the several third world countries I have seen — would I then serve you? My Lord had to retire for eight or nine hours of prayer just after this clamor to make him king. My dear Lord, I do want to serve you just for your own dear self and my love for you — deepen and purify my motives.

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 insistence of the writers that at least 15,000 were fed. (2) Thank you for the tangible evidence of such a great miracle in the pieces left over. (3) Thank you for some who looked beyond the food to the One who had given it to them. (4) Thank you for my Lord who was indeed a Prophet — but much more than a prophet. (5) Thank you for the power of the personality of my Lord that he was able to dismiss the crowd who wanted to make him king. (6) Thank you that even Jesus felt his need to be alone and separated even from his disciples. (7) Thank you for the clear strong purpose by which my Lord walked all the way to Calvary.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again into the hills by himself.” We do wonder just how often our Lord needed to find this solitude with God? There are many of us who do not have the pre-conditioning that would make such a withdrawing beneficial. A vacation or a temporary “break” in the routine can be very boring. It was only because Jesus had established

contact with the Father in the usual daily living that a visit to the mountains became a real source of strength to him. If we have not established a prayer habit we are quite uncomfortable both when we are by ourselves in prayer and when we are called upon to lead in public devotion. These people did not want his personal rule in their lives, hence Jesus withdrew.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In this record of gathering up the broken pieces that nothing should be lost there is much pause for prayer: (1) Jesus was against waste and loss — I want to be like him — but with the same attitude! (2) What immense crowd must have been present to have left such a quantity of fragments — impress on me again the wonder of this sign. (3) At least some of the people caught the supernatural aspects of what was happening — guard me against jumping at conclusions that are only partially thought out. (4) Deliver me from the inordinate praise of men. (5) Deliver me from any desire to seek such praise.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You have spoken to me so many times in the record of this miracle — do it again: (1) “Surely I was *the Prophet* — but I must also decide what is to be done.” (2) “Jesus needed to be by himself to pray when men wanted to acclaim him — go thou and do likewise.” (3) “The fresh bread from heaven is available every day to give you new life.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Iran — Point for prayer: The university students are neglected — pray for the raising up of a witness to them. Pray also for the conversion of Iranian students studying in other lands.

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 TEN

—Thursday—

I lean heavily on your arm — I am falling — uphold me! I am bowed down with sorrow — raise me up! Such help is available to all!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The Lord upholds all who are falling, and raises up all who are bowed down” (Psa. 145:14). I like this lovely verse because it refers to me. But I know I am no different than millions of other persons who have this problem. In these words we find such strength and encouragement. For one reason or another man becomes weak and begins to stumble. He is like a man sick or drunk, he cannot walk. There is no word here as to why he falls — it is describing the help of the helpless not the sin of the sinful. I am so glad for the frequent use of that little word *“all.”* It is the very nature of yourself to reach out to help those who stumble. The second part of the sentence is in some ways even more of a source of praise — *“The Lord . . . raises up all who are bowed down.”* Even if we have not stumbled there are times when we carry an intolerable burden.

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. In a most personal practical way I want to tell you how you have fulfilled this verse in my life and praise you for it. (1) I have been falling away from your desire to save the lost world in which I live. You have so many ways of lifting me and protecting me from this deception of Satan. You lead me to a magazine that describes the successful evangelistic efforts of people just like me. You give me a class to teach — I cannot teach what I do not do. (2) I have a sore temptation to mistake a part for the whole in the development of human character. It is so easy to condemn a whole class because of two or three poor students; to write-off a whole congregation because of a few unconverted leaders. Thank you so much for opening my eyes and heart to your value system.

How do you personally relate to the strength of God, and God who is our strength? Speak it out or write it out.

CONFESSION OF SIN

How sad it is to admit that the divine help was available but I did not want it! I was falling and did not want to be stopped. I was bowed down but refused help. Why? Why? It is because there was a perverse sense of enjoyment in falling — or at least I was deceived into believing there would be. Satan’s lie has been: *“Isn’t it easier to let the world go to hell? They are going there anyway — they don’t care, or want salvation.”* It has *not* been easier. Men *can* be saved if we will teach them. What an easy mark we have become for our enemies’ fiery darts of pride! Somehow we imagine someone’s failure in class is a reflection on our integrity. What a mistake! Somehow we decide we are *“the pastor”* or leader or head of the church and those who will not learn are a reflection on us. Dear God, forgive me!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now.

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Abide with me, fast falls the even tide,
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

⁴⁵Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. ⁴⁶After leaving them, he went into the hills to pray.

⁴⁷When evening came, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he alone was on land. ⁴⁸He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. About the fourth watch of the night he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them. —Mark 6:45-48, NIV
Read also John 6:16-18.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, will I ever be able to say anything adequate to express my constant amazement at actions of your Son? How I wonder if the disciples asked him what he was going to do or if they wanted to know where he was going. It would seem there was an irresistible urgency in our Lord. Both the crowds and the disciples responded to it. How I would like to know what he said in his prayer. Did Jesus know he was going to defy the laws of gravity and walk on the surface of the lake? Did he know the heart needs of his disciples — we know he did — was this the content of his prayer?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How was it possible for Jesus to see the disciples in the middle of the night two or three miles from the shore as they struggled in the raging waters? Our Lord walked several miles on the surface of the lake to reach the boat. I want to get into the boat with the disciples. Indeed, I have been out there many a time, i.e., the ship of my life has often been "making headway painfully." There are such poignant touches in the different accounts of his appearance: (1) *Matthew* says: ". . . they were terrified, saying, 'It is a ghost!' And they cried out in fear." (2) *Mark* says: "He meant to pass by them." (3) *John* says: ". . . they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat." Such an amazing miracle! Dear Lord, I believe!

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 three accounts which all contribute something different. (2) Thank you for his blessed words: "It is I; do not be afraid." (3) Thank you for Mark's account: "Take heart, it is I; have no fear." (4) Thank you for the credibility of this miracle — several men were involved and the distance was great. (5) Thank you for the wonderful way our Lord combined meeting the needs of the disciples and demonstrating his deity. (6) Thank you for the time our Lord chose for the miracle — the most unlikely possible. (7) Thank you for the cumulative effect of his miracles.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Take heart, it is I; have no fear." How often we do need to hear these words! It would seem our ship is caught in a storm most of the time. We need these powerful words each day. Our courage comes from our relationship with our Lord. Only when we recognize who he is does a calm possess our hearts. Jesus wanted the disciples to see him — this is in-

dicated in Mark's comment that he appeared to want to walk past them. How he does have ways of attracting our attention so we will look through the storm and see him. How much more meaningful it was for Jesus to walk on the water at night in the midst of a storm rather than in the broad daylight on a calm lake. This calls attention to the need of the disciples as well as his deity. A daylight performance would have been just a performance.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Our Lord is full of unexpected words and actions — as he retired to pray so I want to pause before those verses to pray: (1) Jesus did not even want his disciples to stay around for gossip about the miracle — he wanted to "call the shots" — it is so today! (2) I do wonder what he said to dismiss and disperse the crowd? He needs to break up some of our assemblies — give us ears to hear him. (3) Since Jesus put them in the boat and sent them out on the water didn't the disciples wonder when such a terrible storm broke on them? It happens now in my own life — let me learn. (4) Jesus looked through the dark night and saw the disciples at a distance of several miles — can I doubt that he sees me even now?

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What wonderful encouragement is in this incident for me: (1) "I see your strain and confusion." (2) "I will test your faith to secure my response." (3) "Trust me — I know — I see — I care."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Iran — Point for prayer: *Christian literature is in surprisingly great demand*, but supplies and distributors are limited. Praise God for the courageous colportage work of Irani Christians, several Christian bookshops, as well as the work of the Bible Society. Pray also for cassettes, videos, correspondence courses, Bibles and literature distributed before the revolution. Bibles are now being printed in Iran, but only four language groups have a Bible; many languages are without anything of God's Word.

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 TEN

—Friday—

We worship One who is just in all his ways — who is kind in all he does — who is here for all who call upon him! One who walks on the water to help us.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The Lord is just in all his ways, and kind in all his doings. The Lord is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth” (Psa. 145:17,18).

How easy it is when the sun is shining and every prospect pleases to agree with the psalmist. But let the clouds gather in the sky and we begin to wonder — if the thunder rolls and the lightning strikes, we are sure some mistake has been made by the One who controls such activities. Dear Lord, I want to affirm my faith in your justice. I believe that whereas I cannot understand here it will not take you longer than a few years to explain it all when I awake in your likeness. Justice is easier to accept for all conditions than *kindness*, and yet I know full well such is indeed true of yourself.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

I claim just now the promise of the eighteenth verse: *“The Lord is near to all who call upon him. . . .”* As I lift my heart to you in praise and adoration I sense your presence and power. There is a deep awareness of peace in my heart; thank you for your grace! I must add the little phrase which is the key to this door of blessings: *“To all who call upon him in truth.”* It is only when my heart is in agreement with what you have written that I have a claim upon this promise. Sin has a way of desensitizing our inner being. I do not come to persuade you to accommodate your word to my understanding or desires. I come to call upon you as a Father who can forgive and help His child. I *want* to do your will, O God.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

How profoundly interesting is this time of worship. In

this time before you I discover the depths of your truth and of the deception of my heart. How terribly destructive is the decision that in any circumstance you are not just or kind! How utterly devious to the human personality it is to call upon you out of falsehood! May I relax just now, and as a child who trusts the love and wisdom of his parents say out of faith: “You are just in all your ways and kind in all your doings.” I will never call upon you until I have repented of my sin and have brought my conduct in line with your word. How essential then is a daily confession of my sin and a wholehearted acceptance of your 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

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

²⁵During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear.

²⁷But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” —Matthew 14:25-27, NIV
About the fourth watch of the night he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, ⁴⁹but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, ⁵⁰because

they all saw him and were terrified. —Mark 6:48b-50, NIV

¹⁶When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, ¹⁷where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them. ¹⁸A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough. ¹⁹When they had rowed three and a half miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were terrified. ²⁰But he said to them, "It is I; don't be afraid." —John 6:16-20, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

The disciples evidently believed in the presence of ghosts. We would understand this to be tantamount to the presence of demons. It must have been an accepted tradition that demons would at times appear in such a form. There was *indeed* something strange and frightening out there on the surface of the lake. I want to see this situation as much like the disciples as at all possible. Matthew (who was present in the boat) says they actually recognized Jesus, but because no one can walk on the water they simply would not accept what their eyes told them. The cries of fear and dread can be heard in my imagination even now.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Jesus wasted no time calling attention to the sensational aspects of this miracle. He "*immediately*" spoke to them. The disciples could think of no reason for a ghost appearing to them, unless to strike terror into their hearts as they went into death through drowning. In another 30 seconds the emotions of the disciples would be out of control and panic would have taken over. It must have been with a loud firm voice my Lord said, "*Take heart, it is I; have no fear*"! Dear Lord, how I want to hear you speak to me in every situation! In the midst of a financial storm — "Take heart; it is I." While the waves of personal family problems roll: "Take heart; it is I." In all of such storms I hear him say: "Have no fear."

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 small details of this account that make it so credible. (2) Thank you that two who were there (Matthew and John) told the story. (3) Thank you for Mark who was glad to report from these eyewitnesses. (4) Thank you that these men acted in such an expected manner. I relate wholly to them. (5) Thank you for the planning of my Lord evident in this incident. (6) Thank you for this demonstration of my Lord's power over the laws he himself originated. (7) Thank you for the multiplied thousands who have found assurance in these beautiful words.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat." Three or four miles of rowing under the heavy weather here described would take several hours. It would seem the sea was not so dangerous that they were to be drowned — perhaps they were close to their destination when Jesus appeared upon the water. It would also seem that they saw him from some distance and became increasingly frightened as he approached them. We wonder at the guarded remarks of John (6:19), but then we remember he was a fisherman. Matthew and Mark were not fishermen and their accounts are full of terror.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the early hours of the morning — while it was still dark Jesus came to them "walking on the lake." (1) Jesus does come at the strangest times and ways — but just when we need him most — thank you! (2) The disciples had no explanation but your supernatural power — this is enough. (3) I am terrified at the wrong person or thing; why should I be terrified at all? Help me. (4) The disciples believed in the spirit world — help me to share their faith. (5) Our Lord is immediate in his response to need — I want to remember for this day and its needs. (6) Why did he direct his steps as if he would pass them by? So it does seem full many a time in our own experience. He didn't — and he will not today.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As he spoke to them in the dark storm of the early morning — speak to me: (1) "I am never far away — you are." (2) "I see you now as I did with them then." (3) "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Iran — Point for prayer: *Bible correspondence courses* have been a very fruitful ministry among Muslims. The largest has handled over 45,000 applications and applicants come from every religious background.

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 TEN

—Saturday—

Our God sets prisoners free — opens blind eyes. He lifts up all who are bowed down. He loves righteousness because he knows its glorious benefits. He is our God — let us worship him.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous” (Psa. 146:7b,8).

We are reminded of the words of your Son in Nazareth’s synagogue. The psalmist found the same promise fulfilled in yourself. What more obvious evidence that you and your Son are one in nature? It is your purpose to set all the prisoners free! Praise your wonderful name! How all men can relate to this blessed good news. We could easily describe this whole planet as held captive. We have been taken captive and are held as hostage by the Evil One. Wonder of wonders the ransom has been paid and the hostages are set free! There is an infection that has blinded the eyes of the hearts of all men. Praise your name, the Great Physician has come! Those who are lifted up and whom you love are those once blind prisoners!

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

Unless and until I can be specific the above description is but one of the millions of pious platitudes written and spoken over the years for the amusement of man’s ego! What are the areas where I have been set free? What have I been since I became a Christian that indicates I once was blind? Dear Lord, I am glad to answer those probing questions: (1) *I am free from every sin back of the last one I confessed!* (I feel like cramming such a testimony down Satan’s throat!) (2) *I am free of hopelessness* — I have the highest possible hope for all I do in this life and the hope of heaven is an excitement beyond words. (3) *I am free of anxiety.* I believe my whole life is in the hands of — not my employer — but my Father. In my liberty, I find my sight!

How do you personally relate to the liberating

power of God, and God who sets us free? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is good that every day I can be reminded of the dichotomy operative in my experience. I am the prisoner set free, yet at times I am hindered and bound. I am the blind man who was given his sight and yet there are glorious vistas to which I have been blind. I am the one who was raised up and yet today I am “down” in my spirit. Why? Why? The answer is threefold: (1) *The process is continuous.* There will be new freedoms and new vistas and new burdens lifted every day; (2) *The process is growing.* What I did not know was bondage yesterday I discovered today. What we never looked for yesterday we revel in today. An inward burden that we did not see was lifted. (3) *Satan is a liar.* We have imagined with the devil’s help many shackles and eye problems and burdens that never existed! Praise your name, I am fine!

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

Take time to be holy,
Speak oft with thy Lord;
Abide in Him always,
And feed on His Word.
Make friends of God’s children;
Help those who are weak;
Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek.

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

HIS WORD

²⁸“Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.”

²⁹“Come,” he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat and walked on the water to Jesus. ³⁰But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

³¹Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

³²And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." — *Matthew 14:28-33, NIV*

Read also Mark 6:51,52; John 6:21.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

The daring of Peter has been a challenge to men over the centuries. There are many good things about Peter's request: (1) He wanted to confirm his faith in our Lord. (2) He accepted the supernatural nature of our Lord — it was almost more than he could understand but he did believe. (3) He believed Jesus even in this supernatural position would take an interest in Peter. (4) He believed that whatever Jesus said it would happen. There were also several hasty ill-judged aspects of Peter's request. (1) It would seem he wanted to do something no one else did — or could — but from the wrong motive. (2) Attention to himself would have resulted if he completed his walk.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Lord, perhaps I have misjudged Peter and he had no such motives. It does seem that the other apostles would soon make the same request and all would be walking on the water. Forgive me if I have not understood this correctly. It was the command of Jesus that got Peter out of the boat and controlled gravity. It was also the living faith of Peter that made it possible. It would seem that when his focus of attention was broken by the winds and the waves the control of our Lord was also broken and he began to sink. How full of meaning this is for 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 our Lord's patient love for Peter. (2) Thank you that Jesus was willing to honor Peter's faith. (3) Thank you that Jesus never took his eyes off Peter. (4) Thank you for the all-inclusive request of Peter: "Lord save me." (5) Thank you for the immediate response of my Lord to his need. (6) Thank you for the clear definition of faith and doubt in this text. (7) Thank you for the unqualified expression of worship directed toward our Lord: "Truly you are the Son of God."

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"And when they got into the boat the wind ceased."

Even this storm had an end. Is there something analogous about this action? We could find a comparison or two. (1) In both incidents of the storm on the lake it was when they were aware of who was with them that the storm subsided. When we become aware of just who is in the same boat with us the wind will cease. We are so prone to living our life as if Jesus was somewhere in the middle of the lake. (2) Our Lord is interested in every trip of every disciple. He sees us in our distress, he shares our efforts to overcome. He marks our location and is there to help.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In impetuous Peter we see ourselves over and over — he needed prayer — so do we: (1) Why did Peter need assurance? Jesus was willing to give it — thank you. (2) Walking on the water supports his deity — not our greatness — please let me remember. (3) In just that wonderful one-word answer: "Come," we have such encouragement! In how many situations will it fit today? (4) Peter did it! But for what purpose? Lord, examine my motives! (5) It was only the wind — but it made him afraid and he began to sink! Keep my eyes on your Son! (6) Here is a clear definition of faith — trust me — look to me — obey me.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

There is much to hear and learn in this text: (1) "There is no time or place for doubt in your relationship with me!" (2) "I uphold all things by the word of my power." (3) "Signs are not the product — I would have been the Son of God if I never did one miracle."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Iran — Point for prayer: Christian radio has even more importance since the departure of all missionaries. Pray for those who prepare programs, and for an increase in hours and languages.

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 ELEVEN

—Sunday—

*There is no broken heart he cannot heal
— there is no star he has not named —
there is no question he cannot answer.
How great is our God!*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“He heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds. He determines the number of the stars, he gives to all of them their names. Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure” (Psa. 147:3-5). How wide is the expanse of qualities here ascribed to yourself! (1) You take a personal interest in the emotional and physical life of every man. (2) You know when we hurt and if we will come to you you can bind up our wounds and they will heal. (3) You also have an interest in the stars. You have created them all and you have named them all. (4) We must say with the ancient singer — “Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.” Praise 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

How I do want to appropriate each of these attributes to my own life! Dear Lord, how much I do need you! I am so glad to come to Someone who can put together the pieces of the puzzle called my life. It would seem it needs repair quite often. I have had thoughts or intellectual schemes that seem to fall apart. In areas when I have been determined to go or stay. I have done neither. My emotions have *not* been compatible with reality. In all of these ways my heart has been broken. I come to you and what a peace and wholeness I find! Your thoughts hold together — your determination is backed with your power to perform. My emotional response to what you have said and done is solid and true. The more I see of the large world outside the atmosphere of this earth the larger becomes the meaning of the expression: “his understanding is beyond measure.”

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Because of who you are and who I am the element of confession is surely a necessary part of my praise. At the same time I do *want* to confess my sin, I am glad to come to the One in whom I have unqualified confidence — to One who I know does not resent my coming — indeed I believe you are glad and warmly welcome me each time I turn my thoughts toward you. I am delighted to hold up my broken heart and ask you to make it whole. How many stars are there? Even man’s computers would have a problem with such a figure. To create and sustain each one is enough — but to know them in detail and give them a name! You will have no problem with my little life — what seems complex to me is simple for you. Thank you for forgiveness!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I can hear my Savior calling,
I can hear my Savior calling,
I can hear my Savior calling,
“Take thy cross and follow, follow Me.”

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

HIS WORD

⁵³When they had crossed over, they landed at Genesaret and anchored there. ⁵⁴As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. ⁵⁵They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶And everywhere he went — into villages, towns or countryside — they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed.

—Mark 6:53-56, NIV

Read also Matthew 14:34-36.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How rewarding it is to read again and again this in-

teresting passage. I wonder what the disciples thought as they stepped out of the boat and saw all the people? The disciples were so full of wonder and amazement at what had just happened. They were hardly ready for the rushing about of people to get their sick healed. The impact of the divinity of their Lord was still with them. This frenzied effort to use the Lord as a free source of physical help must have hit these disciples with a solid blow. Dear Lord, am I reading this aright? How I do want to!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

If there ever was an example of wholesale healing it is described here. I wonder just how many people were involved? There must have been hundreds if not thousands. There seems to be no resistance on the part of our Lord. Jesus knew what he was about. His mission was teaching. The healing was done and was not ignored or shunted to the side, but neither did it become first place. It was indeed first place in the lives of those who were sick. How could these people appreciate a lesson while they remained lame or palsied or nauseous? But there were more who were not sick and they needed healing of a different sort. How many of the healed became consistent converts? It is remarkable to read: "All who touched him were healed."

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 wonderful popularity of my Lord. (2) Thank you that Jesus used his popularity to teach that many more people. (3) Thank you for the record of those who were there when it happened. (4) Thank you for the instantaneous, permanent healings of my Lord. (5) Thank you that there were none who were not healed who came to be healed. (6) Thank you that none who come to him today for the healing of their hearts are turned away disappointed. (7) Thank you we now have the purpose of his healing, i.e., his own deity.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed." It would seem that there was almost superstitious devotion directed toward our Lord. Jesus did not encourage such an attitude; at the same time he did not attempt to reprove these people. The remarkable fact is that "all who touched him were healed." Was it their faith that made them well? Of course it was, but of course it was our Lord's own power or "virtue" that healed these people. He never approved or disapproved of such action. His primary purpose was to teach. If these same persons stayed to listen they

would have received something more valuable than their healing. We would like to believe many of them did.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Surely our Lord is at the height of his popularity. I want to relate to this in prayer for wisdom: (1) If the hearts of those who served the bread and the fish were confused and burdened, what hope is there for me? The same as there was for them; open my eyes! (2) It would seem the multitude related to Jesus on a very physical, selfish manner — but he did not rebuke them. Lord, I want to learn from this — help me. (3) Did Jesus teach them while he healed them? Or was there too much confusion? The healing was a form of teaching — meeting needs teaches so much — may I not forget. (4) All who touched him — and all he touched were healed — no failures. It is my heart that I want him to touch. It is my eyes I want him to open.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Nothing is said in these verses — but they do have a voice for me: (1) "I did pile up miracle upon miracle for a purpose — have you accepted it?" (2) "I can touch you — you can touch me in a more meaningful way today than then." (3) ". . . and all who touched him were healed."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Iraq — Population: 15,475,000. Growth rate — 3.4%. Average people per sq. km. — 36.

Point for prayer: *The deep woes through which Iraqis have passed are decisively changing the nation.* Praise that it is God in control of this situation. Pray that there might be opportunity for the gospel to be freely preached. The land is completely closed for any form of open evangelism. The few remaining missionaries were expelled in 1969.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

There is a name I love to hear,
I love to sing its worth;
It sounds like music in my 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

—Monday—

We worship One who is emotionally responsive — i.e., he “takes pleasure” in our trust in him. My hope is in his steadfast love. It is a joy to worship him!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“His delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the legs of a man; but the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love” (Psa. 147:10,11). In David’s day the above reference was probably to the cavalry and the infantry of the army of that day. The strength and defense of a nation is not in their military build-up but in his steadfast love. God is not impressed with man’s brains any more than his legs. Dear Father, I am glad to be reminded of the real priorities of value in personal and national defense. Our hope is in you or we have no hope.

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 am simply delighted to acknowledge the fact that you can and do “take pleasure” in my fear and hope in you. What beautiful contrasts are fear (or reverence) and hope! Like the net of a fisherman hope is the cork and fear is the lead. In this manner the net is held in the water to catch all the benefits of life. Such a net is actually held against your “steadfast love” and what a draught is taken! If I am willing to accept without question some circumstances that plunge to the bottom my plans and pleasures; if at the same time I hold buoyantly to your steadfast love and hope in your character I am sure I will catch the greatest possible benefits of this life. 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

How easy it is to fall into Satan’s trap of pride. It has been made by the evil one to seem natural to trust in man’s ability. How easily we congratulate ourselves

for our buildings or rockets! How obvious it all seems that we should take pride in the products of our brains. Dear Lord, the editorial “we” must be dropped. I stand blood-guilty before you! Forgive *me* not *them*. I am afraid of hell. I cringe and recoil at the thought of prolonged pain. I do fear you in this sense, but I am much more impressed with your greatness and steadfast love. I do indeed admit your justice and your mercy. In all of this attempt at confession I do want to sincerely commit myself to you. I embrace your forgiveness! How much I need 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

I hear the Savior say,
 “Thy strength indeed is small,
 Child of weakness, watch and pray,
 Find in Me thine all in all.”
 Jesus paid it all,
 All to Him I owe;
 Sin had left a crimson stain,
 He washed it white as snow.

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

HIS WORD

Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law **15** came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, ²“Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don’t wash their hands before they eat!” ³Jesus replied, “And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? ⁴For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother’ and ‘Anyone who curses his father and mother must be put to death.’ ⁵But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, ‘Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God,’ he is not to ‘honor his father’ with it. Thus you nullify the

word of God for the sake of your tradition.” *Matthew 15:1-6, NIV*

Read also Mark 7:1-5.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What was once a good idea when repeated becomes a custom — when repeated long enough becomes a tradition. Soon the tradition has become a law with moral overtones. It is now no longer a good idea — it is right or wrong. Dear Lord, how many such things have happened with me? It was not necessary to wash in just the way the elders prescribed. The disciples of my Lord were not eating with dirty hands, they had just not gone through the ceremony. Their hands might not have been any cleaner when they finished washing than when they first began — but wash they must or be “unclean.” Our Lord looked into the hearts of these men and saw nothing but the shell of form. All meaning has long since left. Greed and selfishness filled their lives.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Our Savior confronts these men as he does me. “Which is the most important? breaking the traditions of men or the laws of God?” Indeed in the very act of keeping tradition we can and do violate the laws of God. It is tradition to substitute public worship and study for personal worship and meditation. We know vaguely that you have said we should have a personal relationship with you and that we should learn your word so as to apply it to our lives. But tradition has subtly substituted *Bible School* for personal study and *Worship Service* for personal devotion. We have not only exchanged one for the other we have broken the commandment of God! Dear Lord, forgive us. Our traditions have cancelled out your will in our lives — forgive us!

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 close examination our Lord received from the teachers at Jerusalem — he improved by this procedure. (2) Thank you for the blunt direct answer our Lord gave these men. (3) Thank you for reminding me again of how important it is to honor our parents. (4) Thank you for this incisive reminder that one law cannot cancel out another one. (5) Thank you for the very distinction made here between the laws of men and your law. (6) Thank you for the value system implicit in these verses. (7) Thank you for the wonderful courage of my Lord in the face of the authorities from Jerusalem.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of

your tradition.” Dear Lord, how blood guilty we are in this area. It is not traditional for church members to be involved in evangelism. One elder said recently “it is not natural.” What he really meant is that it is not traditional. It is traditional to talk about it, but to do it on a one-to-one basis by the members of the body — that just does not get done. The word of God is as clear as can be that the members of the body in the first century spoke to every creature under heaven (Col. 1:23). The fundamental problem is that evangelism disturbs our comfortableness and interrupts our schedule. Dear Lord, forgive us, change us!

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Religious leaders are always full of questions — this can be both good and bad. How I need to prayerfully learn from this text: (1) Give me your wisdom in examining my motives. (2) Do I know what is tradition and what is truth? I want to. (3) “Thy word is truth” — all else is tradition — what can this mean to me in my life? (4) I do want to honor my parents — open my heart to learn how. (5) I know we have set aside your word by our traditions — how I do want your holy honesty to know just how I have done this. (6) Lord, where I have pretense and fear of men shine your light of truth.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

How difficult it is to receive rebuke — speak to me: (1) “Honor from the heart is easily known.” (2) “Men’s rules for worship are nothing.” (3) “Tradition has never been equal with truth and never will be.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Iraq — Points for prayer: (1) *Muslims are very hard to evangelize* — just a handful are known to have believed and this is more often through hearing the Gospel while studying in other lands. For a Muslim to believe, it could mean certain death. (2) *The tragic Kurdish people*, now in the despair of defeat and oppression, have had little chance to hear of the Prince of Peace. There are virtually no believers among this 20,000,000 people scattered over Turkey, Iraq, Iran, the U.S.S.R. and Syria. One or two congregations are in Iraq. Bible translations and new initiatives to reach them with the gospel are planned.

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 ELEVEN

—Tuesday—

One day — when there is no time — we shall rejoice before you with all your angels — it is good to get in practice here. How kind you are to accept our praise!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise him in the heights! Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his host!” (Psa. 148:1,2). We could never find an expression more appropriate to exemplify praise. In these verses we have entered into heaven itself and with the angels we lift our hearts in adoration. It is the expected response of all his creation. The sun, moon and stars are enlisted in one grand chorus of praise. How much more can he expect the hosts of his presence to lift up their voices in joyous songs of praise? From heaven and in heaven does praise come. It would be most enlightening to suddenly become spirit in substance and be a spectator and listener in the courts of heaven.

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

Perhaps the most amazing aspect of these verses is that you accept our praise. How full of our own ignorance and other limitations are our best efforts. But I am gloriously encouraged by these words — you *want* me to praise you and even in the attempt my expression grows. I am sure angels have ten thousand more reasons to praise you than I do. Angels can praise you with the kind of humility, reverence and purity that we could never approximate. Before the worlds were made angels were exulting in your presence. You sent them to express what all the earth should say, “Glory to God in the highest.” Three times in one verse we are exhorted to lift our hearts in praise. Indeed at least this one man does!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

If living intelligences in your presence praise you, if

not one bright spirit is exempted from this consecrated service what is my excuse for not praising you? My excuse is that I have not been motivated to do so. If the instrument of praise is worn out in the service of self-exaltation there is indeed little motivation for heaven’s praise. There *are* times — as you know better than I — when I exult in your greatness and goodness, but there are more times when I am involved in many “other things” and have no energy or interest left to express my praise. Dear Lord, what a sad sin! It is wonderfully encouraging however to know that you do not change. There is as much reason to praise you after such selfishness as there was before. Thank you for opening my eyes. Thank you for the cleansing of my record. I lift my song of gladness to you.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now.

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

⁷“You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:

⁸“ These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

⁹They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.”

¹⁰Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand. ¹¹What goes into a man’s mouth does not make him ‘unclean,’ but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him ‘unclean.’” —*Matthew 15:7-11, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I want to listen as the disciples — and also the Pharisees. Were the disciples shocked at these burning words: “*You hypocrites!*” What was the reaction of those to whom these words were spoken? I gladly ask you, dear Lord, to search my heart and tell me that I do not at all measure up to the standard I profess. I say one thing and do another in several areas of my life. Dear Lord, my heart *is not* far from you, but my conduct does so surely need improvement. More and more I want my heart and life to match the words of my mouth. Could my worship be in vain? When directed by pride I know it is!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I do take as seriously as I can this effort to let your word have free course in my heart. How many of my teachings are made by man and are taught as if they came from you? How interested am I in the externals as compared with the condition of the heart? How much of what I say is said to be seen and heard by men and not of yourself? These are hard words — who can hear them? Dear Lord, I can! The Pharisees were offended when first these words were spoken; do they offend me? No, no! I *want* to hear them — I *need* them. It is what comes out of my mouth that makes me clean or unclean. But the mouth is but the spigot of the heart. How I do want to guard my heart.

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 Isaiah’s prophecy — it has found more than one fulfillment. (2) Thank you for the wonderful courage and humility of my Lord. (3) Thank you that none of us need think of someone else to whom these words apply. (4) Thank you that I can honor you with both my lips and my heart. (5) Thank you that my worship can be genuine or a fake — dear Lord, *I* make the choice. (6) Thank you that Jesus addressed his words to “the crowd”; I can be one of them. (7) Thank you I can and do understand.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“*What goes into a man’s mouth does not make him ‘unclean,’ but what comes out of his mouth that is what makes him ‘unclean.’*” The uncleanness must be defined. Strange to say in both cases it is the same. It is moral uncleanness that is under consideration. Our Lord wants to identify the contaminant. It definitely is not food eaten with hands that are not washed in a particular manner. What we put into the heart is what defiles as it comes out of the mouth. Our Lord *does* say that a man can be defiled. Jesus

said, “Here are the things that defile: (1) evil ideas, (2) murder, (3) adultery, (4) sexual immorality, (5) theft, (6) lying, (7) slander.” We need to examine each of these carefully. If we do not put the motivations for such actions in our hearts they will not come out of our lives.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What a negative section we have under consideration in these words! There are many negative experiences of life — they should lead us to prayer: (1) Give me the wisdom to be able to apply scripture to life, even as my Lord. (2) How deceptively easy it is to say one thing and do another — deliver me. (3) “The heart” is the mind, will, emotions and conscience — these must all honor our Lord. (4) Vain worship consists of teaching as well as expressions — I am glad to so consider my teaching. (5) Physical defilement and heart defilement are here separated by our Lord — help me to keep my priorities straight here. (6) Jesus was not worried about the truth offending religious leaders. How I need his help here.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak as directly to my heart as you did to these Pharisees: (1) “*You can* honor me with both your heart and your lips.” (2) *You can* teach my word and worship me in truth.” (3) “*You can* keep your heart clean.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Iraq — Point for prayer: *The national believers are very few.* They are mostly from a nominal Christian background. There are a few church fellowships in Baghdad and Basra but there is little witness elsewhere. Quite a few believers are not linked with any fellowship. New converts are being added to the church despite the harsh and repressive conditions in the country. Pray that the believers may have courage to stand for the Lord and continue to witness. Many believers emigrate to other lands.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Standing, standing,
Standing on the promises of God my Saviour;
Standing, standing,
I’m standing on the promises of God.

WEEK ELEVEN

—Wednesday—

We could sing a new song of praise every day of every year — I want to see the new blessings you have prepared for this day. How subtle — and yet how real are all your gifts to us. Gladly I worship you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of the faithful!” (Psa. 149:1). In this one beautiful verse I want to lift my heart with the psalmist in praise to you just for yourself. In the past several months we have read through every verse of every psalm. In each verse we looked for qualities of yourself for which we could lift our minds in praise. In this verse it is enough to begin our praise just because this is our first response to your presence. What a wonderful “new song” we could sing every day to you! There has never been a day just like this one. There will never be so many new and different blessings that you have prepared just for today! Were the whole family to gather in one place we could unitedly and individually lift our hearts in praise to 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

What a source of refreshment is your presence! It is natural to praise your name. The more I know of you as I read your word the more I want to lift my voice in adoration. It will be my joy to sing a new song each day of my life. Just for today I want to sing a new song of your subtle interest and love in my life. How true it is that we “live by faith.” All your blessings (or at least most of them) are given in such a manner that if we want to we could call them “good luck.” Right here I want to sing the new song of recognition of the source of every good and perfect gift. What a fresh new meaning do the songs in the public assembly have because of this personal praise.

How do you personally relate to the new song of God, and God who gives us a new song?

CONFESSION OF SIN

How often am I blind! How often am I deaf! How

often have I looked at life as a dull dead routine with no change of meaning? When I live for myself such is the inevitable result. If I am not expecting something new and different, if I am already convinced there is nothing new I shall never find it. I need to wake up! No blade of grass is today what it was yesterday. No need of my loved ones is today just what it was yesterday. I have not been forgiven before of the sins for which I now ask forgiveness. It is in being like your dear Son I find the newest of all new songs! “He came not to be ministered unto.” It was in serving he found meaningful variety. Forgive me for being bored when I know the cause of it — *pure selfishness!*

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

¹²Then the disciples came to him and asked, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?”

¹³He replied, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. ¹⁴Leave them; they are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit.” —*Matthew 15:12-14, NIV*

Read also Mark 7:9-13.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It is very helpful to me to approximate your position as I read these words. The disciples were worried about their master. It would seem they were concerned that he be discredited in the halls of scholarship. They were also worried that he would lose entirely the support of these very influential men. It could be they themselves were shocked by our Lord's blunt words. If they were bothered by his rejection of Jewish tradition they are going to be totally nonplused by these words of condemnation. Is Jesus talking about the teachings or the teachers when he talks about the tree that is to be rooted up? No matter — to lose one is to lose both. Is Jesus saying there are some people who are incurably blind? So it would seem — what an awful thing to contemplate!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

"They are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit." *What a warning!* Those who follow false teaching are also responsible. Since the tree discussed is the teaching of our Lord versus the teaching of the Pharisees, so the sight or blindness relates to the light or darkness obtained by true or false teaching. How careful I want to be to treasure in my heart the very words of my Lord. How earnestly I want to study all you have said and be sure my students are confronted with what you have said — and not what I or anyone else has said. Only when we read and understand for ourselves what you have said can we trust the words of anyone else.

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 self-confidence of my Lord — he knew who he was and what he believed. (2) Thank you that Jesus was not worried about what religious leaders thought about him. (3) Thank you for the concern of the disciples for their master — even though misplaced it was concern. (4) Thank you that you are planting in the field of this world. (5) Thank you that we can be your plants. (6) Thank you for the warning that some men are willfully blind. (7) Thank you for the sober warning that there is a pit at the end of some paths.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit." This assumes that both men are responsible for their blindness. In the case cited it would be easy to define responsibility — at least with the Pharisees. These men had been following Jesus for at least two years, perhaps more. They had listened to his teaching, had watched his miracles. If they could not

accept his messiahship it was because they were willfully blind. Such a statement says so much as to the expectations of our Lord as related to students or followers. Jesus expected these persons to evaluate the life and teachings of the Pharisees and reject them as blind guides.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Our Lord was severe with hypocrites — he used such terms as "blind" and "weeds." Lord, is it I? (1) In each decision of service may I examine my motive and honestly answer who is served — your word or the traditions of men? (2) Have I tried to avoid the application of your word to my life that I might satisfy my greed? Search my heart! (3) There are times when we should leave people alone and move to someone who will listen — give me your grace in knowing when this is true. (4) How terrible to consider the possibility of being spiritually blind — even worse to lead others to destruction — direct my praying and watching. (5) Jesus wanted the crowd to learn this lesson — he surely intends that I understand — give me your wisdom.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Since we are religious leaders today we expect you to speak very personally to us in these verses: (1) "You can be my plant." (2) "You can have your eyes open." (3) "You can lead others to heaven or hell."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Iraq — Point for prayer: The believers are constantly under pressure from the authorities and it is dangerous for them to have contacts with foreigners. Pray that their testimony before the Muslim authorities may recommend the Gospel of Christ.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

To God be the glory — great things He hath done,
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin
And opened the Lifegate that all may go in.
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear His voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father thro' Jesus the Son,
And give Him the glory — great things He hath done.

WEEK ELEVEN

—Thursday—

Out of what poor material have you made us — common clay — Zion is our mother and we are her sons. We dance to the tune of musical instruments in our response to such amazing goodness!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Let Israel be glad in his Maker, let the sons of Zion rejoice in their King! Let them praise his name with dancing, let them sing praises to him with timbrel and lyre” (Psa. 149:2,3). What interesting qualities of yourself I see in these two verses: (1) You are the *Maker of Israel*. Israel should be happy over this fact. It was out of Jacob that Israel was made. Such unworthy material from which to make a great nation. A large degree of humility — even tears of gratitude must mingle with the joy of Israel. (2) The “sons of Zion” are to rejoice in their King! *Maker and King* what wondrous qualities! (3) The exuberance and delight we have in you can be and should be expressed in dancing and musical instruments. The Hebrew culture is a real part of this expression, but back of it is the total joy of man in 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

You have made my body with all its desires for yourself. You have left me totally free as to whether I will respond to your purpose. I know that once I am willing to respond to you as *Maker and King* I will have no problem with false motives for joy. How I do want to pause long enough before your throne and word to encompass the meaning of your creative power and interest. The potter has a purpose or design in mind before he approaches the clay. The king does not take the throne for no reason. In both relationships it is for our highest good. If I could only look behind what you have made and understand the purpose of your rule I am sure I would be so glad and full of joy I would dance and share in the timbrel and lyre. Praise your holy name!

How do you personally relate to God as Creator, 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

It does not even occur to us that there could be or should be such joy in your purpose for our lives. But there is! Man has a tremendous capacity for the expression of emotion — he is going to use it somewhere. The excess of praise and music before the altars of Baal can only be guessed at. The total abandonment of immense crowds to music or sports need not be imagined — we can view it on our TV screens. If we understand what we are doing in public because we have spent time with you in private our joy and praise and music would be a beautiful expression of worship. It is in this that we sin. Oh, that I might open my whole self to you in this closet of prayer. I want to meditate on your word. I want to absorb the eternal truth that you are love and you want me to be supremely happy in my service to 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

Faith is the victory!
Faith is the victory!
Oh, glorious victory,
That overcomes the world.

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

HIS WORD

⁹And he said to them: “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! ¹⁰For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and mother,’ and ‘Anyone that curses his father or mother must be put to death.’ ¹¹But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: ‘Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban’ (that is, a gift devoted to God), ¹²then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. ¹³Thus you nullify the word of God by your

tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that." —Mark 7:9-13, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I do so want to digest the real indepth meaning of these verses. The irony of my Lord is particularly biting here. Jesus called their efforts to evade responsibility as "clever," or "ingenious," or "how well," or "wonderful to see" or "full well." What seemed such an accomplishment to man was only a transparent facade to our Lord. How does he see some of my efforts to evade what he has said? Jesus knew the lie behind their pious words. When they said they had given their money to God and his service what they really meant was that they had put their money into the temple treasury that was under their control. They could get interest on their investment if it was "Corban," i.e., "given to God." If they gave the same money to help their parents it would be lost to the service of God.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

There is no need to attempt to justify ourselves and pull our holy robes about us as if this were for the hypocrites of Jesus' day. What indeed could have *otherwise been given* to help the poor? I can't help everyone who is hungry but I could send one package of food through those who have made the opportunity available to me. Why don't I? Is it because I prattle some expression of excuse in my part of Christian work? I can't win everyone but I can talk to and teach those who live in the same city block as I do. Why don't I? I am too busy with "other things" that the *one* thing that needs to be done is not done. How indeed refined is our hypocrisy! Dear Lord, forgive us!

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 clear priority of your commandments over *anything* that interferes. (2) Thank you for reminding me that it is very possible today to repeat the sin of these men. (3) Thank you that Moses said and meant to "honor your father and mother." (4) Thank you we can fulfill this command gladly *right now*. (5) Thank you for the severe penalty attached to disobedience. (6) Thank you that we can give something to you — even ourselves. (7) Thank you that we are here alerted to be always careful that we allow your word to have free course in our lives and not be nullified by our traditions.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Thus you nullify the word of God by your traditions

that you have handed down." How often do we do the very same thing! In one area we are particularly guilty: Personal Devotion. It is not the custom of the average middle-class (or any other class) American to have a particular time set aside for personal worship. Perhaps this custom was more prevalent a generation ago. Today it is non-existent. I am staying with very faithful church members, but they like so many more of the people with whom I stay have *no* time of personal devotion. Does the word of God teach this or not? Is the example of my Lord and the apostle Paul clear? We have nullified the words of God with the habitual practices of those who have handed them down to us by example. God forgive us!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

We can almost hear the irony in these words of our Lord. If we have it in our heart they can lead us to prayer: (1) Jesus is aroused to the point of condemnation — why? I can expect the same attitude for the same sin — guard my heart. (2) Honoring our parents includes spending our money — i.e., according to Jesus — am I doing this? (3) Bad-mouthing our parents could end us up in hell! Does Jesus say this law applied only to the persons who deserved praise? Open my eyes! (4) A gift to you could be the care we give to our parents — I want to give it! (5) Jesus *did not* recognize the writings of men as authoritative — deliver me from the temptation to do so.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You have surely spoken to me in these verses — speak to me again: (1) "You *can* give to support your parents." (2) "You *can* praise your parents to other people." (3) "You *can* respect and accept only my words as authoritative."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Iraq — Points for prayer: (1) *Pray that the way may be opened for Jordanian and Lebanese believers to enter for witness into this land, for they would be less under suspicion.* (2) *The entry of literature has been difficult, but since the Lebanese Civil War much more literature has been entering the country legally from Jordan. Pray for the wise and careful distribution of this literature. There are several Christian bookrooms operating in the country.*

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

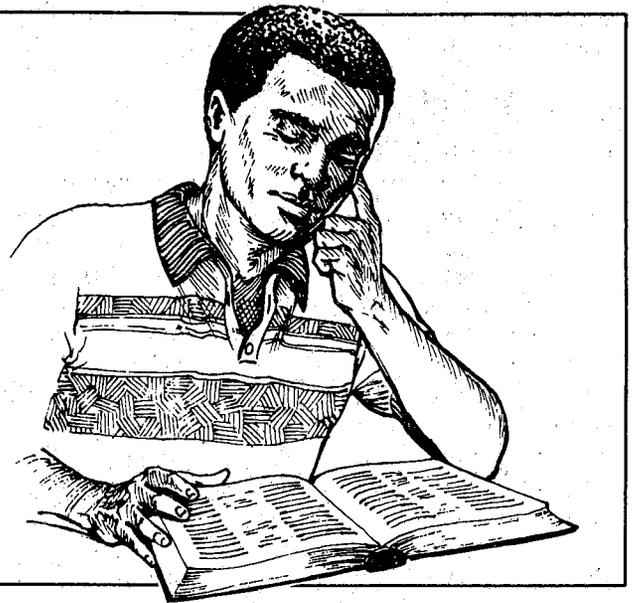
We are redeemed! the price is paid!
What a wonderful Savior!

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

WEEK ELEVEN

—Friday—

We worship One who hurts when we hurt — is happy when we are. Takes delight in giving us what we do not deserve. “. . . adorns the humble with victory.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“For the Lord takes pleasure in his people; he adorns the humble with victory” (Psa. 149:4). It is in praise and worship before your throne I find my highest joy and deepest satisfaction. The two attributes of yourself seen here are so much needed. (1) You have a personal interest in all of our lives; what pleases us is a source of pleasure for you, i.e. as we choose within your will. As a father sees with pleasure the maturing and service of his children so you do with us. It is so good to talk with Someone who has a real personal interest in all of our life. (2) What a charming expression are these words: “He adorns the humble with victory.” When shall we remember the conditions of triumph? Humility is not something we put on — it is something we are.

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

In the very attitude of humility is true beauty. Dear Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief. In lowliness of mind there is exaltation by yourself. In service to others is the highest position. In willingness to suffer without complaint is an example that will be admired by angels — if not by men. If we are genuinely humble all such victory will come as a surprise. I am not humble *in order to be exalted* — this is but another form of pride and self-interest. I can and do choose to be humble minded and claim your promise of victory, but allow you to choose just how it shall be done. How I do praise you for the means you have to accomplish your purposes in my life!

How do you personally relate to the pleasure of God, and God who takes an interest in us? 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* area where I feel less prepared to serve

you or worship you it is in humility. I *know* you take great pleasure in a meek and quiet spirit — I am anything but meek or quiet. There are times when I am surely the very opposite. At the same time I am glad to know you have ways of producing this lacking quality. This is part of your *pleasure* in your people. This indeed must be your largest joy. However, if when you set up the conditions out of which humility could come I rebel and refuse to respond your whole effort of love was for naught. 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

I'm pressing on the upward way,
New heights I'm gaining ev'ry day;
Still praying as I'm onward bound,
“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

²²The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realized that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but that they had gone away alone.

²³Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. ²⁴Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus.

²⁵When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

²⁶Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. ²⁷Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.

On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."

²⁸Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"²⁹Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

³⁰So they asked him, "What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?"³¹Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' "

³²Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you true bread from heaven."³³For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

³⁴"Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread."
—John 6:22-34, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

There surely is much to learn and apply in these verses. I want first of all to understand them. Dear Lord, open my understanding! John tells us of the crowds' knowledge of the appearance of Jesus on the other side of the lake without having used a boat. He does not say just what their reaction was to this amazing fact. Meanwhile on the other side of the lake the crowds were waking to the fact that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples. Since they evidently knew Jesus had not sailed away with his disciples when they arrived on the other side of the lake they were very curious as to just how Jesus got there. Jesus *did not* tell them. He did speak to their heart need of real faith.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How much of my faith relates to the temporal blessings of life? How small was the faith of this crowd! There is such a lesson in this record for today! "Faith comes by hearing" — *not by seeing* — however sensational the sight might be. Faith comes by hearing from or of the Word of the Lord. Only when we accept the authority or truthfulness of the one speaking will we have faith. Faith formed by miracles passes with the sensation of the miracle performed. When the mind is not informed and enlightened the reason for belief is just not there.

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 obvious evidence of the supernatural in the life of our Lord. (2) Thank you that Jesus did not emphasize such evidence. (3) Thank you our Lord was not hesitant about speaking to the needs of the people. (4) Thank you for the eternal life I can enjoy from the Son of Man. (5) Thank you for the most convincing seal of approval placed upon my Lord from yourself. (6) Thank you for the "Work of

God" which amounts to doing what God has said. (7) Thank you for the true bread from heaven from which I have life.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." Amen! He surely gives life to my world. How wonderful to be able to pause amid the busy rush of life and recognize that all the life we have is from him! This bread from God could be as easily misunderstood or neglected as the manna in the wilderness. (1) That manna only lasted one day. If Jesus is to give me life it will be for one day at a time. (2) I must gather it for myself — it is my own effort that appropriates what is on the ground into the energy I need. (3) It seems significant that those who gathered must kneel to do so.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

There is so much here of intense interest we will have a problem deciding what to emphasize in our praying: (1) The crowd was in search of Jesus — not for worship but for their own interests. What is my real purpose in seeking him? (2) Jesus never answered their question as to how he crossed the lake — I wonder why he didn't? Some questions do not deserve an answer — give me grace to know which are which. (3) Jesus read their motives — he knows mine too — speak to me through these words that I might be totally sincere. (4) Oh, Son of Man — give me yourself that I might eat and live forever! (5) I want to hear and read again your "seal of approval" you gave to your Son.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Burn these words into my inmost being! (1) "The work of God is this: to believe in the One he has sent." (2) ". . . the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Iraq — Point for prayer: Christian radio broadcasts and follow-up correspondence courses remain virtually the only avenue for getting the Gospel to these needy people. Pray for the Arabic broadcasts.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK ELEVEN

—Saturday—

How much more meaning we can give to our "grace" before meals if we review each day the qualities of yourself for which we praise you! Give me that bread that came down from heaven!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

"Let the faithful exult in glory; let them sing for joy on their couches" (Psa. 149:5). My purpose is to hold up before you a quality of yourself for which I can praise you. I take the word "glory" to refer to your essential essence or being. To exult in glory is to adore or praise your total character. David is saying that the faithful should reiterate all the attributes of yourself and lift their voices up in praise. It would be most instructive to review all the qualities of yourself I have considered throughout this whole year. I want to multiply these tenfold.

Speak audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Since the Hebrews were accustomed to reclining when eating as well as sleeping it is a little difficult to tell if I am to think of the meal or the bed. I shall think of both. Dear Lord, enlarge my vocabulary and thought as I sit down to the table and attempt to thank you for the food. I want my expressions to be full of thought as well as praise. Give me wisdom in fulfilling this desire. At the same time it is when I retire and relax at night I need a fulfillment of these words. It is such a blessing to retire in a song of praise or in reading from your word. Sleep is so much sweeter and refreshing when you are in it.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

As you know my heart it is no problem for me to lift my heart in adoration for the qualities of yourself I see in your word. I can easily join with the faithful in exalting your divine Person. It is in the application of this capacity beyond this closet of prayer that I confess my sin and need. It is on the couch of eating and sleeping I need your help. I truly purpose to remedy

this need! I plan on writing out some much more meaningful prayers at meals — some words of exulting praise for the bounties of your goodness. I shall also prepare some songs of praise I can sing before I retire. Dear Lord, reinforce these commitments and confession of need.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now.

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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.

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

HIS WORD

³⁴"Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread."
³⁵Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. ³⁶But as I told you, you have seen me and still do not believe. ³⁷All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. ³⁸For I have come down from heaven not to do my own will but to do the will of him who sent me. ³⁹And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up in the last day. ⁴⁰For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." — *John 6:34-40, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How typical is the reaction of these men to all men

who come into superficial contact with our Lord. The crowd asks for a rain of bread from heaven. Jesus offers himself! Not only are they asking for a repeat performance of the manna from heaven, they want it to keep raining such bread. Is Jesus' offer really practical? Can he really satisfy as bread and water meet the needs of the body? Unless we are prepared to say that the needs of the heart are not that important we must say indeed he does become our bread and water. The key to making such provisions ours is in the little words: "come" and "believe." When we come truly hungry and thirsty to him and believe (which necessarily includes obedience) we are indeed filled!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I believe the marvelous means of coming to you is my own willingness. I believe also that this is true for all who come to you. How hesitantly and fearfully we often come to you — but the sweet words of my Lord calm my fears and charm my heart: "Whoever comes to me I will never drive away." Was there a conflict in the heart of my Lord? i.e. did he have a struggle with "his will" as versus "the will" of the Father? *Of course* he did or he would be no example for me. How are we given to the Father? We all can answer this question — it was in a set of circumstances in which we were very much a part that we decided to commit ourselves to his love. What gave us to the Father keeps us in the Father's care — our willingness. Bless your wonderful name!

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 plain powerful promise of the resurrection on the last day. (2) Thank you for a promise I will enjoy forever — "eternal life." (3) Thank you that you will lose none who want to be saved. (4) Thank you that my Lord "learned obedience" so well — I can too! (5) Thank you for the plain statement of my Lord's origin — "I am come down from heaven." (6) Thank you that my Lord does not consider my worthiness as a reason for accepting me. (7) Thank you that I need not go through this day as hungry or thirsty.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... Everyone who looks upon the Son and puts his faith in him shall possess eternal life; and I will raise him up on the last day" (NEB). What an audacious statement to make! Jesus was very conscious of who he was. To include the whole human race in a promise is an incredible claim. But to include *eternal life* in the promise is beyond human comprehension. To top off these words is the assertion that he has control

of death and the grave! We need to reread the conditions imposed for the fulfillment of these promises. "He who looks upon the Son and puts his trust in him." What do we seek as we look? Just what is included in the term "trust"? Faith and obedience are the two words that describe our response. What an amazing Savior is Jesus our Lord!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In these beautiful words on the bread of life we can find many requests for prayer: (1) I know for what I am asking and I say like the crowd by the lake: "Lord . . . from now on give me this bread." (2) I know also the verb tense in "coming" to my Lord is a continuing action — I do indeed want to do this. (3) What a wonderful promise is here: ". . . will never go hungry." I claim the conditions and the promise. (4) I also know just what is involved in believing: *obedience*. This is much better than the thirst. I believe, help my unbelief. (5) I see in my Lord such an example of faith and obedience — strengthen my stumbling steps!

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I do want to hear and believe: (1) "All that the Father gives me will come to me. This means you." (2) ". . . whoever comes to me I will never drive away." (3) ". . . I shall lose none of all that he has given me."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Jordan — Population: 3,600,000. Growth rate — 3.8%. Points for prayer: (1) *The long-lasting Middle East Crisis* has brought many years of suffering to Jordan. This has made many nominal Christians and Muslims more open to the Gospel. Pray for a great harvest to be reaped for God in this land. (2) *Many areas are inadequately evangelized* — to mention several: the south of the country, the nomadic Bedouin and the refugee camps.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Come, we that love the Lord,
And let our joys be known,
Join in a song with sweet accord,
Join in a song with sweet accord,
And thus surround the throne,
And thus surround the throne.
We're marching to Zion,
Beautiful, beautiful Zion;
We're marching upward to Zion,
the beautiful city of God.

WEEK TWELVE

—Sunday—

The joy we have in yourself is our strength for living — Your word in our hands and our hearts is our strong defence. How abundant is your provision for us.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Let the high praises of God be in their throats and two-edged swords in their hands” (Psa. 149:6). I realize this had reference to the conquests of David as he extended his kingdom. However, there is a sense in which we can see ourselves in this verse: for every Christian we can think of no better approach to the conquest of life: praise in our mouths and the word of God in our hands. The very best praise we can give must be directed toward the One for whom it is due. Our praises are also high as to purpose inasmuch as all the wonders and beauties of heaven are our goal. How meaningful is the description of your word. The whole instrument is an edge. Such a weapon however is of no value until it is taken into the conflict and used.

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, this verse does describe my purpose in life. My praise will really never be high enough for all you are. However, I am going to try. I am not referring to volume. All I see in your Son — all that he says to me in his word — all of your glory I see reflected in the lives of your children will be the source of my praises to you. Most of all I want my own life to be an expression of praise. Your sword is only a decoration on the shelf until it is thrust into the battle of life. How sharp and effective do I find it in every conflict. I purpose even now to use your sword where I have been fighting with the crooked sticks of men.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

How often in the midst of the battle has the cry of

high praise been heard? Not nearly often enough! How can I make very practical personal application of this lovely verse? I think of the relationships of my life I know will face me this day. How shall I come to them? *“Let the high praises of God be in my mouth and your two-edged sword in my hand.”* I do not speak of carrying a copy of the Bible. I want your word in my heart so I can use it in the conflict. Such are my goals — such have been my goals for some time. Forgive me for not reaching them. But I do press on. Even as I do I trust in your forgiveness. I bow my head in defeat when I should lift it in praise. 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

Shall we gather at the river,
Where bright angel feet have trod;
With its crystal tide forever
Flowing by the throne of God?
Yes, we'll gather at the river,
The beautiful, the beautiful river,
Gather with the saints at the river
That flows by the throne of God.

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

HIS WORD

⁴¹At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, *“I am the bread that came down from heaven.”* ⁴²They said, *“Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven?’”* ⁴³*“Stop grumbling among yourselves,”* Jesus answered. ⁴⁴*“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.”* ⁴⁵*It is written in the Prophets: ‘They will all be taught by God.’* Everyone who

listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. ⁴⁶No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. ⁴⁸I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. ⁵⁰But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. ⁵¹I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If a man eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." —*John 6:41-51, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Shall we be like the religious leaders who first heard these words? The muttering and murmuring among these men was not because they did not understand but because they did not believe! Had anyone of these men really bothered to investigate just what kind of a life this Jesus of Nazareth lived at home in Nazareth? We doubt it. Had even one of them asked his mother or his so-called "father" Joseph what kind of a person he was? Maybe they had and had already rejected out of hand the claim of his virgin birth. We are face to face with the same decision today!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

The rebuke of our Lord is well deserved! He is saying, "If you do not want to believe you will not believe." There is something about belief beyond human effort. We believe the Father supplies all the evidence in the life and miracles of his Son and through these means draws men to himself, but after all the evidence is in it is *still the decision of man to accept or reject*. If we do not want to be drawn to the Father through the Son no amount of reason will avail. It was so with these men and it is so today. Dear Lord, I want to come to you — I *want* to believe — I am *glad* to accept you. I am like one of the poorest of those you healed and helped. Glory to God in the highest!

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 we all can be indeed "taught of God." (2) Thank you that I confidently can expect Jesus to get me out of the grave. (3) Thank you I can listen to you through your word and come to your Son. (4) Thank you that one day we shall all see him even as he is! (5) Thank you I can believe and right now claim "everlasting life." (6) Thank you that I can keep on eating of the bread come down from heaven and can keep on having life. (7) Thank you for the flesh of my Lord offered on the cross for the life of the world.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Isn't it amazing that this whole beautiful discourse on "the bread from heaven" came out of a chance remark about the miracle of manna in the days of Moses. Of course it really wasn't just "a chance" remark, it was like all the work and teaching of our Lord: He came to show that always in the midst of the "hustle bustle" of life you are at work. Nothing happens by accident, all happens by intent. Our Lord's offering on the cross is the real "bread come down from heaven to give life for the whole world!" As the grain is broken and refined for use as flour so was the body of our Lord. As bread is essential and available to all men so is his offering on Calvary.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Grumbling is such a common trait — when related to our Lord we can be sure it comes from the evil one — guard my heart: (1) How slow to believe were those who should have known him best! By his definition of faith am I any better? (2) "Stop your grumbling among yourselves." These are the words of my Lord — help me to hear them. (3) We won't believe unless we want to — such "want to" comes from us *and* yourself. I praise you for so drawing me to yourself. (4) May I abide in your word and your word abide in me that my "want to" will be strong. (5) Jesus repeatedly promised eternal life — to raise our bodies on the last day. Considering his life teaching and works and his death in my place I have good reasons for saying: "Amen."

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Open my heart to receive your word! (1) "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him." (2) "Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me." (3) "I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Jordan — Point for prayer: There has been much Christian work on the West Bank among the Arabs. Some of this work continues under the Israeli occupation. Pray that there may be fruit for the Lord despite the tense political situation and the rising influence of the Communists among the Arabs.

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

—Monday—

We are your sanctuary — what an awesome thought! There is indeed a “mighty firmament” — or open space above us! For both relationships we can be full of praise!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Praise the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty firmament!” (Psa. 150:1). It would be easy to say “Praise the Lord” inside, i.e. when we assemble to worship, and praise the Lord when we are outside looking up into the heavens he has created. Man himself is your sanctuary. No room in which we gather is properly called a sanctuary. We are your house; our bodies are the dwelling place of yourself in the Spirit. In a sense the words of Paul apply to us. “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If any one destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and that temple you are.” Collectively as here in I Cor. 3:16,17 and individually as in I Cor. 6:19,20 we praise you in your sanctuary.

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 want to step outside and look up into the canopy of space. Your everlasting power and great wisdom will immediately be seen. In our day like no other we can relate to the words of the psalmist. As we look at the pictures returned from the Voyager II showing us close-up shots of the planets let us not forget that we are not looking at stars but just the closest and smallest of your creation in the firmament. How totally amazing is the power and majesty in the expanse of the heavens! Praise leaps to our lips as an almost involuntary response of what we see. “Praise the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty firmament.”

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

When I assemble with others and thus make up your

sanctuary is praise the first and last thought that fills my mind? Such could be and should be. I have so much for which I can praise you. However, I am free to confess there are many other things that take precedence. We are so occupied with greeting one another and visiting about this and that we sometimes even sing the songs with thoughts of other matters filling our minds while the words fill our mouths. I can go out into your beautiful world with my head down and really never look up to see your mighty firmament.

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

⁵²Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

⁵³Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁵⁵For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. ⁵⁶Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. ⁵⁷Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. ⁵⁸This is the bread that came down from heaven. Our forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever.” ⁵⁹He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. ⁶⁰On hearing it, many of the disciples said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?”

⁶¹Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, “Does this offend you? ⁶²What if

you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! ⁶³The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. ⁶⁴Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. ⁶⁵He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him."

⁶⁶From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.

⁶⁷"You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve.

⁶⁸Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

⁷⁰Then Jesus replied, "Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!" ⁷¹(He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him.) —*John 6:52-71, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It would seem it was very important for our Lord to emphasize his body as bread and his blood as drink. He said it six times from verse 53 to 58. Your Son knew these men did not understand, more than that he knew they did not want to understand. How very important it is that we understand his death.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I want to answer the Jews' question "How can this man give us his flesh to eat." I only ask them to stand beneath the cross and contemplate what is happening there. We need to read again and again the words the Holy Spirit gave to the apostles and prophets who wrote of his death. It is only in a daily meditation on his death and suffering that we "eat his flesh and drink his blood." We can do this each week as we gather around his table.

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 exclusive blunt words: "Except you eat the flesh and drink the blood you have no life." (2) Thank you we understand how to eat and drink of him. (3) Thank you for the wonderful satisfaction we find in eating his flesh and drinking his blood. (4) Thank you that he abides in us as we eat — this is a continual practice and presence. (5) Thank you that Jesus said so clearly that our only source of life is himself. (6) Thank you that Jesus did not accommodate himself or his teaching to the unbelief or ignorance of men. (7) Thank you for the wonderful words of Peter: "You have the words of eternal life."

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!" What did Jesus mean by this enigmatic statement? John gives us the meaning. Did Jesus know Judas would betray him even before he chose him? A better question would be "Why did Judas betray him even if Jesus did know it?" Our Lord's knowledge of Judas' actions had nothing to do with the moral responsibility of the betrayer. We as parents can predicate some of the actions of our children, but our foreknowledge does not lessen their responsibility. Judas is representative of the first angel who sinned and the first man who sinned. Why? Why? In the wonder and purity of heaven and Eden why would they sin? In the presence of the Son of God why betray him? The answer is as simple as it is profound: because they could! Dear Lord, I want to choose not to!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In this teaching of my Lord on the bread of life I find prayer needs I *must* bring to you: (1) I do want to eat and live forever — teach me just how I can do it. (2) I see my Savior's broken body as "the bread" from which my spirit must find nourishment for eternal life. (3) Jesus speaks to me in this figure of speech in such a sharp manner. My appreciation of what he did for me on Calvary must be as real as food and drink — make it so! (4) Since my eternal life depends on "eating and drinking" what happened at the cross, I better spend much more time beneath the cross of Jesus. (5) These words separated many of his disciples from him. I want them to draw me to you.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I want to hear you speak to me in my inner ear: (1) "The spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing." (2) "The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and they are life." (3) "Eat and drink and live forever."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Jordan — Point for prayer: The Palestinian Refugees are embittered by their years of fruitless struggle to regain their lands in Israel. Some have been absorbed into the economic life of Jordan, but others live in refugee camps financed by the United Nations. Jordanian Christians are free to distribute literature and witness in these camps, and some do, but this can be dangerous.

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 TWELVE

—Tuesday—

We are full of wonder as we consider your mighty deeds! To save Noah and his family from the flood. To confuse the tongues of men. Most of all to save us out of your mercy.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his exceeding greatness” (Psa. 150:2). How easy it will be to fulfill this blessed verse! I do want to hold up your involvement in human affairs and praise you for this. In just the first book of your revelation to man I can praise you: (1) For your decision to flood the earth and at the same time save Noah and his family. This was a deed almost beyond human comprehension. (2) Your confusing the tongues of men at the tower of Babel tells me of your constant interest in the affairs of men. Praise your name. (3) I wonder just how your voice sounded when you called Abram from the Ur of Chaldees? (4) The wonderful land promise you repeatedly made to Abraham expresses your interest in the physical needs of 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

You have already decided to again destroy the earth and all who are in it (II Peter 3:9ff.). I thank you for the beautiful rainbow that promises you will never again destroy the earth with water. But I want to just as fully thank you that I have been warned you *will* destroy this earth with fire. (2) You have a tremendous interest in the tongue of man, i.e. all languages. It would seem your largest interest is in some written form of language. How glad I am to share this interest. (3) I do believe in ways we do not always understand you are calling men (and women) out of their own country into a land you have prepared for them.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

It isn't that I fail to praise you for your mighty deeds,

it is only that I am so much more occupied with my own activities that I fail to relate them to what you have done and are doing in my life. Somehow I want to live in a constant biblical context. A meditation on your word night and day would be essentially a meditation on your mighty deeds. To take the time to hear your voice through the pages of your book is to see again and again your exceeding greatness. For failure in this very important area of life I ask your forgiveness. It is good to label or name other sins which I gladly do, but it is better to work on the cause. Meditation on your mighty deeds and exceeding greatness will deliver me from my own feeble efforts and smallness.

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

²¹Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²²A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession.” *Matthew 15:21,22, NIV*

²⁴Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret. ²⁵In fact,

as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an evil spirit came and fell at his feet. ²⁶The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter. — *Mark 7:24-26, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It was quite a journey to walk from the Sea of Galilee up to the region of Tyre and Sidon. Why did Jesus go here? It seems clear that he and the apostles were seeking rest and seclusion. Mark says “. . . he went into a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. . . .” My Lord needed a time and place for reorientation. Such being so it should come as no surprise that I need such a time even more often than my Lord. It should also come as no surprise that he could not find such a place — not even outside the borders of Israel! There was someone present who had such a pressing need that it could not be hidden any more than our Lord.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

When I feel taxed and pressed — when I imagine that I could not teach one more lesson or prepare one more sermon, dear Lord, may I remember your Son who came not to be ministered unto but to give his life. Indeed he did! He gave himself in healing (and there was a real loss of energy in this), in teaching — I know what a loss there is in such effort — in reading the hearts of people and relating their needs to his Father in prayer. I can only imagine how this must have taxed him. Why have I come to the service of my Lord? Is it not to follow him? I am not prepared to identify the presence of demons in people — but I can see very plainly the tragic effects of Satan in the lives of people all about me. Will I hear their cry? Will I answer their 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 the humanness of your Son — he needed to rest. (2) Thank you for the fact that crowds were not the whole purpose of my Lord's work. (3) Thank you that Jesus teaches us very plainly here that his primary work was discipling, not healing. (4) Thank you for this unusual woman — full of daring faith. (5) Thank you for this clear statement of the objective presence of demons. (6) Thank you that we can learn that sin and evil *are not* necessarily associated as a cause for the presence of demons. (7) Thank you for the worship and prayer of the woman in the presence of our Lord — I want to kneel with her!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her

daughter.” Where did this woman obtain such faith in our Lord? “Faith comes by hearing” — she no doubt had been told by some of those who had seen and heard him. The report of our Lord's miracles must have been very common knowledge. But there was something special about this woman. Her persistence and humility are evident. But it was her daughter's desperate condition that consumed her whole person. She must have known enough not only of the miracles of Jesus but also of his character to know that Jesus would listen to her need. Both she and the daughter seemed to be powerless in the presence of the demon. What an example this dear woman has become for a multitude of people down through the centuries.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the entreaties of this Canaanite woman we can learn how to pray: (1) My Lord wanted and needed a place to rest and pray — help me to find such a place. (2) It would seem to all too many your presence is a secret — I want you to be the most conspicuous person in my life. (3) May my inner spirit-needs be as urgent as was the physical/spiritual need of this woman. (4) May I in truth — not just word — fall at your feet in worship and prayer. (5) Lord, you know how unworthy any one of us is to appear before you — have mercy upon me. (6) Deliver me from the evil one.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Since my Lord saw such an example in this woman, I know you can speak to me in these verses: (1) “Neither I nor demons have died since this incident.” (2) “My mercy endures forever.” (3) “I honor faith and love today as then.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Jordan — Point for prayer: *The Protestant Church*. There is much nominalism among the second and third generation Christians. Yet among the Bible believing groups there is revival in some congregations and many people are being converted — especially Muslims. The most common source of new converts is from the many home fellowships where the unsaved feel more at ease. Pray that the believers may be sensitive, open and loving to those converted out of a Muslim background, for many of these converts find it hard to settle in a church fellowship.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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 TWELVE

—Wednesday—

If musical instruments can praise you surely we can join them. Give me a deeper appreciation of the infinite variety you use in expressions of praise.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp” (Psa. 150:3). It will be a blessing to try to contemplate just how we shall praise you as indicated in this verse. The trumpets were used on occasions to call the congregation of Israel together. How we do need to lift up our voices like trumpets and let the whole world know that you are King and worthy of our worship. At times trumpets were used to sound an alarm. If ever there was a time when such a blast needs to be given it is now. The lute and harp were used in worship in the temple. Perhaps we could say that if we are occupied with singing the songs of Zion we will be prepared when Gabriel sounds the trumpet call for the King. There are so many beautiful songs of praise and I enjoy singing every one.

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

The variety involved appeals to me as expressive of the praise I can bring to you. The trumpet is for the public announcement. I do indeed want all men to know of your greatness and goodness. The lute and harp were used for smaller groups or even for private use. How glad I am to share with classes your mercy and love, and to lift my heart even now in personal praise. The variety involved in using these instruments is meaningful to me: some of them are sounded by blowing wind into them, some by touching the strings, some by beating on them. All of the instruments give the certain sound of praise to your holy name! How I do enjoy being innovative in my expression of praise to you.

How do you personally relate to the beauty of God, and God who is beauty itself? Speak it out or write it out.

CONFESSION OF SIN

The trumpet lies unused; the lute and the harp gather

dust. So is at times the condition of my heart. I am glad to say that such is less and less frequent. At the same time I need to lift up the trumpet far more often; the joyful music of the lute and harp need to be heard every day in praise to your name. I could blame fatigue for my lack of urgency but hear Paul say to me “Be urgent in season and out of season.” My expressions might not always be as bright and clear as other times but I want to lift up praise to you in the out of season days as well as in the days when it is easy to do. I want to examine my heart and see if my fatigue is sin related. Forgive me and revive me again!

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

Come, ev'ry soul by sin oppressed,
There's mercy with the Lord,
And He will surely give you rest
By trusting in His word.
Only trust Him, only trust Him,
Only trust Him now.
He will save you, He will save you,
He will save you now.

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

HIS WORD

²³Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, “Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.”

²⁴He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.”

²⁵The woman came and knelt before him. “Lord, help me!” she said.

²⁶He replied, “It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs.”

²⁷“Yes, Lord,” she said, “but even the dogs eat the

crumbs that fall from their masters' table."

²⁸Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour. —Matthew 15:23-28, NIV

²⁷"First let the children eat all they want," he told her, "for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs."

²⁸"Yes, Lord," she replied, "but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

²⁹Then he told her, "For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter."

³⁰She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone. —Mark 7:27-30, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I want this whole record before me so I can as much as possible absorb every word. This is a strange response from your Son. Knowing the character of our Lord we wonder all over again if he had not planned all of this. Is he trying to say something to the nation of Israel? He treats this urgent woman with the indifference the Jews gave the Gentiles to help them to see how much confidence one, who had but little opportunity, placed in him. The disciples, as usual, misread our Lord's intentions and wanted to send her away. Jesus said all the right words as he typified the Jewish attitude: "lost sheep of the house of Israel"; "dogs." The woman had an immediate appropriate answer. Dear Father, I do hope I have read this aright!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Is there something in my life that will call out such urgency as found in this woman? Do I have a need that cannot be handled by myself? These questions are all *wrong*, or at least 90% wrong. The woman's concern was *not* for herself, but for someone else. Am I as ready to receive rebuff from men — and apparently, even from my Lord, that the need of someone else might be met? To ask is to answer — I do not like the price. The problem is that I have not yet empathized with others as my Lord did — and as this pagan woman did. Dear Lord, forgive!

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 strange silence of Jesus — it says so much. (2) Thank you for the urgent persistence of this woman — how I need her consuming concern. (3) Thank you for the ironic rebuke in the statement: "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel." (4) Thank you for one lost sheep — not even in Israel — that wanted to be found. (5) Thank you for the test my Lord gave the woman in his words about the bread.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"And her daughter was healed from that very hour." "She went home and found her child lying on the bed and the demon gone." Would that mother ever forget that hour? She would always remember the help given to her daughter, but there was something about the man that healed her she would never forget. The physical presence of our Lord was something with which to be reckoned. The eyes of Jesus must have been wonderfully impressive. When he spoke how did his voice sound? Men and women crowd around a famous man to shake his hand. What would it have been like to shake hands with God in human form?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What a blessed example of devotion — commitment and faith. This woman surely leads me to prayer: (1) When others are quick to say no and turn away, help me to pause and hear behind the words and see beneath the obvious. (2) This woman would not be dissuaded even when Jesus defined the limitations of his ministry. She heard more than others did — she caught his attitude — I want to be like her. (3) I kneel before you even now with the same request of the woman: "Lord, help me" — (in the deep needs you know I have). (4) Is Jesus asking the woman to be classified as a "dog"? If so, she was ready. I am too — but I still need your help.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I am as unworthy as this woman — but speak to me, end my need: (1) "There are no needs that cannot be met with your faith and my word." (2) "I have a whole banquet of food for your whole life." (3) "When you ask on behalf of others you help yourself first."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Jordan — Point for prayer: *Outreach by believers* has increased recently. More and more young people have been enthused and involved in door-to-door visitation and tract distribution. Pray for the right Christian leaders to be raised up who can continue to teach young believers how to reach out to others with the Gospel.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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 TWELVE

—Thursday—

If persons in the time of David were so happy with you that they danced for joy we can do more — we have yourself in the person of your Son. Praise your name!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Praise him with timbrel and dance; praise him with strings and pipe!” (Psa. 150:4). In this time of worship my whole purpose is to lift an attribute of yourself up as a means of praise and adoration. I want to be as objective as at all possible. It would appear that there is something in yourself that creates a joy that is best expressed in music and dancing. Why were the people of David’s day so happy? Was it because they lived in a land of freedom and plenty? Was their joy and exuberance from the forgiveness promised in the sacrifices? In all of these ways and many more we have reason to be full of joy and gladness. We sometimes become so full of happiness that physical expression seems the only natural expression. We want the music to be our voice of joy and praise. The dancing is an individual expression. We are not dancing for each other but for 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

Dear Lord, I do want to enter into this expression of praise. Do I honestly have reason to be so exceedingly happy? Indeed I do! Let me list just a few reasons for such joy: (1) All my sins are forgiven and forgotten and cannot in any way be held against me — I am totally, wholly free from guilt! I should be dancing for joy! (2) I can just as freely and fully forgive from the heart others who have sinned against me. I can and do forget what others have said or done against me. I can and do sustain the “no condemnation” attitude toward all men. Oh, what a relief! What a lightness fills my heart! (3) I have a whole new life and world prepared for me when I lay aside this worn out garment called my body. The wonder and anticipation of this adventure is surely enough to get out the timbrel or pipe!

How do you personally relate to the joy of God, and God who wants us happy?

CONFESSION OF SIN

How sad it is when there are so many reasons for praise and happiness we are complaining and griping about matters that really do not matter. Dear Lord, forgive me! Forgive me for thinking of sins when you have forgotten them. It is Satan’s delight to torment us with that which is only imaginary. If the evil one has a sense of humor this must be the expression of it. Remind me again and again that “as the Lord forgave you, so you are to forgive each other.” I really have no rights at all. I gave them up to my Lord when he bought me at Calvary. Dear Lord, keep my eyes off of that which is so near. When I fasten my attention on the problems and complexities of this life I surely do forget the life to come. I want that wonderful present 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

“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 sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

³¹Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of Decapolis. ³²There some people brought a man to him who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged him to place his hand on the man. ³³After he took him aside, away from the the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man’s ears. Then he spit and touched the man’s tongue. ³⁴He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, *Ephphatha!*” (which means, “Be opened!”) ³⁵At this,

the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.

³⁶Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it. —*Mark 7:31-36, NIV*

²⁹Jesus left there and went along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up into the hills and sat down. ³⁰Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the dumb and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them. ³¹The people were amazed when they saw the dumb speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel. —*Matthew 15:29-31, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I do want to walk with his disciples on the long trip from Tyre through Sidon down to the mountain near the Sea of Galilee. There were several miles and days involved in this whole episode. What did he teach them on the way? We shall really never know this side of seeing him and asking those who were with him. We are sure they will be able to remember much, i.e. considering the wonderful details both Matthew and Mark give us here. Among the many who were healed we are told of a deaf man who had an impediment to his speech. How kindly and thoughtfully does our Lord work with this man!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Why did Jesus separate this man from the multitude? Because there was a need in the man's heart that would be met by doing this. How helpful our Lord was: he gave the man a visual aid in placing his fingers in his own ears and moistening his fingers with his own saliva; and then lifting his face toward heaven in a gesture of adoration. How intently the deaf man was watching Jesus we can only imagine. Did the deaf man hear that wonderful word, "Ephphatha"? We would like to think that he did — for it was his ears that were opened — it was his tongue that was loosed!

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 great crowds who came — they could hear and be healed. (2) Thank you for the variety of sickness healed: (a) blind; (b) crippled; (c) dumb — no exceptions — *all* were healed. (3) Thank you for the spontaneous amazement of the people. (4) Thank you that we can do greater works and praise you for it. (5) Thank you that Jesus manipulated no one — all his work was spontaneous. (6) Thank you for the constant personal concern Jesus had in his ministry of healing and teaching. (7) Thank you for the overwhelming amazement of the people.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"*He has done everything well.*" What was meant here was that the miracles of Jesus were so very satisfying to everyone. There were no questions not answered, no failure to meet the needs of those present. It could have indeed applied to his whole life. He has done everything with no loose ends! How easy it is to neglect some area of our experience — but not so with Jesus! "He has done everything well" in the teaching realm. His writings through his penmen have been under scrutiny for over 1900 years and this is indeed the consensus. "He has done everything well" in the real purpose of his coming — i.e. to provide salvation for all men.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

As Jesus meets the needs of these multitudes of people I want him to meet my needs. I ask him: (1) As you looked into the heart of each man and each woman and gave them just what they needed, I believe you are doing the same today for me and all others. (2) How lame I am in areas of service — heal me — make me strong. (3) I have been so blind in several areas — you have opened my eyes — but they need to be opened again and again. (4) How feeble are our best efforts — heal this cripple in teaching and preaching and writing.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

How I do want you to open my ears and my mouth! Speak to me: (1) "I have you as much on my heart — as a separate person as I did the man in this text." (2) "I have greater works for you and through you than you read about in these texts." (3) "I can and do heal the whole person."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Jordan — Point for prayer: *Christian leadership* — mature Christian leaders are urgently needed for the many opportunities for ministry that there now are. Unfortunately too many of the best men tend to go to America.

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 TWELVE

—Friday—

I want to praise you with no hesitation or hindrance. If you want me to use cymbals — harps — or whatever, I am glad to do it. I am so bound by tradition — help me.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!” (Psa. 150:5). Why are cymbals mentioned twice if the same instrument is intended? Dear Lord, you are the only one who truly knows what is meant. But I believe David is talking of two types of cymbals. Perhaps the first were finely tuned smaller instruments and the second were the larger ones used by both hands. There is one meaning that comes across with no hesitancy: as you want all nature to recognize its creator in its praise so you want man to employ all means available to him to praise you. It would seem here that you are saying that there are times when loud exclamations are in order. There is a time to shout for joy. There is a place for a crescendo of joy! Dear Lord, I want to sound my cymbals in your presence this very morning.

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

How limited and confined to say nothing of hindered we are by convention. It is just not the right thing to do, so we do not do it. We have been reading the wrong book for conduct. Your word in describing our expressions of praise plainly recommends the use of “sounding cymbals” and “loud clashing cymbals.” Whereas this was a part of the worship in the Old Testament I see it as a good example of how we could express our joy today when our joy is commensurate to the use of these instruments. My problem is that I do not feel as exuberant as the use of these instruments would suggest. There is however a reciprocal action involved here. Perhaps if I decided to use such means of praise I could soon suit my praise to the cymbals. It is always good for me to act on my convictions and let my feelings follow.

How do you personally relate to the music of God, and God who wants our praise? Speak it out or write it out.

CONFESSION OF SIN

How shall I confess my failure to praise you? Is it even necessary to make such a confession? Indeed it is! It is in this area I find both my greatest blessing and my greatest sin. If I read what you have given to us aright the intelligent beings in your presence are occupied with little else than praise and adoration. This says much to me. There must be something constantly and increasingly wonderful before them or they would not so respond. No one is forcing such angels and men to praise you. Their praise is a response to the wonder and excitement that meets their eyes and ears and mind. I have a beautiful choice today: I can expose myself to your word and there find reason piled upon reason to praise you; or I can pick up a magazine or turn on the TV and turn my heart away from you. 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

Come, Thou Fount of ev’ry blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above;
Praise the mount — I’m fixed upon it —
Mount of Thy redeeming love.

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

HIS WORD

³²Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way.”

³³His disciples answered, “Where could we get enough

bread in this remote place to feed such a crowd?"

³⁴"How many loaves do you have?" Jesus asked.

"Seven," they replied, "and a few small fish."

³⁵He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. ³⁶Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, and when he had given thanks, he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people. ³⁷They all ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ³⁸The number of those who ate was four thousand, besides women and children. —*Matthew 15:32-38, NIV*

Read also Mark 8:1-9a.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

These two accounts are so very similar that I want to consider them as one. At the same time I want to read them just as if I had never read them before. This is a crowd in which a majority could be Gentiles. It is the dry season because they are going to sit not on the grass as in the feeding of the 5,000, but on the "ground." There do indeed seem to be several reasons why my Lord repeated the astounding miracle of the creation of food: (1) It deals with the basic element of deity — *creation*. There is little point in saying the seven loaves and a few fish were increased in number — the *increase was something out of nothing!* (2) It reinforced the conviction of the apostles that he was indeed and in truth "Emmanuel."

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

As I with the disciples begin to gather the leftovers would I not be very, very thoughtful? What would I think? Perhaps: "He is always so modest and humble about all he does! He could have really made a sensation out of this meal, but now it is over — I wonder how many men in the four thousand even knew what happened? Perhaps as many as He wanted to know, i.e. those who had eyes to see and ears to hear." We could say that 1900 years this side of the incident many more than 4,000 have understood what happened. Praise 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 unfailing compassion of my Lord. (2) Thank you that my heart hunger can always be satisfied by him. (3) Thank you for the challenge of no provisions — out of this can glory come to our Lord. (4) Thank you that Jesus always thanked you before he ate — what an example! (5) Thank you that in thanksgiving there is creation. (6) Thank you that we are always in the distribution business in your program of feeding this hungry world. (7) Thank you that nothing is wasted or lost when you create it.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"*They all ate and were satisfied.*" How beautifully does this phrase describe all those who will eat of the bread come down from heaven. What lessons we can learn here: (1) Our Lord alone can give us this bread. The exclusiveness of Jesus is apparent on the surface. He brooks no competitors — indeed he has none! (2) He expects us to look beyond the bread to the One who gave it — indeed we do! (3) This bread, like all bread, must be eaten every day. Yesterday's supply was only adequate for yesterday. It is for today — for right now that I must eat.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Why did our Lord twice feed in a miraculous act thousands of people? There is in the answer many areas for prayer: (1) It was because of your compassion for these people that he fed them. Is feeding the multitude an indication of my compassion or a satisfaction of my ego? Examine my heart, dear Lord. (2) These people were so interested in what Jesus taught they went without food for three days. How total is my interest in his words? (3) Jesus knew the depth of interest as well as need — oh, dear Lord, deepen both qualities in me. (4) Jesus fed people with what *they* had and *he* had — not one without the other. Teach me from this.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

How well you feed us when we come to you with our hunger. Speak to me: (1) "Creating eternal food for the hungry from my word is your job today." (2) "Satisfaction is guaranteed when you eat of the bread from heaven." (3) "Thank me for the living bread."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Jordan — Point for prayer: *Missionary work* is still needed and is a great encouragement to the national believers. Great tact and a low profile is needed in these times when a foreigner is under suspicion and often far less free to minister than the nationals. Several missionaries have recently been expelled. There are now about 24 mission agencies and 160 missionaries in the country. This number is increasing since many literature, radio and other ministries could no longer carry on in strife-torn Lebanon.

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 TWELVE

—Saturday—

When we understand your creative genius it only seems right for us to praise you! In the world to come we shall join innumerable angels in such praise. What a privilege to prepare now in adoration before your throne.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Let everything that breathes praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!” (Psa. 150:6). What shall we say of yourself in this closing verse of these beautiful songs? You have created every intelligent creature in such a manner that it seems altogether right to lift our hearts to you in expression of praise and adoration. How beyond human expression will be the world to come when all angels and men lift their voices in one incredible chorus of praise! But this is no more than what should be done. It is good to contemplate the use of instruments of music enlisted to express praise to you. It is better to see man forming the words of praise in his mind and lifting them through his voice before 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

In all of the above words I have tried to express what I consider the most obvious response man could and should make to your greatness and goodness, but just now I want to praise you for the reasons I have to lift my voice in praise: (1) The intricate and beautiful design and purpose I see all about me in the world in which I live. The more I contemplate the plant life — the shape and color of flowers — the more impressed I am with the One who made them all. (2) The marvelous subtleties of your work in my life — and I can extend such work to every life. In a thousand ways you have prepared my life for this very hour.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, the above being true why should I not spend most of my time meditating upon the meaning of your word? I am glad, *delighted* for the time you

have given me — and for the wonderful opportunities you have given to share with others — but how much better could my track record be if only I would have it so. Somehow I want to find more time to memorize your word. I have committed some to memory but there is so much more I could do. Forgive me for this sin against the development of your praise in my heart.

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, my everlasting portion,
More than friend or life to me;
All along my pilgrim journey,
Savior, let me walk with Thee.
Close to Thee, close to Thee,
Close to Thee, close to Thee;
All along my pilgrim journey,
Savior, let me walk with Thee.

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

HIS WORD

16 The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven.

²He replied, “When evening comes, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,’ ³and in the morning, ‘Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. ⁴A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah.” Jesus then left them and went away.

—Matthew 16:1-4, NIV

And having sent them away, ¹⁰he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the region of Dalmanutha.

11The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven. 12He sighed deeply and said, "Why does this generation ask for a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, no sign will be given to it." —Mark 8:9b-12, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I am shocked! How did the Pharisees and the Sadducees get together? Surely this is an indication of the power and influence of the ministry of our Lord. The Sadducees did not even believe in such supernatural occurrences. Had any of these men been present when he performed one of the several thousand signs in his healing ministry? Had these men bothered to interview any who were either eye witnesses or actual participants in the signs he had already given? To ask is to answer. The real answer is: They did not want a sign; they wanted to discredit the signmaker. The answer our Lord gave indicates he knew their motives. Dear Lord, deliver me from this same syndrome.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I do want to hear with my heart the answer of my Lord. What was common knowledge concerning weather conditions in Palestine was used as an analogy by Jesus. The logic was devastating! He is saying you can read cause and effect in an area where you are no experts, i.e. the weather — but in the realm where you have had training you cannot put cause and effect together! Essentially Jesus is saying to these men what he says to me and to all: "I have presented my credentials. How many copies do you need?" If you won't believe the first copy why would you believe the three thousandth copy? I am not on trial — *you are!*" He reminds them (and us) that the "sign of Jonah" will convince or you will not be convinced. Praise your name, I am convinced!

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 Jesus shocks the modernist and the fundamentalist — we must *hear him!* (2) Thank you that Jesus was not on trial — these men were. (3) Thank you we can all be weathermen — we *know* what the signs say. (4) Thank you that his signs are for *all time!* (5) Thank you that Jesus has no hesitancy in pronouncing a generation evil and adulterous. (6) Thank you that Jesus separated disbelief and unbelief — we *can* believe if we *want* to. (7) Thank you that Jesus did leave and walked away from some people — (I need to be careful in following this example.)

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Jesus then left them and went away." "Then he left

them, got into the boat and crossed to the other side." Jesus did leave the scene of action. He left more sick than he healed; he left more who did not believe than those who accepted him. Several thoughts are suggested by this fact: (1) His primary purpose was not to empty hospitals or graveyards. (He will do that when he comes again.) He came to let us know who he was, not what he could do. (2) He expects us to carry on where he left off. After all, we are the body of himself. He has sent the Spirit into us that we might have the life necessary for this tremendous task. (3) He left because remaining did no good. For those who disbelieve — for those who refuse this becomes the only recourse. How do we stand before him?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Seekers after signs! Is this different than those who seek the miraculous? There are surely lessons for prayer here: (1) The Pharisees and Sadducees could not agree — how could they agree on a sign? Help me never to come with the request that I "call the shots" on any subject. (2) There was a fatal flaw in the evaluating capacity of these men. May I see it ever so clearly and avoid it! (3) I am so glad that there could be a generation that was not "wicked and adulterous" — I want to be a part of it. (4) Just what is it I seek from you? Your Lordship or my own vanity? Examine my heart! (5) What a wonder is "the sign of Jonah"! How I want to fully learn from it.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I am constantly aware that I could be "just religious" like these men who came to Jesus. Speak to me: (1) "Seek me, not my signs, and you will find all you need." (2) "Faith is a decision of the will — not the emotions." (3) "My resurrection will answer all the questions as to my deity."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Jordan — Point for prayer: Many Lebanese took refuge in Jordan in 1975-76. Pray that many may be brought to the Lord through their insecurity and sorrow. Many of these people are nominally Christian. Pray that the true believers among them may have courage to testify.

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 THIRTEEN

—Sunday—

When we give careful heed to your word we can live in security — we can be quiet — and without fears. Even now I bow in wonder before you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell securely, and shall be quiet without fear of evil” (Prov. 1:33). In this comforting verse is the wonderful fact that you are concerned about man’s conduct. This is such a basic assumption that we often forget it. I take great courage in your interest in my life — and the lives of all men. Another equally meaningful fact is that we can understand what you say. In this *a priori* assumption is the important truth that you expect man to form in his mind from your words just what was in your mind. Moreover you are going to hold man responsible for responding properly to what you have said. Security and quietness can be ours when we open our ears and heart and receive your word.

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

Over this entire year I have each day tried to do just what the wiseman Solomon here recommends. I have surely not always hearkened as well as I should, but I have been eager to read most carefully what you have written. How I praise you for the fulfillment of your promise — a deep sense of security and quietness has pervaded my life. I do not fear evil; I do fear the Evil One. I fear you much more. In both senses of the term “fear” a source of awe is meant. I have a sense of wonder in your presence. But I do not fear evil because I know it is under your control and I am hiding in you. Praise is my natural response to such a relationship.

How do you personally relate to the fear of God, and God who is our security? 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 to observe some improvement in my response to stressful circumstances. (I just had one

yesterday.) I believe it is a direct result of each day opening my mind and heart to your word. Whatever security and quietness I have comes from you by this means. At the same time, I am a long way from where I want to be and you want me to be in my daily awareness of the application of your counsel in my life. Forgive me for willful selfishness. I am sometimes selfish and do not know it until it is pointed out to me — but when I can choose and the choice is for self — dear Lord, forgive! My security and quietness are upset. Thank you for helping me to see the cause and effect in such a situation.

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

Under His wings I am safely abiding;
Tho’ the night deepens and tempests are wild,
Still I can trust Him; I know He will keep me;
He has redeemed me, and I am His child.
Under His wings, under His wings,
Who from His love can sever?
Under His wings my soul shall abide,
Safely abide forever.

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

HIS WORD

⁵When they went across the lake, the disciples forgot to take bread. ⁶“Be careful,” Jesus said to them. ⁷“Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

⁸They discussed this among themselves and said, “It is because we didn’t bring any bread.”

⁹Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked, “You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread? ¹⁰Do you still not understand? Don’t you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? ¹¹Or the

seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? ¹¹How is it you don't understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." ¹²Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. —Matthew 16:5-12, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How dull of hearing were these disciples! As learners they were slow indeed! How synchronized were all the words of Jesus to the thinking and conversation of those with whom he sailed! His words seemed so appropriate — and yet they missed the point. How very much like many present disciples. Our Lord is so infinitely kind in his rebuke! He reminds them that if he could feed 5,000 with five loaves and 4,000 with seven loaves he could feed those in the boat with one loaf. At the same time he wants them to understand he is talking about the evil influence in the teaching of these men under the figure of bread and leaven. How I need both lessons!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Lord, I do indeed want to *beware* of the strong, rapidly spreading influence of false teaching. I wonder just what the danger was in the warning of my Lord? I can think of several possibilities: (1) Their position and influence would lend prestige to what they said and more people to accept it regardless of how strange it sounded. If history is a teacher then she would say that those in authority are usually wrong when acting as theologians. (2) When three opposing sides unite against one person jealousy and envy are behind it. The leaven of envy has cut the head of more than John the Baptist.

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 extremities which can always become your opportunities. (2) Thank you for the beautiful figure of *bread* used so often. (3) Thank you for the sharp clear warning of my Lord that there *are* false teachers. (4) Thank you for the patience of Jesus in teaching the disciples — how we need his patience today! (5) Thank you that we can indeed remember what happened with the 5,000 and the 4,000! (6) Thank you that Jesus pointed to himself as the object of their faith. (7) Thank you that the disciples finally did understand.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... guard against the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees." This strong statement presupposes

several things: (1) That the disciples would be able to discern the difference. This is indeed a compliment to the effectiveness of our Lord's teaching. (2) The man himself is judged with his teaching — or we could say his teaching decides his fate. This is one awesome thought. (3) This presupposes that these men were such effective teachers that they would be given consideration. Perhaps their political position added to their acceptance.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

After the feeding of the four thousand one would think that bread would be "up front" in the thinking of these men — but it wasn't — there are obvious points for prayer here: (1) I know at times I am as dense as these men to the real meaning of your words — I claim by faith the wisdom you promised. (2) They forgot bread and didn't understand the bread of which our Lord spoke. Do I really know the deadly danger of humanism and hedonism? Open my eyes! (3) Thank you for the time we have (all of us have the same amount) we can use in meditating upon the truth — your word as a guard against error.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In a world full of false teaching I need to hear your voice through your word: (1) "You can know truth from error or I would never have given you truth." (2) "Evil men will and do get worse and worse." (3) "My truth is the mandate of liberty."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Jordan — Point for prayer: *Literature* in Arabic is becoming more widely available. Pray for effective distribution of books, magazines and tracts. Pray also for the work of the Bible Society in a ministry that is also strategic for the surrounding nations, where restrictions on Christian work are severe.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Sing, oh, sing . . . of my Redeemer,
With His blood . . . He purchased me, . . .
On the cross . . . He sealed my pardon,
Paid the debt . . . and made me free. . .

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Monday—

When time has disappeared into eternity you will be the same wonderful caring God we now worship. How can we be caught up in the temporary when we know we are created for eternity?



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“He will endure as long as the sun, as long as the moon, through all generations. He will be like rain falling on a mown field, like showers watering the earth” (Psa.72:5,6). There is something solidly comforting in knowing that ten or twenty or one hundred generations from today you will still be the same. Men might not be worshiping you — or perhaps time will have disappeared in eternity — but you are always the same. The sun and the moon appear to us as such permanent entities. There will be a time when the sun and the moon will be moved from their places — but there will never be a time when you change in any way. How good to put my confidence in total permanence!

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

In a more personal expression: “You are to me ‘like rain falling on a mown field.’” Dear Lord, how beautiful a description of yourself! (1) We do not deserve your mercies but each day we arise they fall upon us like the rain from heaven. (2) We sometimes mistake your mercies and complain — but like the rain we are not going to change your wonderful purpose. (3) As rain is perfectly adapted to the needs of the plant world so are your influences in our lives. If we will but wait and meditate — with thankfulness, we will see, if not in this world in the larger world to come, how your goodness was behind every shower. (4) How different are the attendant circumstances in this shower or that! Just so are your influences in our lives. I suppose there never has been one rain on a newly mown field just like another even on the same field. Thank you for your goodness.

How do you personally relate to this quality of God? 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 am caught up in the temporary when I know I live in eternity? How could I be so fascinated with the tinsel when I have pure gold nearby? How is it I complain about being dry when you send showers upon me as they are needed? Someone has been lying to me! Thank you for the awakening that I might see things as they truly are. My deepest need just now is to separate the temporary from the eternal. How I do need the wisdom that comes down from yourself! “Pure, peacable, gentle, easy to be entreated, without hypocrisy.” If my ability to use the knowledge which I have from your word was “pure” I would soon escape this deception of the evil one. Dear Lord, I so purpose — 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

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.

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

HIS WORD

²¹From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

²²Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

²³Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Out of my sight, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not

have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." —Matthew 16:21-23, NIV
Read also Mark 8:31-33.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

The time has come! Jesus can now explain in detail and plainly what he before had only spoken of in veiled form. Jesus not only here describes his death at the hands of "the elders, chief priests and teachers," but he kept it up. What a shock to find out that Jesus was not going to return force with force. *Jesus was not going to defend himself!* This must have been the greatest possible stumbling block. They missed the little power-packed phrase: "and on the third day be raised from the dead." If they had only been listening! How often is this true of all of us!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Peter had good intentions. He had already developed the picture of the Messiah — and nothing Jesus said that destroyed that picture would be accepted. Peter did not lack for temerity — when he walked on the water or when he took Jesus aside and rebuked our Lord privately. We could hardly imagine a more ridiculous spectacle! And yet we are at the same time witnessing the most human of scenes. Death is a shock to anyone. If one of our loved ones were to predict his own death (even as my own father did) the first response is, "not so"! The rebuke of Jesus to Peter is also natural. Too much was in the balance for Jesus to say anything less. It was Satan's old ploy to sidetrack our Lord — and he would have none of 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 thoughtful explanation of his death and resurrection — it becomes all the more precious to us. (2) Thank you for the suffering my Lord underwent for me. (3) Thank you, oh thank you! for his rising on the third day. (4) Thank you for the naturalness of the reaction of Peter — so full of credibility. (5) Thank you for the sharp deep rebuke of Jesus to Peter — how we all need, like the disciples, to hear him. (6) Thank you that I can guard each day that I am no "stumbling block" to my Lord and his purpose for today. (7) Thank you I can set my mind on the things that are above and not on the things that are from beneath.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." Jesus *must* be severe in this circumstance — his whole purpose was at stake. Peter had (with so many others) fallen into the trap of Satan. This was but a repeat through the lives of one

of his devoted followers of the same offer Satan had already made earlier. How easy it is to mix "the things of God" and "the things of men." Or is it? One good look at the life and teachings of Jesus and we know "the things of God." It is rather more to the point to say: "how easy is it to look at the things of men all about us rather than to draw apart and spend time meditating on our Lord and his words." It is indeed what fills our minds that directs our speech and our actions. How many verses will I commit to memory today? Better yet: will I meditate on them until there is an involuntary response?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I lift up my heart in these requests: (1) I want to know more and more about the meaning of his death for me. Lead me to the best sources for this information. (2) The leaders of religion are still confused — how shall I relate to them? Indeed — perhaps I am one of them! Open my eyes! (3) Write again on my heart the evidences — the "many infallible proofs" of his being raised from the dead. (4) How can men (like me) be so wrong when they (we) are so sincere? I need more knowledge here! (5) Jesus turned away from Peter so it would be true that Peter was behind Jesus when Jesus spoke — teach me such wisdom and courtesy. I sorely need it.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I am listening! Reach my conscience. I hear my Lord say to me: (1) "Please, please remember it is *always* Satan who disagrees with me." (2) "You DO NOT have to understand my reasons to obey me." (3) "Have you learned anything from the experience of others? — if so act like it!"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Lebanon — Population: 2,600,000. Growth rate — 2.1%. People per sq. km. 250.

Point for prayer: *Hatred and revenge have brought death and tragedy to all.* Deep repentance and a forgiving spirit must come before reconciliation is possible. Yet in the sorrow and tensions responsiveness to the gospel has increased.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Beneath the cross of Jesus
I fain would take my stand,
The shadow of a mighty rock
Within a weary land,
A home within the wilderness,
A rest upon the way,
From the burning of the noontide heat
And the burden of the day.

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Tuesday—

All the world is yours — “from sea to shining sea.” Ten trillion galaxies also belong to you! Isn't this good reason for praise and joy? Thank you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“In his days the righteous will flourish; prosperity will abound till the moon is no more. He will rule from sea to sea and from the River (Euphrates) to the ends of the earth” (Psa. 72:7,8). We see this literally fulfilled in the reign of Solomon. Is it prophetic of another King and another reign? We do indeed believe there will be a day when all men on earth will acknowledge that Jesus is Lord. I know also that this describes your desire for all men today. You want all men to be righteous, i.e. to fulfill your will in their lives and accept your mercy in declaring them righteous. You do want all men to prosper. Men's sin has hindered the flourishing of this prosperity. Since you want all men to be saved and be thus your children and you want prosperity for all your children this promise is open to all.

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

The answer to enjoying prosperity today (and Solomon's connotations were indeed physical) is found in the eighth verse: “He will rule from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.” It would be interesting to know just how much material prosperity was enjoyed in Solomon's empire. It is not a sin to be poor — but it is sin that produces poverty. Dear Lord, I do want you to rule in my life — if I am blessed with prosperity it has to do with the whole circumstance and not some magical formula I have learned. I should be just as concerned that others prosper as myself. If my Lord is my example — if Paul is to be followed then food and clothes will be adequate. The largest concern is with your rule in the hearts of all.

How do you personally relate to this quality of God? 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. How little is done in my experience to promote righteousness in the lives of men. I can't do much but I *can do* my part. I *can* live a life above human reproach. I *can* teach those who are my students by example and word what you have said about life. I need to be far more effective here than I am at present. Even in such a little thing (or is it little?) as gifts of money I need to believe your promises and set the example. I say this for all — but I must say it for myself first. Dear Lord, there are several ways in which I can improve here. You have blessed all us Americans in a material sense until we are known as the “haves” among those who have and those who have not. May thy goodness lead us to a deeper repentance!

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 that with yonder sacred throng
We at His feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song,
And crown Him Lord of all;
We'll join the everlasting song,
And crown Him Lord of all.

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

HIS WORD

²⁴Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. ²⁶What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? ²⁷For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according

to what he has done. ²⁸I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." —Matthew 16:24-28, NIV

Read also Mark 8:34-9:1; Luke 9:23-27.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How beyond my poor powers of description are these words! My Lord is speaking into the heart of all in these verses. Matthew says: "then Jesus said to *his disciples*" (you & me), but Mark says: "then he called *the crowd* to him . . ." (perhaps they better characterize us). Luke says: "then he said to *them all*" — we are all there. "If *anyone* would come after me, . . ." — dear Lord, we do *want* to come after you — ". . . he *must* deny himself and take up his cross (daily) and follow me." The decision of Gethsemane must be made each day and then publically lived out before men. A man carrying a cross in Jesus' day left no doubt in the minds of those who saw him just what had happened to him or where he was going.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Jesus explains what he means: "*For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, . . .*" Our life consists of: (1) *Time*; (2) *Thought*; (3) *Energy*; (4) *Ability*; (5) *Money* — How do we use life? For whom do we live? To whom do we give our life? It is not at all difficult to determine. Answer the following five questions with all the honesty the Holy Spirit will enable you to produce: (1) How much of your time do you give to our Lord's words or works? (2) How often are you meditating on Jesus? (3) How are your energies presently used? If you would die right now what would Jesus lose? (4) Does Jesus benefit from your abilities? (5) How much actual cash is Jesus given from your income? Dear Lord — I *do want* to lose myself in 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 I am convinced Jesus said this for all his followers — or all who would follow him. (2) Thank you that it is the total self — or life that must be given or denied. (3) Thank you that Jesus put it in both the negative (denied) and positive (*gives* or *loses his life*) so we could not miss his meaning. (4) Thank you he said such denial or *losing* would be made public — would influence society. (5) Thank you the options are clearly stated — one is the gain of real life; the other is the loss of life. (6) Thank you for the warning that there will be a time when an accounting will be made. (7) Thank you for those followers of my Lord who set the example and gave their lives for him.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the son of Man coming in his kingdom." Since all three writers record this promise it does seem we must pay attention to it and discover its meaning! It would be easy to say that our Lord meant that all these men would be alive on the day of Pentecost and there enter into his Kingdom the church. And to a large extent such is true and did happen. But the subjective meaning to those involved is what I would like to know. *Just how did they indeed see the Son of Man coming at that memorable day?* Did any of those present think of our Lord's word and recognize the Kingdom of God? We could as well ask if the three thousand knew they were "born again" when they repented and were baptized? The more important question is what we know about such relationships?

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How shall I pray about these words? Have I in any sense seen my Lord coming in his rule in my life? I lift up these requests: (1) It is possible to follow him NOW — TODAY — please, please mark out his footprints for me! (2) I want to deny the use of time for myself that I might devote such time to you. (3) Just what is the topic of my thought? Does it relate to me or you? I deny thoughts selfish and get "heaven on my mind" — help me. (4) I have a store of energy to use up each day — how is it spent? I deny that it need not all be given to you — yes — it should and it can! Show me how!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

These verses have *really* captured my attention. Continue to speak to me through them: (1) "You have unlimited creative ability — I gave it to you — what return do I get from it?" (2) "Your money is you — time to earn it — thought in the earning process — energy is expended — ability is used — how much do I get as compared with others?"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Lebanon — Point for prayer: *The country has been ravaged for years by foreign and community armies, and is, in effect, ungovernable.*

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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!

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Wednesday—

You have appointed a covenant with your firstborn — the King of all kings — and a covenant with us — your firstborn ones — How good to know not one word you have spoken has ever failed! Gladly do I worship you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I will also appoint him my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth. I will maintain my love to him forever, and my covenant with him will never fail” (Psa. 89:27,28). Since verse 20 of this psalm identifies David as the one to whom these beautiful promises are made we examine his record to find fulfillment. We could see the possibility of this being Messianic. However unless you could have indicated by one of your inspired writers such is true we are most hesitant to do so. We are more than glad to apply this to ourselves as Christians. David was not the first born in his family. He was the eighth in as many sons of Jesse. The term firstborn as used here is one of position not birth.

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

So it is with us! Our new birth gives us an exalted position with you. We can share this position of favor with you through your exalted Son — his death and resurrection makes our joint exaltation possible. How good it will be to one day see all the kings that have ever reigned or do now reign pay homage to the one who will be exalted above them all. How comforting to rest in the love of someone who will never fail! The covenant you have made with us is in your own blood. We like David can cry out with even more meaning: “You are my Father, my God” — and to your Son — “You are my rock, my Saviour” (see vs. 26). Praise your name forever!

How do you personally relate to this quality of God? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is always good to reverse the praise process and realize all praise is out of grace and mercy. It is not because we deserve it that we can praise you. Our ex-

altation is in you, not in ourselves. How your love does call from within me a mutual response. My love for you has failed and I have broken my covenant with you. Here and now I do indeed renew my love and agreement. It is out of my need I call: “O thou, the most exalted of all the kings of the earth, reign over the kingdoms of my heart.” As I meditate on this I ask your rule in the kingdom of my thoughts — in the kingdom of my will or choices — in the kingdom of my emotions — and most of all reign on the throne of my conscience.

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 love Thy kingdom, Lord,
The house of Thine abode;
The church our blest Redeemer saved
With His own precious blood;
I love Thy church, O God!
Her walls before Thee stand,
Dear as the apple of Thine eye,
And graven on Thy hand.

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

HIS WORD

17 After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ²There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. ³Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

⁴Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters — one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

⁵While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my

Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

"When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus. — *Matthew 17:1-8, NIV*

Read also Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I feel like the disciples: "the disciples kept this to themselves, and told no one at that time what they had seen." Least of all do I want to attempt to tell you what I see. But as you know this is but a form of adoration and wonder before you and your word. I only want to express to you what these blessed words mean to me. I do wonder what happened in the eight days between his words concerning discipleship and this blessed incident. In your eternal presence we can fill in all the blanks. Jesus did at least this time give his disciples a lesson in prayer. It would seem that they as before fell asleep. As he prayed something happened to him.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

His face changed, it "shone like the sun." Was he kneeling? Was he standing? Perhaps he was prostrate on the ground. The last posture hardly seems right since the appearance of his face is mentioned by those who saw him. I wonder about how they saw his eyes. Terror was struck into the heart of those who saw him. Perhaps it was a result of being awakened from sleep to see the One you have known for so long so changed that you could hardly know him at all. Dear Lord, we are always awakened to new vistas of your glory or character. His clothes were also affected by the transformation. I wonder why such a detail is included? To confirm the reality of what is happening! Praise 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 that our Lord, for just a little while drew back the veil that we might see his glory. (2) Thank you for your thoughtfulness in meeting the needs of Peter, James and John. (3) Thank you for the emphasis upon the physical, this is where we live. (4) Thank you for the threefold accounts — so alike yet so unlike. (5) Thank you for sending Moses and Elijah — the Law and the Prophets — it helps us see just how exalted was your Son. (6) Thank you for the tremendous subject under discussion: "His departure at Jerusalem." The spirit world knew and was vitally concerned with the affairs of earth. (7) Thank you for not leaving any question as to who should be heard and heeded.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"He did not know what he was saying." "He did not know what to say, they were so frightened." These are the apologetic comments of Mark and Luke; Matthew does not record such an apology. It was a strange remark. What would be the purpose of the three buildings? They would be memorials to three such great men. In truth Peter did not know what he was saying! Consider: (1) Jesus was not to be compared to Moses and Elijah. (2) This experience was not to continue. (3) Buildings were not the purpose nor any part of the purpose of the transfiguration. Indeed he was speaking without thought. Isn't it much better to be quiet if you do not know what to say? Indeed it is! — but then some men are moved out of the pressure of nervousness to say *something — anything!* Such was Peter's expression. We can learn much from this impulsive man. Such a contrast to our Lord.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I have been upon this mount before — but I eagerly go again! — just as if I had not been before. Here are my present-day requests: (1) Why take Peter, James and John? I see myself in each of them — open my understanding of yourself and your Son as I share their experience! (2) I do believe Jesus is giving them and us a lesson in prayer and the world to come — I want to learn: (a) Prayer changes your appearance! (b) *The men who had died* are so much nearer than you think. (3) Conversation is exchanged in the spirit world about events in this material world — keep me sensitive — open — listening!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Surely you will say something very special through these words — I am listening! (1) "Why do you live on such a mundane level — when the real world is on a different level?" (2) "Please do not mistake what I mean by the terms 'real world' — I only speak of its eternal nature."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Lebanon — Point for prayer: *Protestantism is seen as as threat to both traditional Christians and to Muslims*, and also appears foreign. Eighty percent of all Protestants are from the Armenian community; only 20% from the Arab majority. Pray for the believers, their unity, fortitude, protection and witness in this complex situation.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

King of my life I crown Thee now—
Thine shall the glory be;
Lest I forget Thy thorn-crowned brow,
Lead me to Calvary.

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Thursday—

You are my stone foundation — my rock on which I stand. You have promised me that my house will stand — I believe you — I rejoice — I marvel at your goodness!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Psa. 118:22-24). This beautiful prophesy concerning your Son has been often used by both the inspired and uninspired spokesmen. I want to see these words just as if I had never looked upon them before. Why was the stone rejected? Obviously its appearance belied its purpose. When they looked at it out in the field they could not imagine its use as a capstone. We need to remember this stone is not overlooked but “rejected.” A cursory consideration is given and it is turned down. The humility of my Lord blinded the eyes of the proud. How indeed he did empty himself! (1) Born in a place for feeding cattle and laid in a feeding trough. (2) Running and hiding from a tyrant in the arms of a peasant couple. (3) Reared in obscurity in a carpenter’s shop. (4) Only one son among four others and several sisters. How could anyone know he was the King?

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 Lord (even your dear Self) has done this, and it is indeed marvelous in my eyes!” I am so impoverished of words! But I *must* try to say just how marvelous I find the *capstone*! (1) Marvelous in being able to hold every life together. You are just the balance that supports both sides of our way or gate of life. The door of life falls apart without you. All of life is but a jumble of stones without you. (2) Marvelous in how long you were willing to wait for our recognition — or is it your waiting for our awakening to the ability to see. How clearly does this teach us of the deep meaning of infinity as compared with time.

How do you personally relate to this quality of

God? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

How imperceptibly do you lead me daily to a confession before you! I run out of resources. My life fails to hold together. Nothing seems to fit. I know what is the matter! I have been overlooking the capstone again! How marvelous to be whole! How glorious to sense completeness! How futile and frustrating is any other life. Forgive me for my blindness! Having claimed your forgiveness I can exclaim with the psalmist: “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.” A day of freedom from even one record of one sin. A day like the one at the deliverance from our mother’s womb. A new beginning — Praise your name! How I do seek the capstone for all the combinations of this day!

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.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁰The disciples asked him, “Why then do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?”

¹¹Jesus replied, “To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things. ¹²But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished. In the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands. ¹³Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist. —Matthew 17:10-13, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How I do delight in this privilege to identify the Elijah promised in the person of John the Baptist. How little did even those who were the closest to Jesus know him! Did the meaning of his words penetrate their hearts? “. . . *until the Son of Man be raised from the dead.*” They did evidently connect his words with Messianic promise as they immediately asked about the coming of Elijah. There were so many obvious likenesses in the life and work of John the Baptist and Elijah it was a wonder that they had not already made the identification. What poignant words are these Jesus makes concerning Elijah! He said the prophet would return and “restore all things.” In our day when restoration is a real passion with many it is good to learn from our Lord what he considered “the restoration of all things.”

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Even when he came they did not recognize him. But neither did they do anything to him that was not promised or permitted. Considering the record of John's imprisonment and death we catch a glimpse of the incredible balance between the foreknowledge of God and the free will of man. In this last word about John I can learn much. (1) He was “set apart” from his birth to his death. (2) He was totally unconventional in his dress and his diet. (3) He spoke to the needs and conscience of his hearers. (4) He was unafraid of what men could do to him — and it was considerable! (5) He was human in his limitations — i.e. he suffered as we do. Disappointment and discouragement were his lot or part of what men did to him. Death was his release. We admire him even as our Lord did!

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 interest of the disciples in what the scriptures and the scholars said. (2) Thank you that most of the time the scholars didn't have all the facts — credit then could go to the right source. (3) Thank you for the wonderful record of Elijah in the O.T. I want to read it again. (4) Thank you for the courage of my Lord as he faced the coming suffering at the hands of those who should have worshiped him. (5) Thank you for Jesus' confident assurance that he would rise from the dead. (6) Thank you for the privileges we have today because of his suffering — (oh, how poorly expressed!). (7) Thank you for your infinite love and mercy.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . *he was talking to them about John the Baptist.*” John the Baptist was a topic of conversation with our Lord more than once. It is easy to point out

some meaningful comparisons in the life and ministry of John and Elijah: (1) Both lived in the wilderness. Elijah hid himself by the brook and John was in the deserts. (2) Both had a strange diet — the ravens came to feed Elijah and John's food was locusts and wild honey. (3) In appearance they were alike, Elijah is described as a “hairy man” (II Kgs. 1:8) and John wore camel's hair. (4) The message of judgment was preached by both men. (5) They both had a tremendous influence over a large crowd. (6) Both pronounced God's wrath on the religious leaders. (7) Each man spoke before kings. (8) Both pronounced God's judgment against women — Elijah with Jezebel and John with Herodias. No wonder there was such a high estimate of John's life. He was indeed “more than a prophet.”

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

(1) Why did Jesus refer to himself as “*the Son of Man?*” — this was his most frequent description of himself. How wondrously inclusive! “The son (and Lord) of all men” — this means me! In what sense is he my son? (2) In what sense or connection should I learn from the present day teachers of your word? Help me just here! (3) I do so need the wisdom to be able to speak in the veiled language of my Lord that men will learn for themselves. (4) John the Baptist was the greatest man born of woman — he suffered *much* from ignorant unbelievers — does it pay to be good? Teach me Lord!

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As Moses, Elijah and my Lord discussed “his soon departure from Jerusalem” what did they say? Speak to my conscience about this. (1) “Moses was meek but also stubborn — I can use you too.” (2) “Elijah was obedient but sometimes despondent — I can use you too.” (3) “The death of my Son was the focal point of all history.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Lebanon — Points for prayer: (1) *Lebanon has been one of the key centers for Christian ministries to the whole Middle East.* Much of this outreach has been limited or stopped altogether. Pray for the restoration of freedom and a resumption of this role for the blessing of the whole region. (2) *The Bible Society* has been a major contributor to the spread of Christian Literature and Bibles. Pray for staff, supplies, distribution of God's word and openness to it.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Friday—

We all need an escape — a fortress — a stronghold — life has too many unanswered questions — impossible obstacles. You are my divine escape where I find protection — security — peace! Thank you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield, in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me” (Psa. 144:2). Praise your wonderful name! It is good to return here and lift up my heart in familiar surroundings to my loving God. Often I have praised you as “my fortress” — it is good to do it again. The psalmist changes the figure just a little as he addresses you as his “stronghold.” In you I have protection as a “fortress,” but in a stronghold I have provisions for a long siege. Through yourself I shall be able to hold out against the enemy until you come to take me home. From this stronghold will a deliverer come and his name is “King of Kings.” Praise 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

How I would like to represent all men and their position before you. I want to share your love and concern for all men. Just here I want to hide behind the wonderful shield I see in yourself! The shield is yourself — but my use of such protection is through faith. I feel so very weak before the horde of Satan’s forces — but I read in your word “if God be for us, who can be against us” and I find a shield between me and the enemy that he cannot penetrate. I do sin and fail my Lord — but your word says “the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin” — I confess my sin and hide behind your forgiveness. Praise your name!

How do you personally relate to this quality of God? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

My confession is spontaneous but it does seem strange. When I have such a wonderful fortress why am I found in the open field? When there is such an

abundant stronghold why do I live in a ragged tent open to the elements? When there is a deliverer to lead me who has never lost a battle why do I prefer to engage the hosts of darkness? Why do I often fight without a shield? All I can say in answer to all of the above is that I have been deeply deceived! Praise God for the light that has shown through this gloom. More and more I am ready to walk in the light. I have died like a fool dieth long enough — O Rock of Ages, hide thou me! Forgive me and renew my 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

Take the name of Jesus ever,
As a shield from ev’ry snare;
If temptations round you gather
Breathe that holy name in prayer.

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

HIS WORD

14When they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him. **15**“Lord, have mercy on my son,” he said. “He is an epileptic and is suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. **16**I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him.”

17“O unbelieving and perverse generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me.”

18Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed from that moment. —*Matthew 17:14-18*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What a passage for our hearts! How shall we ever appreciate fully just what happened here? So little if anything has ever been solved by an argument. It

would seem from the lack of response to our Lord's question that even those arguing felt the same. Jesus asked a direct question: "What are you arguing about?" — It was a man in the crowd who answered. It was indeed *the* man who had a felt need who answered. And so it is always. It was the father of a poor demon possessed epileptic son. Matthew and Mark describe in graphic detail the tragic effects of this disease and demon possession. The best I can do before you is to read it over several times.

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 from this record! Teach me. It was because of lack of faith no help was given to this young man. Jesus said his disciples were representative of the generation in which they lived: "unbelieving." How well does this describe us! It is so easy to adopt the attitudes and mores of those with whom we daily associate. I say this for *myself* and *my* need. Was this child possessed by a demon from his childhood? We would associate this answer with his epilepsy. The disciples had carefully considered the problem and decided it was impossible. How typical is this response to the several "impossible" circumstances that face me every day. Dear Lord, I am the father in this circumstance: "I *do* believe; help me overcome my unbelief." I *know* you will!

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 wonder and excitement that filled the hearts of the crowd. (2) Thank you that Jesus always put his finger on the sore spot — that as the Great Physician he might heal. (3) Thank you for the loving sincere heart of the father. (4) Thank you for the plain identification of the presence of a demon. (5) Thank you for the desperation in the request of the father — it is in just such requests our Lord has an answer. (6) Thank you for our Lord's identity of the evil spirit — it was not responsible for the epilepsy but for the deafness and dumbness. (7) Thank you for the wonderful deliverance — not understood by the people — but your own work of grace!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, 'He's dead.'" Jesus never seemed to either be in a hurry or worried over what men said. There have been, and are many cases that appear to be hopeless — many indeed say "He's dead," but not our Lord! What appears as death is only the rest before the resurrection! We are being taught over and over again that we must relinquish all hold on ourselves and all we have to him. It is only when he has total control over our lives that he can give us his hand and raise

us up. There are always those who will say "He's dead" — it is in our Lord's understanding and authority that we have hope.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How many fathers have been lifted up and encouraged by this record? I do not know how many — but I know *one who has*. I lift up these requests to you: (1) I run to Jesus and cry out my need! "Help my sons — they both have needs only you can meet." (2) Was some of the brightness of the transfiguration still on his face? For me it is! Show me again his glory! I read the record yet once again! (3) Demons are *real* — but identifying them is *not* my job, I too must appeal to the only one who can help. This I do! (4) How liberating it is to know the blessed Holy Spirit lives *in me*! He is at work even now strengthening me — comforting me — assuring me! I want the faith to accept this work!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

If ever there was a personal passage this is it! Continue to reach my heart! (1) "You are always in the vortex of life and death — evil and good — sin and salvation — *trust me*, I have overcome for you." (2) "Men will never understand — but I *always do* — cast your whole self upon me. Your cares, your frustration — your helplessness!"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Lebanon — Point for prayer: *Radio*. Both Far East Broadcasting Association and Trans World Radio maintain studios and produce programs in Beirut despite the danger and destruction. The FEBA studio was destroyed in August, 1985. The "Voice of Hope" Christian station in south Lebanon broadcasts the gospel 24 hours a day, locally and to all the Middle East, with some impact and response.

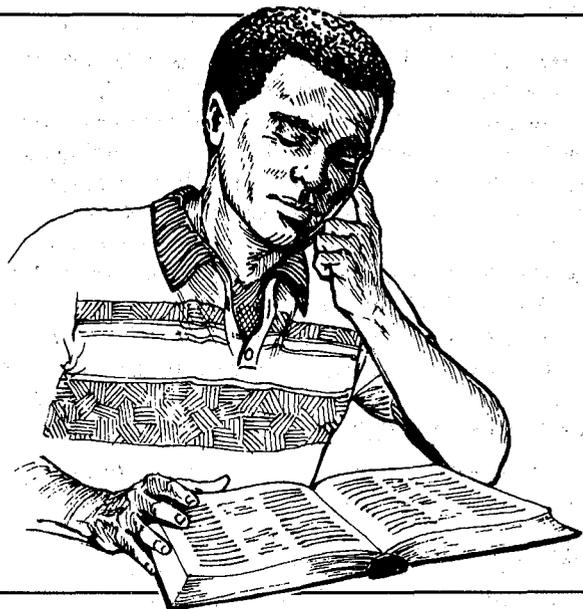
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Low in the grave He lay — Jesus, my Savior!
 Waiting the coming day — Jesus, my Lord!
 Up from the grave He arose
 With a mighty triumph o'er His foes;
 He arose a Victor from the dark domain,
 And He lives for ever with His saints to reign:
 He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Saturday—

All Christians are sojourners in a strange land — we are pilgrims on a journey — but one day we will be back home — one day our pilgrimage will cease. How I long for that city whose builder and maker is yourself!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage” (Psa. 84:5). Man by himself is weakness itself! You are the source of energy — of all energy and most especially of the strength all men need to face each day. The energy I need to prepare the next lesson comes from you. The health I enjoy is from you. Indeed, the health of all men is a gift from yourself! We are “blessed” because your strength does not disappoint or dissipate. We do need a renewal of your strength each day — but sufficient unto the day is your strength — praise your name! I am indeed a pilgrim in search of the eternal city. I have set my heart on a tour of that beautiful place.

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 set my heart on pilgrimage. As beautiful as the world you have made is, it is only representative of that land that is fairer than day. I do not want to just “put up” with the world in which I find myself — you have given it for our enjoyment and our appreciation of yourself. But *there is* a new heaven and a new earth. I am a pilgrim on my way to that city. The excitement of this hope is ever with me. The curiosity is not at all greater than the fulfillment. The wonder and adventure is always before me. Relax my hold on all that is here. Help me to travel light that I can move through the gates as soon as you call.

How do you personally relate to this quality of God? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

How too easy it is to forget! When I am weak I forget my strength is in you. When I am somehow sad I forget your words “be of good cheer.” When I am sick it is too easy to forget the health you promise.

What I am saying very poorly is that I am *not* blessed by your strength for I choose too often to live in my own. What a comfortable environment we have found for ourselves in the daily routine of this life. To say we are pilgrims in search of a city would only raise a smile to the lips of those who see how very deeply enmeshed we are in the world that now is. Break me loose! Open my eyes! Forgive me!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now.

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Be not awaery, for labor will cease
Some glad morning;
Turmoil will change into infinite peace,
Some bright morning,
Some bright morning,
Some glad morning,
When the sun is shining in th’eternal sky;
Some bright morning,
Some glad morning,
We shall see the Lord of Harvest,
By and by.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁹Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?”

²⁰He replied, “Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

²²When they came together in Galilee, he said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. ²³They will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised to life.” And the disciples were filled with grief. —Matthew 17:19-23, NIV
Read also Mark 9:28-32; Luke 9:43-45.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

We are all shocked at the failure of the nine apostles to cast out this demon. Was this "kind" so impossibly difficult? Had they not faced stubborn cases before? Were the shrieks and convulsive foamings a threat to these men? None of this was the problem. Their faith in their Lord had been shaken to the very foundation when they heard him say over and over again that he must go to Jerusalem and die. This did not at all represent their idea of a Messiah. They were confused. They simply did not now have the faith in Jesus they once had. Until they are willing to say with Peter, "Lord, you know all things," they were not ready really to do anything.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

The context of the promise of "mountain moving faith" is so important! They lacked faith because they doubted his word — he had told them of his soon coming death and they didn't believe it. The exercise of any supernatural power was to be based upon his word. If he said they could and should they could — if not they could not. How often do I need to remind myself of the source of faith — it is first of all in the character of my Lord, i.e. in his divinity — but it comes from what he says. The reaction of the disciples to the promise of his soon coming death is so typical of myself in the face of some impossible problem: ". . . the disciples were filled with grief" — ". . . they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it" — "It was hidden from them, so that they did not grasp it, . . ." Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.

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 greatness of yourself as seen in the person of your Son. (2) Thank you that Jesus had something more important to do and say than to listen to the marveling of men. (3) Thank you for the persistent earnestness of my Lord — he is the same today. (4) Thank you that no man could take his life — he freely gave it for us. (5) Thank you that nothing — *utterly nothing* is impossible for us. (6) Thank you for the total confidence I can have in you and your word. (7) Thank you for the wonderful promise of the resurrection — and he did raise to life! Praise his name!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"They will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised to life." How little could man do to him! — and yet how much man did to him. They did kill him — in the same act he "gave" his life for us. They shed his blood, but he also poured out his blood. He

was delivered up by the determinant counsel of yourself — but he was also slain by the hands of lawless men. Neither the responsibility of man nor the plan of yourself is emphasized — both are simply stated for our amazement. How full of wonder is that little phrase: "and on the third day he will be raised to life." It was *on* the third day, early in the morning that he came out of the tomb. How full of confidence and assurance are these words. Praise your eternal plan which issues from your love. "He is alive and I am forgiven, heaven's gates are opened wide."

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I am as full of questions as these apostles — I turn such questions into requests: (1) Just how do I know I have faith or do not have faith? I know faith is acting on what you have said — but I am not always sure of my actions — help me, help me. (2) Do I have the same power as these men? What mountains shall I move? Are these literal or figurative mountains? (3) What a powerful encouragement: "Nothing will be impossible for you." Show me how to claim this promise! (4) I do want to improve my prayer life.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Relate this verse to my private life — I open my heart to you — help me to listen: (1) "You do not hear me because you are listening to someone else — *yourself!*" (2) "Quality is always more important than quantity."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Lebanon — Point for prayer: *Unreached peoples*: (1) *The Druzes*. Well organized, but close-knit community with a secretive religion. Response to the gospel has been minimal. (2) *The Shi'ites* are newly powerful, militant, radical and hostile to any Western influences. Pray that they may discover the emptiness of a religion without Christ. (3) *The Kurds*: a despised and ignored but more responsive minority. (4) *The Palestinians*: a tragic, stateless people. There are Christians among them, some evangelical, but the majority are Muslim and unreached.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.



If you have tried to maintain daily devotions and have failed – don't give up! There is a way that works.

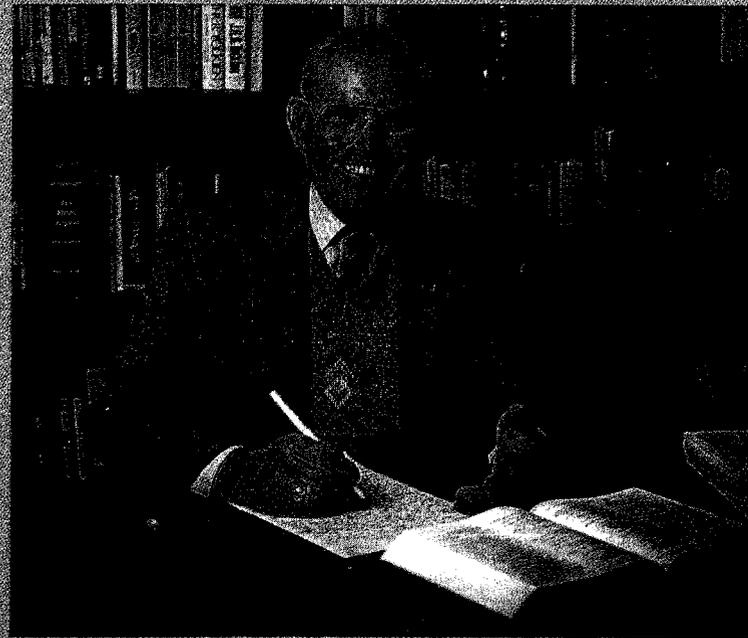
The simple effective method of daily devotions as described in **PERSONAL WORSHIP** can help you succeed where you have failed. You will know what it is to experience intimacy with God.

Discover How To:

- Overcome a wandering mind
- Establish the best time for your devotions
- Have a 100% record of success in daily devotions
- Overcome earlier failures
- Keep your personal devotional time as a regular commitment
- Produce your own prayer journal
- Write a prayer analysis of any Bible text.

When You Use This Proven Method You Will:

- Find more lesson and sermon ideas during your devotions than you ever found by using a direct approach
- Establish a personal relationship with your personal Savior
- Read more devotional comment on the Bible than you will find in any other source
- Discover that praise to God means so much more to you
- Become the spiritual example you always wanted to be



"Let my discovery work for you!"

I have been preaching and teaching for almost 50 years and I have observed the lives of thousands of Christians. I know how they have struggled to establish a regular daily time with God. I believe that the enemy attacks us in this area with all of his vigor.

It has been a struggle for me over the years to be faithful in my daily time with God. How I have longed for constant personal worship with Him.

It took years but eventually I found the missing factor, and it has helped me more than I can express. I want to take you with me on my devotional journey. Come with me and find power in your daily time with the Lord. Come with me and rekindle your fire of spiritual zeal!

Yours in Christ,

Don DeWalt
Don DeWalt