

PERSONAL WORSHIP

Intimacy With God

Volume Four

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Intimacy With God

Volume Four

Matthew 19:1-26:19

Mark 10:1-11:14

Luke 14:7-22:30

John 11:1-14:9

Don DeWelt

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HOW TO BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND!

"I beseech you therefore, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:1,2, NKJ).

I have thought for one long time that personal worship is the time and place for these verses to take on reality!

Please follow with your heart as we look at these precious words:

"I beseech you" — also translated: *"I urge you; I implore you; I appeal to you."* There is the strongest of desire on the part of Paul for all of us to place the importance on these words he does.

"... therefore" — this is the conclusion of the first eleven chapters of Romans. It is as if he is saying: "in light of the lost condition of the whole world 1:18-3:20 — in light of the salvation apart from the law 3:21 — 4:25. In the face of justification through the second Adam 5:1-21 — yea, if anything I have written in 6:1 through 11:36 is important give the most careful heed to what I am going to say now:

"by the mercies of God."

If God's goodness and love mean anything to you then write these words upon your heart! Give heed to the following.

Our reasonable response to his mercies toward us is to present our bodies a living sacrifice.

"You present your bodies a living sacrifice."

Paul would not ask us to do this if we could not do it! Did you read that sentence with understanding? I said *he would not ask us to do it if we were unable to do so!*

We are not our bodies — we live in them — we can and will move out of them — we can buffet them — we are the occupant of our houses — but we are not the house. We can *present* our bodies to God as the Jews presented animals on the altar.

The closet of prayer is the altar upon which we present our bodies.

When we open the door to this sacred place and close it, we appear before God in control of our bodies — we are there because we decided our body would spend this hour in this place at this time. We are indeed at the altar of burnt offering. We need to leave our bodies on this altar. Let's visualize ourselves as

laid out before him. "It is no longer I who live." The fires of cleansing and purifying have consumed me. There is a strange and wonderful resurrection (metamorphosis) that takes place in this solitary place.

"... holy ..." We are only holy in the sense of being *separated* for your purpose — the one thing you want and seldom receive is for us to *"set our minds upon the things that are above — and not upon the things of this earth"* (Col. 1:1-3). If ever there was a time and place to do this it is here.

"... acceptable to God." Our offering or our sacrifice is accepted. This was so large a part of the offerings of the Old Testament. There were many offerings that were not accepted — and with sad consequences — there were others that were acceptable. And what joy and peace filled the life of the worshipper.

Of course presenting ourselves before our Lord for one or two hours a day does definitely not presuppose the rest of the day is then given to our own pursuits. *Lifestyles are created first in the mind — and by following models.* Once we see ourselves as always living in your presence — when once we find our highest joy and deepest fulfillment in the closet of worship we will find ways of extending this blessed experience into all of life. And *it is* a life-long pursuit!

"... which is your reasonable service, (or worship)." Isn't it interesting to discover that worship is service — all service is worship since presenting our bodies includes a multitude of areas of life. We must never forget that our sacrifice is alive — not dead. At the breakfast table we present our bodies before God. The question is always before us: "how can I eat breakfast so as to please my Lord? — indeed he is eating with me. Acknowledging his presence and speaking to him before we speak to anyone else would be the beginning of our presentation. How do we treat his property? I.e., our bodies — they do not belong to us — they have been purchased by him at a very high price. Gluttony is defined as a sin. Abusing his property is serious. Most of all the desires of the body can be expressed to the fullest in the joy and delight of pleasing him. Expressing love to your wife or husband at the breakfast table is quite permissible to the owner of our bodies who created them with this very capacity. And love means much more than sex. A oneness begins to form between us that no words can express.

On the way to work — at home or away from home is another opportunity to remember whose we are! Can't we plan our hours of work so that our Lord is

recognized and honored? We take him with us to work — we labor in his presence — he is alive — he sees and hears and responds to what we do and who we are — even if we do not know it.

If some of my readers feel this is beyond them I do too! I am on the way — I have *not* arrived! But neither of us should give up on our commitment.

All of this leads us to the heart of this glorious experience. We are convinced and we are ready to enter completely into the transformation — we are surely longing for the change. Here is how it will happen:

“*And do not be conformed to this world,*” the *Living Bible* paraphrase is very good just here: Kenneth Taylor says, “*And do not let the world squeeze you into its mold.*” The three areas of pressure from the world are in the God-given desires: (1) “*The strong desire of the flesh* for sex and food.” What is the “mold” of this world? Unrestrained sexual expression and gluttony. Such a mold has many models from the most sophisticated to the vulgar. We have a daily — hourly choice — more about this in a little while. (2) “*The strong desire of the eyes* for physical things,” I refer to clothes, shoes, cars, furniture, a house. The more we look at the opposite sex or the “things” just named the stronger is the desire. (3) “*The pride of life,*” i.e., the peer-pressure we receive from those of the world to be just like them. How shall we escape being pressed into these molds? Here it is:

“*but be transformed (or metamorphosized) by the renewing of your mind.*”

When a caterpillar produces a cocoon and then emerges a butterfly it has *metamorphosized* — it is indeed — indeed *transformed from crawling to flying* — this is the beautiful picture of what can happen to us *every day*. It all begins in the cocoon of the closet of prayer. What is it that does it? It would be better to ask — “*who is it that does it?*” It is accomplished by:

“*The Renewing of Your Mind*”

But it is the Holy Spirit himself working through his living word who does it! In a very practical way let’s see how this works.

The First Day we used Luke 14:7-11. The eleventh verse: “*For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted*” (Luke 14:11). It is important that we absorb all the words in all five of these verses — four of them come from the lips and heart of our Lord.

These verses talk about Jesus’ attitude about “*the pride of life*” — or how we respond to others and they to us. How very — very often do we trip ourselves up in our speech — we think far, far too lightly of ourselves — and our speech betrays us. We find ourselves bragging on ourselves before we know it. These verses are for the first of 14 days of this quarter. We have printed them on 2”x3½” cards to carry with you. Memorize them. Refer to them *often* — just as often as you can. Surely you can memorize one or two verses a day — you can be transformed — changed — renewed — restored if you do. It is so

vitaly important!

Do you want to know personally *or* experientially “*what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God* in your daily living? Here is the way — let’s do it!

The Second Day let’s renew our minds with these verses: “*But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just*” (Luke 14:13,14). Memorize these powerful words — carry the card with you and refer to it. Let these words sink down into your heart! Let them find application in a hundred relationships. They are living and active, they will *change* you!

Once again Jesus is speaking about “*the pride of life.*” In seeking the response of men to our giving how shall we express it? Will our giving indicate our genuine love for others or will it be just another way to call attention to ourselves? Do we *really* and *truly* believe there will be rewards given at the resurrection of the just? Mercy is giving when it can not be reciprocated — when we give to those who can not return the gift we are like God — and his Son. Will you let this powerful principle take hold of your conscience and issue in obedience? Or will you let it go by as just so many more pious words? Do you want to be transformed?

The Third Day: Luke 14:15-20. Let’s just use the first half of verse 18: “*But they all alike began to make excuses.*” We can apply this to all three of the strong desires God has put within us. Are we going to excuse ourselves when we are confronted with the will of God concerning sex? He says “*no sex outside of marriage.*” What excuse do we offer? He has prepared a great feast and celebration for sex in marriage — will we come to the feast? When our Lord asks us to control the appetite of our body for food and not “*dig our graves with our teeth.*” What do we say — what excuse do we offer? Jesus is often seen at the dinner table — there is a wonderful celebration in eating any and every meal with him.

Why is the love of money so severely condemned? Because it is part and parcel of “*the lust of the eyes.*” Read these words with your conscience: “*But those who want to get rich (so they can buy “things”)* fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction” (I Tim. 6:9). What excuse will we offer here? Once again are these words “*For we brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. And if we have food and covering — (house and clothes) with these we shall be content*” (I Tim. 6:7,8). A simple house — ordinary clothes — a humble meal with the Lord is a feast and palace given to those in royal apparel.

Our Lord’s half-brother gave us these words: “*If however, you are fulfilling the royal law, according to the Scripture. You shall love your neighbor as yourself, you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by*

the law as transgressors” (James 2:8,9). This speaks directly to “the pride of life.” Do we attempt to sidestep the impact of these words by making excuses? Please say “yes” — I do not want to be the only transgressor — but I want to be transformed by the renewing of my mind. I hope you do too. Let’s renew our minds just here!

The *Fourth Day* is anticipated in the *third day*.

Day Number Five concerns a very difficult text — it reads: “If anyone comes to me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Who ever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26,27). Jesus is making a comparison of our love for our parents — our wives — our children and our love for him. In comparison, our love for our dear ones would be hatred. This is indeed a radical comparison! How deeply does it strike at the “*pride of life!*” Are we ready for it? It will transform us if we are! Do we truly want to follow him? to be his disciples? I cannot over emphasize the need to cut out the cards from the printed page we have supplied. Carry it with you — refer to it often.

When we attempt to apply these words they of themselves will create a cross for us. We cannot love someone as completely as our Lord commands and not talk about him — this will get us in trouble with the ones we love less. We love him so dearly we make choices in our use of time that are not always pleasing to others — and in many other ways are we creating a cross to carry as we follow him.

Day Six discusses Luke 14:28-33. I am glad you have my comment on all these verses — and I urge you to read it carefully. Just here read with me verse 33:

“So therefore, no one of you can be my disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.”

What a shocking verse this is! If ever there was a death-blow to “the lust of the eyes” this is it! If we give our Lord all our possessions we shall have no problem with *things!* How does this verse relate to the context? It is simply the fact that life is building and a battle! It is going to take real planning and all our resources to build our house upon our Lord or defeat our enemy satan. All our possessions, our house, car, clothes, furniture, boat, etc., etc., belong to our Lord — they are his gift to us!

Please, please, carry this verse with you and look at it real often — let it relate to the various circumstances of your daily life. There is just no way you could do this without renewing your value-system! You might want to make some radical changes in your acquiring or using possessions. Do you *want* to be transformed?

Day Seven begins a careful look at the 15th chapter of Luke, for this day we look at the first four verses. We want to memorize only *verse four*:

“What man of you, (Pharisees) having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it?” “The pride of life” or how we react or respond to others is the largest part

of life — here my dear Lord addresses the basic problem in relating to others: it is *selfishness*. The Pharisees were the religious essence of selfishness. All of life evolved around their own interests. However if some of their economic interests were threatened they immediately came alive. Sheep were money to these men. If even one got away they were excited — they *must* find it. But men were to them of less value than sheep! How can we move day-by-day among men who are lost and really never care? This is a life altering verse — memorize it.

Day Eight continues the thought of the first four verses — we want to focus on *verse seven*:

“Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”

This verse lifts our interest clear out of this world. The lust of the eyes — the lust of the flesh and the pride of life are all forgotten as we consider the world to come. The spirit world where we will spend “ten million years and scarce be started.” In that world there are angels who know all about the life on this earth. When one sinner on this earth (there are no other kinds of people) comes to himself — awakens from the stupor he is in and sees life from our Saviour’s perspective they are truly happy! It would be impossible to read this verse ten times during the day and even look at life the way you did before you read it. What a rich experience it is to transform our attitudes and the way we look at life by renewing our minds!

Day Nine: Luke 15:8-10. We will ask you to memorize *verse eight*:

“Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it?”

Here is a beautiful example of both how we should react to the “*pride of life!*” in an emergency situation — and what to do with the “*lust of the eyes!*” — but *all of it is made subservient to the value of one human being!* The woman could well represent the bride of Christ — his church and the coin one lost person. Everything else stops — everything else is forgotten until the lost is found. How utterly foreign such thoughts are to our lives! This verse contains the very essence of the purpose of our Lord — i.e., “to seek and save the lost” Luke 19:10. Do we really, really want to be *metamorphosized?*

Day Ten: Luke 15:11-16. We will memorize *verse 12*: “and the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that falls to me.’ And he divided his living between them.”

This whole story is full of life-changing principles — to see all of humanity as my Lord did is one rare privilege! The Father in this story is our Father in heaven. To all of us he has divided “his living” which has become our living. Such consists of time, energy, ability, thought and money. How do we use these five gifts of God in the three realms of: (1) *The lust of the eyes*, sex and food. (2) *The lust of the eyes* — or acquiring “*things.*” (3) *The pride of life* — how we relate to those among whom we live. How easy it is to

see the down steps of this young man — but he represents each one of us! We can “come to ourselves” now — we need not wait for the pig pen. Let’s do it!

The Eleventh Day: Luke 15:17-20. It is difficult to make a choice here — each verse is so very precious let’s memorize verse 20 — we do so need it!

“And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.”

We can, like the son, exhaust our sex desires, pig-out on food, spend all and have nothing, and we can feel less than an animal among men — but if we will only remember — or awaken to who we are and leave — our father will see us before we see him! How about making two or three copies of this verse and giving them permanent display in your car — your kitchen and your work place? It will change your attitudes!

Day Twelve: Luke 15:21-24. Let’s use verse 24:

“... for this my son was dead, and is alive again, he was lost, and is found. And they began to make merry.”

“The wages of sin is death” — “we all like sheep have gone astray” (Rom. 6:24; Isa. 53:5). Death and lostness can and does occur via any one of the strong desires God has placed within us. I am not discussing biblical exegesis or theology — I am talking about the raw material of life — *sex — money and power*. These can be killers! All Christians were once “dead in trespasses and sins” — all Christians were once lost and without hope. Will the memorizing of this verse remind you of this? It will! It will allow it to renew your mind and restore your first love.

Day Thirteen: Luke 15:25-32. It would surely seem

these words describe the vast majority of church members who are “the prodigals who stayed home.” Of all the haunting words from a father’s heart these are the ones:

“... he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours’ ” (Luke 15:31).

God is saying to us that he plays no favorites — he is ready to kill the fattened calf for any one of us any time we cease our jealousy and envy and share his love. What a tremendous thought! “*All that is mine is yours*” — what does this mean to you? Stretch your imagination — he could just as well have said “*all that is yours is mine*.” Let these words sink into your heart! Need I say they will transform your whole outlook on life?

Day Fourteen: Luke 16:1-4. This is a most intriguing text! Let’s use the fourth verse to renew our minds:

“I have decided what to do, so that people may receive me into their houses when I am put out of my stewardship.”

Jesus is striking at the center of all three desires: stewardship refers to all we have — all we are and all we do. All of life is a stewardship — and we shall give an account. It is certain that sooner or later *all of us* will be put out of our stewardship. It is only sensible that we plan now for that time. Jesus says that how we use our money now relates to where we will spend eternity.

We have now completed two weeks of being transformed by renewing our minds. We have printed these fourteen texts on 2”x3½” cards. Why not select a verse for all the rest of the eleven weeks of this quarter — type those verses on 2”x3½” cards — a different one for each day. Use them as you have the fourteen we have supplied to you. Isn’t it at least that important? Here is a life transforming opportunity — please, please take it!

A little humor can sometimes speak to our hearts like no other means of communication. Here is a cartoon strip that describes what we do not want to happen.

BEYOND BELIEF



We are not involved in an artificial ritual empty of power but in a transformation of character by the Spirit of God. I have a butterfly collection as a hobby. There are so many beautiful comparisons to be made between the life-cycle of the butterfly and ourselves. Something wonderful is happening to you even now. *"But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror (God's word) the glory (or character) of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory (character) to glory (character) just as from the Lord; the Spirit"* (II Cor. 3:18).

What happens to the caterpillar can happen to us, we can graduate from *crawling to flying!*

There are some beautiful comparisons between us and a butterfly: (1) *The butterfly cannot see without the sunlight.* They never fly unless the sun is shining.

Does this say anything to us? We can only walk when we have the light. We have no life without the light.

He is the light of our life. We fly when the Son gives light.

(2) *Butterflies have incredible reproduction capacity.* One female butterfly can lay thousands of eggs in her brief lifetime. Just as this beautiful creature has reproduction as a natural capacity so our Lord expects every Christian to reproduce after his kind. We are saved to save others. A female butterfly that does not reproduce is sick! (3) *The life span of a butterfly is less than a month, many species only live*

one week. In the light of eternity our life-span is indeed "like a watch in the night" or "like a vapor that appears for such a brief time." Are we going to "buy up the opportunities" and purposes you have for this little while? No butterfly ever emerged from the cocoon without doing all it could to fulfill its purpose in your plan. Will this lovely creature say anything to us? (4) *There are at least 10,000 species of butterfly known to science — with several sub species.* There are billions and billions of butterflies born, matured and dead every month. Why so many? There seems to be but one purpose present: *to give us reasons to praise the one who created them all.* It should teach us that God is capable of infinite variety — how many species of sea-shells are there? How many species of trees? Or flowers? How many stars? Each is beautiful — each is perfect. And so it is with each one of us! (5) *The change that happens to a caterpillar is not explained by any scientist.* The best they can do is to define it — not explain it. It is called "a phenomenon" but no explanation is given as to just how or why such happens. And so it is with our metamorphosis — or our "new birth." We know it is from your marvelous power through your Spirit. We have thousands of beautiful examples of such a change. We can truly rejoice in your grace!



From Butterflies of the World by Valerio Sbordani and Savino Forestiero, published by Crescent Books, New York — used by permission.

WEEK ONE

—Sunday—

You alone can give us the pure heart for which we long — and so sorely need. I lift up my whole heart to you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me” (Psa. 51:10). What a joy it is to know *you* are going to create the pureness we all so long to have. Not without our consent — but none the less the creative activity will be your own. It is because I want a pure heart you are able to create it. David had been anything but pure or steadfast in his episode with Bathsheba. I want to consider the negative factors that drew him back to yourself. Yea, they do the same for 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. (1) He felt deeply unclean. (2) He was in a constant state of flux and change. His purpose was not at all firm. (3) He felt very much out of the presence of God. (4) David felt that the Holy Spirit had been taken from him — at least his identity with you was clouded and vague. The opposite of these relationships would be the answer to his prayer. Indeed it is the rejoicing of my heart: (1) My heart — i.e. my inmost being — can be constantly pure every day I can renew this fact. (2) Since I have found the ultimate meaning to life my commitment can be constant. (3) I am even now — right now in your presence — such can happen anytime I open my heart to you. (4) The Holy Spirit came and went in Old Testament but not now. He is with me 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

This Psalm is renewing my fellowship with you like few others have. It is only when I want to be pure that I can be pure — but when I do i.e. in my inner

being — something wonderful happens! You begin your creative process of giving me a pure heart! Praise your wonderful love! Make new the desire to be steadfast! This is a request for an attitude on my part. It is easy to plow right on when the harvest of the field is ever before me. Dear Lord, keep the harvest in my vision. I do not want to get away from you — I want to be always open and receptive. I am glad I need not be concerned that the Holy Spirit will leave me — but I want Him to fill many areas of my life not yet under His control.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them.

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Take the name of Jesus with you,
Child of sorrow and of woe;
It will joy and comfort give you;
Take it then where'er you go.

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

HIS WORD

⁷When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable: ⁸“When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited.⁹If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, ‘Give this man your seat.’ Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. ¹⁰But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, ‘Friend, move up to a better place.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests. ¹¹For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” —Luke 14:7-11, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What a simple, but profound lesson our Lord taught in these words. The “pecking order” of position at

the table was evidently very important to these Pharisees and those that shared their attitudes. It was only because the supernatural power of yourself was evident that these words were heard. Pride is such an obvious factor in all of life with everyone that a decision of the will is essential to making any change. If a place of prominence is open and we are there will we choose to leave it open and move to a lesser place? The answer is, "no!" *But* if we remember such decisions are not ours to make we will!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Are you interested in our place at the table of life? Of course you are but we are always worried that you will miss us amid so many. Never, never! Jesus *did* ask us to make a choice — "humble yourself." We would like to turn that decision over to you — if you want us humble take steps to do it! At times this does happen — but in the daily development of character the choice is ours — not yours. My Lord *does care* and *does see* what others think of us. He wants us to establish worth and meaning in the presence of others. But He also tells us how it will be done, Dear Lord, I want to 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 courage of my Lord in meeting need where He saw it. (2) Thank you that there is a place for every guest at the wedding dinner. (3) Thank you we can choose to be humble. (4) Thank you for the host (even yourself) who will decide who shall be where. (5) Thank you for the privilege of serving — just like Jesus. (6) Thank you for the one grand example of humility seen in your Son.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." It is good to know that we can make the choice. We can in any situation choose to be humble-minded or proud. Our fundamental attitude toward ourselves will be the determining factor. Perhaps we should say it is our basic attitude toward yourself that makes this true. If we actually believe you are the true source of all we have and are, then we can be humble about ourselves. Regardless of how we respond to you this principle will be fulfilled with no exceptions. In this life it has been repeated over and over again. In the life to come there will be no exceptions.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

It is possible to either humble myself — or exalt

myself — and I am responsible in both decisions. How much better to allow *you* to make such decisions. I lift up these requests to help in allowing you to humble me — or exalt me: (1) Keep me aware of the beautiful fact that you are interested in our place at the table of life. (2) Give me the relaxed commitment — or better, the commitment to relax and let you have your way with me. (3) Show me the man to-day to whom I should show honor.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I pause before selecting a place at the table of today's life. I look to you, the host, for instructions: (1) You know from much experience, that *waiting* is usually better than acting. (2) "I will give you all the honor you can handle." (3) "Remember, there is exaltation in humility."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Pacific — Point for prayer: *Praise God for His workings in the Pacific!* (a) *The Pacific was one of the first areas to be evangelized in the modern Protestant missionary movement.* Few areas of the world have claimed more missionary lives through disease, violent death and cannibalism. Praise God for the sacrificial labors of those early LMS, Methodist and Anglican missionaries. (b) *Great people movements* over the past 200 years have brought whole peoples and islands into Christianity. Some of the most strongly Protestant Christian nations in the world are in this region. The Solomon Islands have the remarkable distinction of being possibly the nation with the highest percentage of Evangelical believers in the world. These people movements continue to this day in Papua New Guinea.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

O Lord my God!
When I in awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds
Thy hands have made,
I see the stars,
I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout
The universe displayed.

When through the woods
And forest glades I wander
And hear the birds
Sing sweetly in the trees;
When I look down
From lofty mountain grandeur
And hear the brook
And feel the gentle breeze.

WEEK ONE

—Monday—

Joy in salvation is the very essence of our relationship with our Lord. It is our greatest highest recommendation to others.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you.” (Psa. 51:12,13). How good to come to you with the assurance that you want me happy! You want me to rejoice — you want joy in my life. On your salvation is the fountain of happiness! Praise your name, I have found this is true! You are in the constant effort of saving me from myself! Yea, from the evil one whose name is sadness and depression. The one attitude so much needed in my life is *“willingness.”* When I am willing you are abundantly able! It is indeed a willing spirit that sustains me.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

If there is no joy in my salvation I will not want to share it with others. It is in this quiet time I can turn again my heart over to you. This I gladly do! I even now embrace your forgiveness and cleansing and look up to you as covered by your love. Praise to your wonderful mercy! There is no joy like the joy of forgiveness. I want to tell others of the calm assurance — and of the exuberant joy of my salvation! The greatest need I have is for a willing spirit. I truly thank you for the many years you have sustained such a spirit in me — *oh*, thank you! Teaching is such an essential part of all I do for you. I am humbled and delighted you gave me the privilege of teaching others.

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 would seem the constant process of sin is found in looking for a rationale to fulfill a desire in a way you have not approved. Regardless of the realm of sin, *lust, things, pride* this is invariably true. The answer is

in humble obedience. I do not want to obey unless it makes sense to me. Who am I to decide the convenience or sensibleness of obedience? If it is painful or tedious yet you are Lord, I have but one choice. Forgive me dear Lord for my horrible presumption! Praise your name I can find assurance in forgiveness — I do not say *license* for such is not present. I want to be a teacher of others — teach 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

Earthly pleasures vainly call me;
I would be like Jesus;
Nothing worldly shall enthrall me;
I would be like Jesus.
Be like Jesus, this my song,
In the home and in the throng,
Be like Jesus, all day long!
I would be like Jesus.

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

HIS WORD

¹²Then Jesus said to his host, *“When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. ¹³But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, ¹⁴and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”*
—Luke 14:12-14, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Wasn't this a presumptuous thing to say to this Pharisee? Jesus is telling this man who invited him to a meal whom he should invite to his next luncheon or dinner. Jesus had gained authority in the hearts of

those to whom he spoke — at least in the hearts of some — and it was to them he addressed these words, the others would not hear him regardless of what He said. Our Lord is assuming the purpose for a dinner invitation was to give with no thought of reciprocal action. He is striking at the heart of selfishness! We should feed and give to people in the same manner you give to us — not because we expect a return on our investment.

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 is my Lord saying to me about a banquet for the poor, crippled, the lame and the blind? Can I send help to such people today? According to the media this is altogether possible! This principle is to carry throughout all the relationships of life — but just in the specific application of this text to our hearts. I am embarrassed! I could help the poor, etc., but I do not! Dear Lord, dear Lord, I am sorry — I do repent! I *must* I *will* help those who can not and will not return the favor. I claim the incredible truth of the statement: “. . . you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

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 would not let his host go until he had spoken to all the needs of his heart. (2) Thank you for speaking to the obvious selfishness in my life. (3) Thank you that Americans are always in abundance of a banquet — i.e. as compared with most of the world. (4) Thank you that Jesus asked us to find others. (5) Thank you for the example of unselfish giving Jesus demonstrated in His life. (6) Thank you for the constant possibility for change to the better. (7) Thank you for the wonderful promise of a conscious world of reward promised in these verses.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.” What great confidence we do place in this promise! There will not be a single effort we put forth for our Lord that will go unnoticed on that day. A total evaluation on all deeds as to their motivation will be a judgment by fire. All that is wood, hay and stubble will be burned away and only the gold and silver will remain. We are so glad the promise is made that no service done for the same unselfish reasons that prompted our Lord to give Himself will fail of reward. It is also interesting to mark that the reward is connected with people. Our Lord’s rewards are given on behalf of service for others — for people!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How I do *long* for “*the resurrection of the righteous.*” Perhaps these requests will prepare me for it. (1) Righteousness as seen here is being like our Lord *in attitude* — this is all I can offer — i.e., an attempt at being like Him in this regard. I do so sorely need your help. (2) For those who eat with me today — I ask I might speak your words to them — even as your son did. (3) There *are* ways of giving to the poor — just as your son instructed — reinforce my commitment to get involved.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As I eat with him at his table in this time while He rules in the hearts of men — speak to me! (1) “I am interested in giving without thought of return — what is your interest in giving?” (2) “I am interested in helping when you *know* such persons cannot return the help.” (3) “There is a very large repayment at the resurrection.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The West — Point for prayer: *Encouraging signs of spiritual awakening* are evident in the West. The overall decline in church affiliation and church attendance can obscure the positive developments: *past revivals* have left a legacy of dynamism and spiritual wealth — the Puritan, Pietist, Methodist and 19th century awakenings ultimately led to blessing for the world in the 200 year old modern missionary movement. It can happen again! Never before has the potential for the West to speedily and deeply affect the world been as great as now. In recent years there have been localized revivals in Scotland, Finland, Canada and the USA.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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.

WEEK ONE

—Tuesday—

You have given us — as a gift — your righteousness — we have none of our own. How good it is to just now praise you for your goodness!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise” (Psa. 51:14,15). David has been caught, his hands *are* stained with the blood of Uriah. He is guilty — and he knows it — he feels it! Even from this premeditated killing our Lord can forgive. David was overwhelmed by his guilt — he became ill — even unto death. Out of this you delivered him. Perhaps the salvation in verse 14 is from physical death. How beautiful to hear David say he would *sing* of your righteousness. It is one thing to admit you are righteous and I have sinned — it is something far better to *sing* of your righteousness!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me! If it were not for the categorizing of crimes — i.e. considering murder as a capital offense, we would all need to plead the prayer of the psalmist. We have all been caught — we are all blood guilty before you! I put myself at the head of the column. Dear Lord, you must save me or there is no escape! I have found in my inner being — and in every association of life *you are right!* What you have said perfectly matches the facts. No word of your book has been tested and found wanting! I could easily compose a song and sing of your righteousness (— it would not compare with David’s, but it would be out of my heart).

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

Since this whole psalm is a confession, the element of seeking your forgiveness runs through all we have said in this time of worship. If I am going to be saved at all it will be from blood guiltiness! I hide not my sin,

I do not at all for one moment seek to justify or excuse my sin — I am guilty, guilty, guilty! All I can do is cast myself at your feet and beg for mercy. I will say I want to obey you — yea from the heart I love your law — it satisfies my longing spirit o’er and o’er! Only you can open my lips to declare your praise. Only by your sceptre of forgiveness can I arise and praise you. Wonder of all wonders — it is so!

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

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,
Cleanse 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

¹⁵When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, “Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.”

¹⁶Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. ¹⁷At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’

¹⁸“But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’

¹⁹“Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’

²⁰“Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’ ” —Luke 14:15-20, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How I do want to take my place at that banquet in the Pharisees’ house and hear every word of your

Son! When Jesus told of the ideal banquet where unselfishness and true hospitality would prevail someone was moved with enthusiastic praise to say: "Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God" — he knew as we now know our Lord was talking about His own Messianic Kingdom of which the church is now a part. It would seem Jesus is going to insult this man and pour a large bucket of cold water on his ardor.

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 enough to see the Jews in their rejection of their Messiah by their excuses, but are we exempt from this kind of attitude? We could easily say of these men: "They are either incredibly stupid or blatant liars!" Who ever bought a field sight unseen? Who ever put out enough money for ten oxen and never even examined them ahead of the sale? What wife would not be glad to attend a banquet? *Why? Why?* would anyone refuse to attend God's banquet served by His Son as the host? There are reasons: (1) To go is to accept Jesus as the host of my life. My food and actions while at his banquet — (which lasts all my life) are under his control. (2) To go is to say I enjoy such company and such an occasion. Once we see this we too begin to make excuses!

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 "certain man" who prepared a banquet! Know he was *yourself!* (2) Thank you for the host at the banquet — even your Son. (3) Thank you for the gospel preachers who have invited me to this feast. (4) Thank you that even now "everything is ready" and I can come to the feast. (5) Thank you that you have said so clearly that possessions are not as important as your feast. (6) Thank you that vocations can take no precedence over your feast. (7) Thank you that domestic ties cannot be considered as an excuse for not accepting your invitation.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"I just got married, so I can't come." This is perhaps the most absurd of the excuses in as much as this newly married woman would no doubt welcome an invitation to the banquet. Each excuse became more of an insult to the host: The first man seems to suggest that once he had investigated his field he could come. The second said he didn't have time because of his oxen, but this third man was blunt! "I can't come." There are indeed many marriages today that make following our Lord an impossibility. How glad I am my marriage is the largest factor in favor of following my Lord. What a good woman you have given me! I bless her name.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

It has been my desire for a long time not to make excuse, but to make good. I do need some real help here. I lift up these requests: (1) Develop my appetite for spiritual food! (2) May I seriously consider all my property — does it hinder my obedience to you? Could I live just as well without it? (2) What attachment do I have to the automobile? or other transportation? Search me O Lord, and know my heart today! (3) My dear wife is the biggest help I have — the problem here is my appreciation — enable me to deepen my capacity!

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I do wonder just what was the response of those who first heard these words — speak to me as you would speak to them: (1) "Appreciation for *me* not my food is the first of importance." (2) "Everything is always ready for your everlasting enjoyment — I am ready how about you?"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The West — Point for prayer: *The spiritual need of the West:* a) *A godless materialism* has become the formative philosophy of the majority — particularly in Europe. To term Europe today as 'post-Christian' or as going through a process of 'de-Christianization' is a sad partial truth. Pray that this trend may be reversed by an intervention of God, and that empty churches and chapels may once more be filled with people praising God. b) *In many countries an increasing percentage of the population has had no meaningful contact with biblical Christianity for generations.* Parts of Europe, especially, are now some of the most spiritually dark areas in the world; southern Europe is, possibly, after the Muslim Middle East, the hardest mission field on earth. Many Westerners live in the afterglow of a great Christian heritage which is being eroded by rampant secularism and indifference to anything to do with God. This new generation must be evangelized.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Am I a soldier of the cross,
A follow'r of the Lamb?
And shall I fear to own His cause,
Or blush to speak His name?
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?

WEEK ONE

—Wednesday—

We offer up a broken spirit for mending — a contrite heart for cleansing. How blessed it is to worship you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are (or my sacrifice, O God is) a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise” (Psa. 51:16,17). This seems a strange statement when David lived in the day when sacrifices were indeed offered to you. David knew, as few men did, that “the gift without the giver is bare.” Unless the heart was lifted up as an offering with the sacrifice there was no offering! David’s whole life had been shattered by his affair with Bathsheba. He felt like Joseph that this great wickedness was against you. He now offered his heart in deep repentance.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. These verses surely say much to me about the acts of worship — in the psalmist’s time or for any other time. As I lift up my voice with others to sing the songs appointed for the public worship — is a broken and contrite heart behind the words? As I listen or speak the lesson for the day does it issue from a totally sincere heart? As we lift the cup and the bread to our lips are we seeing our sins in His body on the tree? Dear Lord, I like David want to offer my heart to you in sincere repentance. I know until this happens all other expressions are meaningless.

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 not a broken and contrite heart that bothers me — it is a dull and apathetic heart that frightens me! It is my much familiarity with “religion” that shocks me. I want to stay sensitive to the wonders of redeeming grace — but it is not easy! There is too much of the acts of piety all about me. It would be so much

easier to walk and worship on the fields of Galilee as I followed my Lord. I know the problem is not in the environment — it is in me! Forgive me for this attempt of evasion. Cleanse me deep within that my acts of worship will come from my heart of hearts.

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 with you,
Child of sorrow and of woe;
It will joy and comfort give you,
Take it then, where’er you go.

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

HIS WORD

²¹“The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.’

²²“‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.’

²³“Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full. ²⁴I tell you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.’” —Luke 14:21-24, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Here is history written ahead of time. It also lets me see your reaction to the Jewish rejection of your Son. Indeed it must be true of the American and English rejection of the good news. I have been in the “streets and alleys,” “to the roads and country lanes” of the world and have seen the eager interest many people have in the banquet you have prepared. The servant

of the Lord was given orders to use persuasion of the strongest kind to fill the house. How urgent is the interest of God in our salvation. One good look into hell would help our motivation.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for us. How is it that the urgency of God has not taken hold of my heart? Am I *really* as interested in world evangelism as was my Lord? Jesus pictured you as very, very upset that men did not accept your offer of a banquet — or salvation. How upset am I? You ask that the world be told “*quickly*.” Even by your measurement 2,000 years hardly seems “*quickly*.” Am I misreading these words? Please say “yes” as the alternative is almost more than I can bear. If we will not accept your authority how do we imagine others will?

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 we can all be the servant sent out to fill your house. (2) Thank you for this clear word from your Son that you are very sensitive to our acceptance or rejection of your invitation. (3) Thank you that you can offer hope and life to the crippled, blind and lame. (4) Thank you for the room in heaven — room for all! (5) Thank you that you teach us that persuasion has a real part in filling your house. (6) Thank you for the story warning that rejection does not go unnoticed. (7) Thank you that even now we can taste the bread of life and drink of the cup of salvation.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... *not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.*” Once again the exclusiveness of Jesus comes across to us. It is either eat at his table or be out forever. There is no way to treat the words of our Lord as neutral. “*Not one of those men*” just does not leave room for compromise. Dear Lord, I am glad to come to your table. I welcome the wonderful provisions you have made. Either your Son was who He said He was or He was self-deceived or a liar. His divine credentials cancel out any option but the obvious. His words of love and truth convince me. His perfect conduct raises Him to a realm above this world.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I do identify with the poor, the lame and the blind, i.e., as prospects for my Lord’s banquet! I believe you are going to lead me into a new way to reach

them — give me the sensitiveness I need to recognize your leading. (2) Give me your motivation that I might share it with others (or have you already done so?). Impress upon me yet once again just how exclusive is the invitation of Jesus! A polite excuse will not do.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Continue to speak to me: (1) “I do get angry — and you know what it is that causes such. What are you doing about it?” (2) “I see every hedgeman — I know every one in my house — I love them all. I long to save them all — will you help me?” “I alone can save them, but I cannot save them alone.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The West. Point for prayer: *The less reached of the West.* An increasing worldwide emphasis on missionary work in the West is discernible, but such cross-cultural work is not easy and response has been slow. The missionary casualty rate is high. Pray for effective outreach to: a) *The 15 states and territories* where less than 1% of the population is evangelical Christian. b) *The mini-states* of Andorra, Liechtenstein, St. Pierre and Miquelon, Malta, Monaco and San Marino where there are no viable indigenous evangelical congregations. c) *Lands where the evangelical witness is very small;* Luxemburg, Greece and Spain. It is little better in France, Belgium, Portugal and Italy. d) *Large areas* of many West European nations, both Catholic and Protestant, which are without a strong, clear gospel witness.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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!

WEEK ONE

—Thursday—

It is your unfailing love that calls me into your presence. I have no hope without your authority over our enemy. Gladly do I worship you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God: I trust in God’s unfailing love for ever and ever. I will praise you forever for what you have done. In your name I will hope, for your name is good. I will praise you in the presence of your saints” (Psa. 52:8,9). You have given us life and a place in your house. An olive tree has a useful purpose. We leave reason and meaning in our relationship with you. Your love for us never, never fails! What a wonderful encouragement this is! Every good thing that has come into my experience has been from you and I praise you for it. It is only of you and in you that man can hope. There is no hope at all outside yourself!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. The above praise was intended to be expressive of what all men could find in you — it became increasingly personal. Just here I do want to open my heart to you: your love has never failed! Yea, it shall never fail. In the world to come I can throughout ever and ever praise you for what you have done. In eternity I shall have a total perspective of this little vapor called life and will be able to see the total expression of your love. In your very self is hope — only in an acceptance of your love and mercy and grace is there any hope at all. I am glad to acknowledge you in the presence of whoever wants to hear it!

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

I do at times feel like anything but an olive tree flourishing in your house! I feel more like a briar bush in a junkyard. However — I am delegated to accept your evaluation because I know it is true. Your

love as an independent entity would be of no value to me. But when I know you and your love are inseparable then I do take hope! There are a thousand good things that have happened to me. For every one of them I thank you! I do want to add my confession for the many times I have failed to focus on what you have done. I am so drawn to remember what I have done or the evil one. 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

When upon life’s billows you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.

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

HIS WORD

²⁵Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: ²⁶“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters — yes, even his own life — he cannot be my disciple. ²⁷And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. —Luke 14:25-27, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What a searchlight my Lord turned on the crowd and on the real meaning of discipleship! The word “hate” is a strong one — but just the one Jesus wanted. In contrast to our love for our family is our love for our Lord, the contrast is so great it would be like comparing hate with love. (Have I expressed it as it should be?) Just what has this meant to those who took this very personally and applied it to life? To hate even our own life — what will this mean? It means that whatever there is in my life that dims or hinders my

love for you must go!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Jesus turned *suddenly* to the crowd that followed Him to say these words. Why? To sift out the chaff from the wheat. There were those who would "leave all" and follow him. Jesus was saying more: the real learning process — the integration of my words into the subconsciousness — into the well-springs of action must be preceded by his attitude. Oh, my heart! Do you hear this? Do you truly *want* to be His learner? Somehow we must advertize like a man carrying a cross that we have died and our whole life is hidden in our Lord and Yourself! Is Jesus saying that even now He is carrying a cross? Has he already died, i.e., in his will? We believe it is so. He would not ask us to carry a cross if He wasn't doing so.

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 large crowds that traveled with my Lord — there were some who were wheat. (2) Thank you for the penetrating words of my Lord. I believe every one! (3) Thank you for forcing me to examine my own heart — where is the focus — center of my love? (4) Thank you that I have a deep desire to truly learn from you, my Lord. (5) Thank you that I have given up all rights to live my life — I am crucified with my Lord! (6) Thank you there is someone leading me even yourself! (7) Thank you I shall never cease learning from you!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple." Is our Lord saying that before we can follow him we must die? One who carried a cross through the streets of the city advertised to all who saw him that he had been tried and found guilty and was sentenced to death and was now on his way to the fulfillment of that sentence. How unlike church membership in our day! What a contrast is seen in the selfish attitude of some of the professed followers of our Lord! Perhaps it would be much better to begin with myself: "you who have died to sin how can you any longer live therein?"

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What a *long* time it has been since *first* I saw these words and their impact spoke to me! It is now more than 50 years ago! I do need help in making them real today! I lift up these requests: (1) Is my love for you so much stronger than my love for anyone or

anything it is only a contrast and not a comparison? Dear Lord, I want it to be! (2) I am learning more and more about being crucified to the world, and the world to me — but I have yet *much* to learn — teach me, dear Lord! (3) "Love for me — deep compassionate love for others *and* myself is first — remember!"

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Turn your searchlight on my conscience *just now!* I pause to hear what you will say to me: (1) "Did you notice you are called upon to bear *your own* cross? *Not mine — but yours?*" (2) "Did you get the impact of 'cannot be my disciple' — i.e., a true learner?"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Afghanistan — Point for prayer: (1) *The Russian invasion of 1979-80* has caused immense suffering. More than half of the nation's schools and much farmland have been deliberately destroyed. An estimated 600,000 have lost their lives and over 5,000,000 have fled to Pakistan and Iran in the subsequent fighting with the invaders. Pray that this tragic situation may be the means by which many hearts are opened to the gospel. (2) *Afghanistan is virtually unevangelized.* Pray that this land may be fully opened to the preaching of the gospel. Officially there has been religious freedom since 1964, but proselytization is forbidden. The Marxist government has not opposed any religious activity at this stage because of its unpopularity in this staunchly Muslim nation.

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.

WEEK ONE

—Friday—

What a blessed time of release and forgiveness we can find as we worship before you. We have confidence in your love, authority and vindication. Gladly do we worship you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Save me, O God, by your name; vindicate me by your might. Hear my prayer, O God; listen to the words of my mouth. Surely God is my help; the Lord is the one who sustains me” (Psa. 54:1-2,4). Here are the blessed qualities of yourself: (1) salvation; (2) vindication of your children; (3) listening or attentive to the prayers of your children; (4) a helper to those in trouble; (5) the one who sustains. What an array of encouragement! If we enter into an acceptance of these qualities what would we lack? In you we find the fullness of life! This bounty you offer to all men. How full of goodness you are!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. It is for my own personal salvation I come to you. I am glad to own you as my Saviour in a thousand small areas of daily life. These all add up to the salvation of my whole life. I have no words adequate to express praise for taking my place and defending me before the evil one. I am defenseless of myself. Only by your vindication can I stand in the judgment! What a blessing to know that you are for me — no one else then can be against me. The thought that even now you are listening attentively to my poor prayers is a real humbling experience. I have never come to you when I was in trouble without being delivered, i.e., given grace adequate for the need! In you I daily live and move and have my being! 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

To ask for salvation is to admit we are lost — indeed I have been — so often! To seek vindication means we are in deep trouble. How true this is! To call out to you in prayer is to indicate we are in need. To ask

for help is an admission of our weakness. I call to you for strength to sustain me because I have none of myself. In all these ways and many more I ask for your grace and mercy. It is by your name, it is through your might I am able to even call you “Father.” I do want to truly repent — but I want just as truly to claim my sonship and the bounties of redeeming grace! Praise to your goodness!

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 leadeth me: O blessed tho’t!
O words with heav’nly comfort fraught!
Whate’er I do, where’er I be,
Still ‘tis God’s hand that leadeth me.

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

HIS WORD

²⁸“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? ²⁹For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, ³⁰saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’

³¹“Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand?

³²If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. ³³In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.

—Luke 14:28-33, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Your Son speaks so sharply to me — and all about the cost of discipleship. Jesus is in the temple building

business. We are rewarded when we work with Him — but it also costs! As far as we are concerned the tower we build is our lives — we must be willing to give all our life to Him. There is nothing quite so sad as a “has-been” Christian — or servant of our Lord. We could say that all our towers together became His temple. My Lord is in a battle — a war for external life or external death. Unless we are ready to give our whole lives the whole time, we better stay out of the line of recruitments for his service.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. If I had heard such strong words forty years ago would I have gone to work on His temple? Would I have enlisted in His army? Indeed I would! It is just such words that called me into His service. It is just such words that keep me there! As much as is in me I am glad to “give up everything” to be his learner. I am always fulfilling this intention — but I do hear you my dear Lord. I am counting the cost and I am not asking for terms of peace with the enemy. I have no other building that will last forever — I have no other battle in which the victory is for heaven.

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 terms of discipleship that call for cost accounting. (2) Thank you Jesus expects our example to have real influence (good or bad). (3) Thank you that Jesus is not calling us without also setting the example. (4) Thank you we serve under a king who never lost a battle. (5) Thank you you have given us more than enough to finish the tower. (6) Thank you we have a superior force in encountering the enemy. (7) Thank you for the present call to discipleship — it hasn't changed at all.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.” Over the years there have been those who have taken these words of our Lord literally. Men and women have taken the vow of poverty and have given up all they have to better serve our Lord. Did they get it done? A better question is: what did He mean? He obviously means that whatever stands in our way in making Him the absolute ruler in our lives *must* be given up. The real learning process is so very much hindered by what we have. Are we ready to sell out in order to follow him? Dear Lord, I ask this question out of real concern about the hold “things” have on me. I can not, I will not ignore these words!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Here are my requests out of this powerful text: (1) Dear Lord, show me the cost a little at a time, please — and give me the courage to pay. (2) Use my time as you want it used, please enable me to know just how this will be done. (3) Thank you so much for the nervous and physical energy you give me — grant your own wisdom in using it and building my tower — your tower — and fighting *our* battle. (4) How can I best spend the money you have given me on the tower and the battle? (5) Would you let me know just how the building is progressing? And who is winning in the battle?

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I open my conscience to hear your voice — please tune my inner ear to your voice: (1) “By my calculations (a 1,000 years to a day) Rome was built in less than a week. What you are building will last longer than Rome.” (2) “Please know you are a workman *together* with me.” (3) “The battle will be over when I release you from your body — not until — and only when.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Albania — Point for prayer: (1) *Albania is Europe's most closed and least evangelized land.* Only for a brief period before World War II were there some evangelical missionaries in the country. The death of Hoxha, the long-ruling dictator, in 1985 could lead to change. Pray this land open! (2) *Albania was Europe's only Muslim state.* Marxism has suppressed Islam too. The people live in fear and in a state little better than slavery. Pray that the liberating gospel may be proclaimed freely to them. (3) *There are still believers meeting together in secret — despite the claim that all religious superstitions have been eradicated.* The Albanian press complained in 1975 that there was a remarkable increase in the public and secret practice of religion! A wave of arrests of Christians was reported in 1981.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Angry words! O let them never
From the tongue unbridled slip;
May the heart's best impulse ever
Check them ere they soil the lip.
Love is much too pure and holy,
Friendship is too sacred far,
For a moment's reckless folly
Thus to desolate and mar.

WEEK ONE

—Saturday—

All of us are afraid — Your perfect love casts out our fears. How pleasant it is to appear before your throne of grace in praise, confession and thanksgiving.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“When I am afraid, I will trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?” (Psa. 56:3,4). Such a beautiful expression of trust — of confidence — in your very essential being! This is true of all men. There are so many overwhelming circumstances in life. We are afraid of pain — of being uncomfortable in any sense. What most of us need to do is to consider that most of the world lives in a very uncomfortable circumstance, i.e., as compared with our affluence and they do not complain.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. What others have or do not have offers very little to me in the reality of daily living! It is only when my confidence reaches behind the pain — the uncertainty and lays hold on yourself that I can say with the psalmist: “I will not be afraid.” It is what you have said in your word that gives me this assurance. “Mortal man” can cause pain and suffering — he can strike terror and uncertainty in the heart of his fellow man. Dear Lord, I do need to read again the word “mortal,” i.e., “subject to death.” Death has often been a welcome prospect to those who suffer. It is because of what I know of yourself and the world to come I can praise you for *all* that comes my way.

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 real easy to confess my weakness and sin in relation to this quality of yourself. Dear Lord, how much more surrender do I need in this area! My apprehension is based squarely on the uncertainty of any set of circumstances. When I know that behind all circumstances there is one — even yourself — who

knows what is happening and has it under control — my fears disappear! Praise your name! But it is so easy to forget! It is so easy to look at only what is near. My need is to much more often *praise your word*, i.e., read again and again of your interest in every thing that happens to me. You are my heavenly parent with a personal interest much more pronounced than the interest of any earthly parent!

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

Be not dismayed whate’er betide,
God will take care of you;
Beneath His wings of love abide,
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

15 Now the tax collectors and “sinners” were all gathering around to hear him. ²But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.” ³Then Jesus told them this parable: ⁴“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? — Luke 15:1-4, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I could never in a whole lifetime be able to read these words of your Son in a way to communicate the whole meaning in them. Jesus attracted men — all men — many men — ordinary sinful men by his life — his miracles and most of all his teaching. At noon my Lord would stop and gather with a crowd of “sinners” to eat with them. How unlike us! It is a strange but true fact that Christian people today — (begin-

ning with yours truly) do not eat with “sinners” — perhaps we should say sinners are not attracted to us with the thought of sharing a meal. This says something serious about our lifestyle.

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, do sinners feel welcome in my presence? Open my heart to hear the words of your Son! He is teaching me about the kind of concern you have for men who are lost. The whole world is compressed into one hundred sheep. How kind you are to tell us that we can consider ourselves a part of the ninety-nine if we wish — but each of us identifies with the one who is lost. At least we want to do something about someone else who is lost. How does a sheep become lost? He “nibbles” his way out into the area when he can not see the shepherd and he is lost. It is the hundred little distractions that lead us into the wilderness and away from your fold.

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 attractiveness of my Lord’s personality. (2) Thank you that these people wanted to “hear” Him — so do I! (3) Thank you for the religious bigots; they say much to me about my own prejudices. (4) Thank you that Jesus used social amenities to teach people — i.e., “knife and fork evangelism.” (5) Thank you Jesus *made us* responsible for the one hundred sheep. (6) Thank you for the urgency my Lord placed on seeking and saving the lost. (7) Thank you for the persistence suggested in the search.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost until he finds it?” This is our Lord’s picture of himself. He would leave the open country of heaven for the jungle of this world if there was only one lost person to seek and save. He tells me over and again just how valuable I am — anyone is, to Him. He is also real persistent in His search for me. How true I have found this to be! This is in one sense a strange search since He knows where I am all the time. He must spend His efforts to open the eyes of my heart to the realization of my lost position. Until the sheep knows he is lost he can never be saved. Thank you for your external vigilance.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Ah, the story of the prodigal father and son will never, never grow old — (both are lavish, one in love and the other in selfishness). Gladly, gladly do I lift

up these requests: (1) All us sinners and other selfish people need so much to come “near him to *listen* to him.” May that happen right now. (2) How easy it is to look around and see unworthy men — hold up your mirror to our face! (3) My Lord receives the sinful men — he loves them — he eats with them (and in my case he *lives with them*)! Stamp these words on my heart as with a hot iron!

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You have spoken to me often in these verses — continue to do so: (1) “You *are you are you are* that one lost sheep — I am even now *going after you*.” (2) “If you were the lonesome resident of this planet I would leave heaven ‘in the open pasture’ and come looking for you.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Albania — Point for prayer: (1) *Albanians outside the country are more accessible:* a) *In Yugoslavia* 1,800,000, where there is a small group of believers; the only such in the world. b) *In Italy* 260,000, where centuries-old Albanian communities and new refugees live. c) *In n.w. Greece* 12,000 living in villages near the border. d) *In w. Europe* where Albanian guest workers from Yugoslavia have sought employment. Pray for these to be evangelized. There are less than 50 known ethnic Albanian evangelical believers in the world. (5) *The New Testament was printed in 1937 in Gheg.* A revised New Testament in modern Albanian was printed in 1981. Pray for its effective distribution and impact on lives.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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.

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;
Tho’ 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.

WEEK TWO

—Sunday—

We want to take adequate time in this worship period to consider: deliverance from death, keeping our feet from stumbling, and walking in the light. Help us!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I am under vows to you, O God; I will present my thank offerings to you. For you have delivered my soul from death and my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before God in the light of life or the land of the living” (Psa. 56:12,13). Every man who has ever lived, or will ever live is here described. We are all indeed under vows to you. To you we are obligated for all we have and are. Such a relationship should call forth a deep sense of gratitude from our hearts. Dear Lord, what an array of blessings proceed from your heart to mine: (1) My soul from death: (2) My feet from stumbling: (3) Walking in the light!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. The one constant relationship I have with you is one of thankful obligation — I am glad to express my indebtedness to you. A debt of love I owe. Here are the three tremendous reasons: (1) My whole life has been delivered from eternal death — you have also removed the sting from the first death. (2) You give me a lamp for my feet — you light up the pathway ahead. You show me the dangers in the way. (3) You give me the joy of walking in the light of life on the land of the living. How could I ever find sufficient or adequate words to express my praise for these qualities of yourself!

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

Dear Lord, you know I have been so dilatory in paying my vows to you! Just yesterday I was full of complaint and not thankfulness. Why do I complain? For whatever reason I need forgiveness. A thank offering was made with all other of the five offerings — how appropriate! In all my relationships with you a thank offering is in order. How is it I sometimes prefer to

be removed from your presence? Do I find you stifling? Do I feel “hemmed in?” If I do I am wrong. How sharp and deep the rocks and pits from which you have delivered me — and yet it would appear at times I prefer to be hurt. 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

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;
Holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty!
God over all, and blest eternally.

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

HIS WORD

⁵And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ ⁷I tell you that in the same way there is more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent. —Luke 15:5-7, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What personal care and concern is here lavished on such a dumb beast as this sheep! The message is that you do not want even one to be lost — yea, none! You will do all you can that all be saved! When at last the sheep is found by the shepherd — and the shepherd is found by the sheep — what happens? The shepherd says not one “mumbling word” about the stupidity and willfulness of the sheep. To what a place of honor is the sheep raised? “He joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home.” The shepherd — even yourself is full of joy. He must share his happiness with others. If you are so delighted over the salvation of men who am I to not rejoice?

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 a scene as here described happens many times each day — on some days it happens many times each hour. Dear Lord, I want to enter into the fullness of this joy! To do otherwise is to live below the record of reality! I see myself on the shoulders of the Great Shepherd of the sheep. Since I have been in the fold so long and the eyes of my heart have been opened to the meaning of salvation I can weep tears of joy with those who share with the joy of the Shepherd. In heaven another celebration is being held. It is over that one transgressor of your law who has changed his mind — from the inside out. There are some who remain unmoved — who are they — the sinners who do not know they are lost!

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 no sheep is ever hidden from the shepherd's sight. (2) Thank you for the joy of the shepherd — what a beautiful picture of yourself! (3) Thank you that the sheep was not driven or led but carried home. (4) Thank you that your flock is "home" for all us sheep. (5) Thank you for the desire to share with all the joy of salvation — at least on your part. (6) Thank you I can be one of those friends and I can truly rejoice with you. (7) Thank you I am also that sinner who really changed his mind.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... than over the ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent." We do wonder who such persons might be. Is he speaking of angels? Angels have no opportunity to repent. Angelic beings rejoice over those who do repent and therefore understand the need for it. Surely angels would recognize the eternal issue involved in the salvation of man. But our preference is the thought that this is a somewhat sarcastic remark directed to the self-sufficient, self-righteous Pharisees. If such men felt they had no need of the great, good shepherd then indeed they would have to live with the consequences of such an attitude.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I mix the story of the lost sheep and the lost son — both of course are really the same story. Just now I want to become the sheep — not the Pharisee — I lift up these requests to you: (1) Place me on your shoulders — encircle me with your arms — carry me throughout this day. I do so need such protection. (2)

I do so want to rejoice over the salvation of others. Help me to break out of my own selfishness. (3) Tune my heart to hear the rejoicing in your presence over anyone who is found — who is saved.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I am truly in "the heavenly places" as I read again these words! Speak to me: (1) "I am interested — *very interested* in the *one* with whom you are working — share my concern." (2) "There is a whole world of spirit beings watching you and hoping you will choose to love me as I love you."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Albania — Point for prayer: (1) *Christian literature in Albanian* has been almost totally lacking since World War II. A number of books and booklets have been produced recently, mainly for the Albanians living outside Albania. Pray that some of this literature may find its way over virtually sealed borders with Greece and Yugoslavia. Pray for those who receive such literature — possession of which may lead to a death sentence. It is almost impossible for the few well-guarded tourists to distribute any literature inside the country. Pray that the slight thaw in relations with the West may result in more openings. (2) *The Greek minority* has been heavily persecuted, and a large proportion are in prisons and labour camps. Pray for them.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

"Almost persuaded" now to believe;
"Almost persuaded" Christ to receive;
Seems now some soul to say, "Go, Spirit go Thy way;
Some more convenient day On Thee I'll call."

"Almost persuaded," come, come today;
"Almost persuaded," turn not away;
Jesus invites you here, Angels are ling'ring near;
Prayers rise from hearts so dear, O wand'rer, come.

WEEK TWO

—Monday—

*It is ever such a privilege to hide in you.
I call out for your mercy. This will be
one of my best times of personal wor-
ship!*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for in you my soul takes refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed” (Psa. 57:1). How attractive is the quality of mercy! It is the personal application of your love. Mercy is meeting our personal current need. In the circumstance of this psalm David is fleeing from the jealous wrath of King Saul. As David hid in this cave he knew that only by your grace, yea by your mercy would he be saved. It was in your love he found real protection. David felt as defenseless as chicks in a storm. How comforting to hurry beneath your wings and hide in the security of your concern for us.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. My life is real often in need of your mercy. There is something beyond words in the calm assurance that there is no personal hurt of mine that is not also personal to you. In you my whole being can find a hiding place. Inside your character I can sit down and rest. I want to do just that! Life is one succession of disasters. If it is not the one in which I presently find myself it will be another. I am always presently in need of “the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed.” Praise your name I gladly seek out your mercy.

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 strange and perverted is the independent attitude of man. David could have decided that now was the time to take the throne. It was rightfully his, after all he had been anointed by the prophet Samuel and you had indicated you wanted him to rule. But David had also decided that until you removed Saul by a set of circumstances arranged by yourself — and not by

David — Saul would remain king! We catch just another reason here why you called him “a man after your own heart!” Forgive me for deciding that I will arrange the circumstances. There is no need asking for a personal expression of your love, i.e. mercy, if I really do not want it. 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

Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee;
Leave, O leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me.
All my trust on Thee is stayed,
All my help from Thee I bring;
Cover my defenseless head
With the shadow of Thy wing.

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

HIS WORD

8“Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? 9And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’ 10In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” —Luke 15:8-10, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Why is this woman so interested in one silver coin? She was given it along with the other nine as a dowry from her father. She has been wearing it as a frontlet on her forehead in anticipation of her soon coming marriage. She was to share this coin with her husband in their new home. No wonder she wants to find it! She lost it at night. Everything else stops! She *must*

search now for the lost. She is totally involved in looking — all her energy and time are given eagerly to it. And find it she does! What joy! What happiness! She must share it. This is your joy over the salvation of the lost.

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 ask if such words of my Lord represent today's interest in the lost is almost a joke. *We are the woman!* We are the bride of Christ. We are also responsible for the dowry you expect us to present to you. Do I realize this is my Lord who tells this parable? Am I listening to the One who will judge me — and all church members *by His word*? Can we just go on as if we have never read it? Are all three of these parables going to be ignored? *Not by him.* Shock me into reality!

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 personal value you placed on every man. (2) Thank you for the image of the woman searching — this means me! (3) Thank you you have told me it will not be easy to find people — it was night. (4) Thank you for the lamp — your word that lights the way in my search. (5) Thank you for the sure promise that the lost will be found! (6) Thank you that you take such joy in the finding of the lost. (7) Thank you for the heavenly hosts that share our joy.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." Angels are "messengers" of God, as their name signifies, but there is one mission upon which they are never sent: not one angel was ever to be sent to search out and find that "one lost sheep." No angel will ever take the place of the woman in search of her precious coin. They rejoice over the sinner who recognizes his desperate need and the wonderful Saviour, but it is our priceless privilege to herald the "glad tidings" of salvation. Angels must indeed wonder at the lack of interest in this greatest of all missions of God. Dear Lord, may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Amid all my worship of you through these three verses I have been lifting up my heart to you in petitions. I continue to do so just now: (1) It does cost — and cost *much* to get ready for the marriage supper and the joys of being one with you! Show me the

price of the few coins dear Lord and I will pay it. (2) Light my lamp — fill it with your oil! Set it aflame in search of the lost. (3) Show me once again the joys of salvation — move me to share this joy with my friends and neighbors. (4) Once again I try — not very successfully to identify with the rejoicing of the heavenly beings — help me in ways you know and I do not.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these three, oh so brief, parables I hear your voice real often — continue to speak to me: (1) "Be patient — *I am* — I am seeking *with you* — *in you* — *ahead of you* — and *behind you*." (2) "Please, please make what is important and valuable to me, important and valuable to you." (3) "Many are being found today — are you rejoicing?"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Algeria — Points for prayer: (1) *Opposition to the gospel is intense.* A hundred years of tearful sowing the seed by a tenacious succession of missionaries has yet to bear fruit. Satan's forces must be overcome in the heavenlies. Muslims have a long and bitter memory of "Christian" conquests, colonialism and atrocities, so miracles are needed to overcome the centuries of prejudice. (2) *Independence failed to provide the prosperity and progress expected.* Young people are frustrated and dissatisfied. Many seek solutions in fundamentalist Islam and Berber nationalism but rarely in the gospel, for few have heard it. Pray for ways and means of reaching out to them. (3) *Berber nationalism* is a potent force among the younger generation who resent Arabic political, religious and cultural domination and increased efforts to Arabize them. Pray that this may bring many back to the faith of their ancestors. The majority of Algerian Christians are Kabyle.

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.

Ye chosen seed of Israel's race,
Ye ransomed from the fall,
Hail Him who saves you by His grace,
And crown Him Lord of all;
Hail Him who saves you by His grace;
And crown Him Lord of all.

WEEK TWO

—Tuesday—

You are high above and deeply within at the same time. Teach me just now how to enter fully into your goodness!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

"I cry out to God Most High, to God, who fulfills his purpose for me. He sends from heaven and saves me, rebuking those who hotly pursue me. God sends his love and his faithfulness" (Psa. 57:2,3). It would seem crying is the static expression of your children. We have cried, we are crying and we will be always crying to you. This is as it should be, indeed as it must be as long as we are the needy creatures we are and you are the Most High benefactor. How delighted I am to honor you and express this quality of yourself "God Most High." Our enemies may be high and mighty, but you are higher and all mighty! Nothing shall ever frustrate your purpose in my life!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. David is hotly pursued by Saul; he considers yourself as the great omnipresent commander who sends help as it is needed. What a beautiful image of your constant interest and involvement in all that happens in our life! ". . . like the Israelites in the wilderness, we shall have our bread hot from heaven, new every morning; and for the overthrow of our enemies God shall open his celestial batteries, and put them to utter confusion" (*Spurgeon*). It is your love and steadfastness that became the generals to lead in the overthrow of all our enemies. How often in the heat of the conflict have I called upon such help and found them more than able to overcome!

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

If all the above expression of praise is true — and, oh, it is! How is it also true I must confess failure? Because the battle is yours and I have often taken it unto myself! Your attributes are like angels on the wing, ever ready to come to my rescue, but not unless

I call upon you for help. As long as I am willing to fight alone and somehow neglect your help I shall be defeated — I am no match for the evil one. Why I should fight with a broken sword when all the batteries of heaven are ready to save me only heaven can know. Dear Lord 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

"Are ye able," said the Master,
 "To be crucified with me?"
 "Yea," the sturdy dreamers answered,
 "To the death we follow Thee."
 Lord, we are able.

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

HIS WORD

¹¹Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. ¹²The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

¹³"Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. —Luke 15:11-16, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, there is no way I can approach in words the feelings I have about these words of your son. I have now read them over and over for more than forty years — just now it seemed that I had never caught

the full impact of them and I bow my head in wonder before your grace! This is really a story about yourself! You are the “*certain man*” — and we all are either the prodigal who left home or stayed home. Both sons were lavish or wasteful with your wealth. But there are three prodigals in this story — you are the third — how prodigal or lavish you are with your love!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Never in a thousand lifetimes could I probe the depths of these twenty-one short verses! All the world is a part of your house. All men start out as your sons, all men either become prodigal or petulant. All sin! All sin is one form of selfishness or another — respectable or not. You have given to us not only your estate — it is all we have — every minute and the thoughts of it are a gift from you. The *one* sin of man is to spend what you have given us with no consideration for the giver. When we do this we have left your presence — we have moved to “a distant country.” How easy it is to spend all and find ourselves in the midst of a severe famine.

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 wonders of love and grace I see in the words of your Son. (2) Thank you for describing the younger son as the totally selfish person he was. (3) Thank you for telling us that you will let us decide even when it is wrong. (4) Thank you for the up-to-date value of this story — “wild living” is the same — “the distant country” is in the same place. (5) Thank you that there will always be (either inside or outside) “a severe famine” in our experience of sin. (6) Thank you for your estimate of service outside your house “feeding pigs.” (7) Thank you that utterly nothing satisfies but yourself!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... *but no one gave him anything!*” In the far country while working in a pigpen no one had anything to give him. The people of such a place have a way of placing the blame. It was his money and his life — and his mistakes — he could see to it. In a very real sense no one had what he needed. He knew he could not find an answer to his deepest need except in his father’s house. Deep down inside he knew he had violated a fundamental law — “he had sinned against heaven” as well as his father and himself. Only the father could give him forgiveness and a place in his house.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I shall never, never outlive the wonder — the beauty — the power of these words! I lift up my feeble attempt of asking for a deeper understanding: (1) I see that the whole human race can be summed up in these verses — the sinner who left home and the sinner who stayed home. Dear Lord, help me to speak to their need. (2) You have given to me the share I have in your great estate — my portion of time, thought, energy, ability and money. Teach me how to better use it. (3) Dear Lord, I have indeed spent your substance on myself — forgive me. (4) Awaken my senses! Shock me into reality!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Dear precious Lord speak to my conscience: (1) “Remember — all sin is against heaven.” (2) “I see you from afar — and I know you more intimately than anyone else.” (3) “I want to kiss you and throw my arms around you.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Algeria — Points for prayer: (1) *The Algerians outside the country are more accessible to the gospel, and more so since travel restrictions abroad were eased. NAM, GMU, and others have ministry among them in France and Belgium. Pray for effective outreach to tourists and residents in Europe. Pray for churches to be planted that also have a vision to evangelize in their native land.* (2) *The tiny Church is growing, even more so since 1981. Yet threats and intimidation by family, friends, employers and police are commonplace. Most believers are young, and the girls are often forced into marriage to Muslims. Fear frequently leads to isolation from fellowship, compromise and backsliding. Pray for perseverance, stickability, willingness to suffer where necessary and boldness to witness. Pray for the conversion of the families of believers. There are now about five indigenous church fellowships.*

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

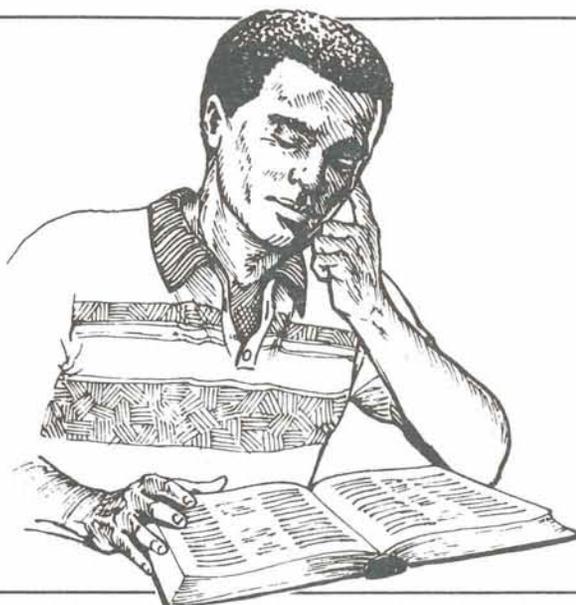
Anywhere with Jesus I can safely go,
Anywhere He leads me in this world below;
Anywhere without Him dearest joys would fade;
Anywhere with Jesus I am not afraid.

Anywhere with Jesus I am not alone;
Other friends may fail me, He is still my own;
Tho’ His hand may lead me over drearest ways,
Anywhere with Jesus is a house of praise.

WEEK TWO

—Wednesday—

Your dear personal interest in every one of your children leads us to give ourselves to you in worship. Just now I renew this commitment.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and make music. Awake my soul! Awake, harp and lyre! I will awake the dawn” (Psa. 57:7,8).

There is a quality of yourself that calls forth steadfastness in the midst of the worst of adversity. Is it your omnipotence? Or your omniscience? Such attributes could give us resoluteness. But it is your tender personal interest in our lives that calls forth such commitment. If David was in the cave of Adullam it would be such a place that was filled with his songs of praise. David needed to remind himself that such expression was appropriate to your interest in his life. Such an example he is to all of us!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. There is something in man that will not let him languish for long in the darkness of Adullam. Indeed — it is a remembrance of the qualities of yourself! It is a recollection of who we are, as well as yourself. The harp and the lyre are appropriate accompaniments to the songs of praise we wish to lift before you. The beauty of the sunrise will be greeted with song. It is my privilege to do this each morning. Each dawn can be like awakening to a whole new life. Each day can have the freshness of eternity upon it. I want to be there when that day opens its eyes! “The early dew of the morning” may often be gone by noon — but I want to greet the dawn of every day with praise to 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

It does seem a shame to spoil such praise with confession of sin. Such is not true at all! There would be no praise without confession. It is in acknowledging our unsteadfastness we can develop our steadfastness. It is

out of confession we can find a song to sing! It is only because we are clean and whole that we can greet any dawn with joy. Thank you — praise you for the boon of confession — of repentance — of forgiveness! There is no music like that of the heart set free to sing of 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

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.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁷When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.’ ²⁰So he got up and went to his father.’
—Luke 15:17-20, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Is your Son saying to me that sin does not make good sense? I believe this is true! It surely does not make sense for us to be hungry when there is plenty to eat. There is no reasoning in being dirty when we can be clean — cold when we could be warm. Is my Lord saying that the next move is mine? It is only when I move toward you that you can and will move toward me. The son went home because he knew something of the love of his father — it is only ourselves that can know the full love expressed in the kiss and the robe and ring. Praise your name!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I do not read this account as a one-time event — or in the past tense. I believe I need to “come to my senses” each new day of the week or month or year! I believe this is happening *right now!* Each day I want to leave the things that are past in the past and set out and move toward the Father. I can easily say with meaning: “I have sinned against heaven and against you.” My Father sees me even now — the only place in your record in which you are represented as running is here — toward me with roses of forgiveness!

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 definition of good sense. (2) Thank you that you do not intend for any of your children to be in want. (3) Thank you that I can leave the pigpen anytime I want to. (4) Thank you that I can always call you “Father.” (5) Thank you that only your love and grace makes me worthy. (6) Thank you that you can see me “a long way off.” (7) Thank you for your arms of love and kisses of forgiveness!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.” What a greeting to receive from yourself! I know this is a description of the welcome given to every person who has “come to himself” and moved from the pigpen. It was the choice of the son that changed his position from death to life. The Father, even yourself waited and was always ready to extend the welcome — but it was our decision that made it possible. Nothing was changed at the father’s house from the father’s perspective, but all was new and different and so full of meaning from the son’s view point. What new eyes repentance gives us!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How easy it is to find requests in this familiar text: (1) Keep me aware that “give me” was the basic sin. (2) Teach me to say with real meaning “make me.” (3) May I use what you have given to your advantage — not mine. (4) I want to remember that famine is always the result of wild living. (5) I want to work for you in feeding the bread of life — not pods to pigs. (6) Keep me hungry for your presence and your feast. (7) Keep me aware of the basic sin — selfishness.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

(1) “There are yet only two sons in the world.” (2) “You have been raised from the dead — live in your newness of life.” (3) “I still have food to spare in my house.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

American Samoa — Points for prayer: (1) *The entire population was Christian by 1900*, and every village has a church. The basic structure of society remained intact with the coming of the gospel, and much pride, formalism and compromise is evident. The Mormons have made big inroads into the nominal Protestant community. (2) *There are no unreached peoples, but thousands have never been challenged to a personal commitment to Christ.* Evangelicals are growing in numbers through the Assemblies of God and several smaller denominations. (3) *For years many ardent Samoan missionaries traversed the Pacific*, but now that number is greatly reduced. Pray for renewed vision and zeal for the kingdom of God. (4) *Pacific Students for Christ* serves 11 countries, including Samoa, with student groups in 40 institutions. Pray for the evangelization of Pacific campuses.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now I’m found,
Was blind, but now I see.

Thro’ many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
‘Tis grace hath bro’t me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

WEEK TWO

—Thursday—

How encouraging to have Someone who never changes — most especially when his name is LOVE — even yourself. I want to sing and pray of your faithfulness.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations. I will sing of you among the peoples. For great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies” (Psa. 57:9,10). How I long to make a reality what David sang at the mouth of the cave of Adullam, or was it Engedi? If David had a desire for Gentiles to know of your mercy who am I to sit in my own little cave? There is so much to sing — there is so much to tell all men of all the earth! In recent years the distance to the heavens has been extended immeasurably! But we shall never reach the terminus of your love or faithfulness!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Dear Lord, I do long to spread your love to the peoples of the earth. I have helped in some way to train those who are even now telling of your love and faithfulness to persons I shall never see this side of heaven. And yet I feel more circumscribed than David in Canaan. The two qualities here mentioned are surely worthy of the exalted position given them. Is not the whole essence of yourself encompassed in “love and faithfulness”? The steadfast expression of your concern for our lives is indeed all we need! 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

It isn't that I do not want to praise you — for indeed I do! It isn't that I do not appreciate your love or your faithfulness — I could never exhaust my desire to tell you of what these qualities mean — but to realize that billions of people have never heard — and will never hear is a reproach I do not want to consider. I could feel less guilty if I believed America was your chosen nation among all the other nations to be

the means of evangelizing the world — but I have not found this in your word. I am simply bloodguilty of failure in world evangelism — as are all other of your children in this “land of the free and home of the brave.” 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 calls us: o'er the tumult
Of our life's wild restless sea,
Day by day His sweet voice soundeth,
Saying, “Christian, follow me.”

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

HIS WORD

²¹“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

²²“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate. —Luke 15:21-24, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What a poignant penetrating confession this was! All men sin against you before they sin against anyone else. Heaven is violated before we awaken to the reality of our sin. The one fundamental sin of man is to take what you have given us — i.e., time, thought, energy, talent, money and waste it on our own selfishness. The son was right! He was indeed no longer worthy to be the son of the father. But then he was not worthy earlier either. We shall never be worthy. We would not even make a good hired servant.

Worthiness is not even in the thought or vocabulary of the Father — *love is the word!* Forgiveness is what is given.

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 look again at what I received when I came home: (1) The kiss and embrace of forgiveness. I know your love and acceptance of me has not changed since I came home more than forty years ago! (2) The best robe in my father's house is that crimson robe of righteousness bought for me and all your children by your dear Son. (3) The ring of recognition and authority — the signet ring of your house. I compare this to the presence of the Holy Spirit in my body. (4) My feet are shod with the good news so I can walk in your presence — but so I can also tell others of your love. How rich you have made 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 depth of forgiveness and acceptance I have found in yourself. (2) Thank you that my worthiness is of yourself and not myself. (3) Thank you that I can often consider the beauty of my red robe of your righteousness. (4) Thank you that I can "ask in your name" since I have on the signet ring. (5) Thank you I can walk in your house in the sandals of your own provision. (6) Thank you for the tremendous feast I find in your house. (7) Thank you for my part in the first resurrection.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." Here is indeed a description of a resurrection. By your own definition a person separated from you by his own rebellious choice is dead. There can be no real life or enjoyment apart from your presence. This also contains your definition of being lost. When we separate ourselves from your purposes we are lost, i.e., we have entered a purposeless existence. Praise your name the dead is alive and the lost is found. There could hardly be stronger figures of speech to describe salvation. Such beauty and meaning are found here. Most of all because I see myself in it!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In these powerful verses we seek your throne of grace: (1) Teach me all over again your definition of sin and salvation. (2) I want to remember that heaven is always interested and involved in what I do or do not

do. (3) I shall never be worthy to be your son — impress your grace upon my heart. (4) Open my eyes to see the beauty of your best robe in which I am dressed. (5) I hold up your ring and ask on behalf of our son that he might live and be saved. (6) I want to tread softly — but gladly in your beautiful house. (7) Dear Lord, how can I truly celebrate as you want me to?

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What do you say? (1) "Eat with real gratitude in every bite." (2) "Eat with the deep joy of salvation." (3) "Eat knowing I shall never run out of good food."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Andorra — Points for prayer: (1) *There is not one known Andorrano evangelical believer.* Pray that a strong witness for the gospel may soon be established in this materialistic and cosmopolitan society. (2) *The only Evangelicals* who regularly meet together are 10 Spanish and a further five Filipino sisters. *WEF* maintains regular contact with these two groups. Pray for their witness to local and foreign residents. (3) *Christian literature* has been distributed throughout the country on several occasions in the '70s by both the Pocket Testament League and *ECM*. Pray for lasting fruit.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing pow'r?
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
Are you fully trusting in His grace this hour?
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Are you walking daily by the Savior's side?
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
Do you rest each moment in the Crucified?
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

WEEK TWO

—Friday—

It is alone in your strength that I am strong. Left to myself I am poured out like water. Gladly do I cast myself before you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“O my strength, I watch for you; you, O God, are my fortress, my loving God. God will go before me and will let me gloat over those who slander me” (Psa. 59:9,10). How we all need *your* strength. How great and wonderful is your strength! We all feel at times there is no strength at all in us — for the good reason that there is not. Such a beautiful thought that we can look for you in the changing circumstances of life and find you! There are some very hard and difficult events in our lives — but if I am looking I can see your face behind it all.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. How many times have I read in this book of psalms that you are love? Is it a hundred times? I am sure it is — and yet the personification of love had not come. In your infinite interest in my need you have anticipated the move of my enemy and have already overcome him. There are many servants of satan called demons who have lies to tell me — what accusations they make. Were it not for your loving kindness that goes before me in the person of your Son and his sacrifice on calvary every one of their charges would stand. Now I can gloat over those who slander me. I can tell them “there is therefore now no condemnation.” Praise your mercy to and for me!

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

“When I am weak then am I strong” — but there is no denying how very weak I am. It is trusting in an arm that has no strength. It is holding up a paper shield. I am covered up by the avalanche of satan’s forces. Forgive me for remaining much too long in the open field of combat — I run even now into my

fortress. Even yourself! Pride forces me forward but I am no match at all for my enemy. Oh, go before me! Go before me! Cut a way out for me in the wilderness. Destroy the forces of the darkness with your sword of light! I am at a total loss without you. I am more than a conqueror with 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

Arise, my soul, arise,
Shake off your guilty fears;
The bleeding Sacrifice
In your behalf appears;
Before the throne my Surety stands,
My name is written on His hands,
My name is written on His hands.

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

HIS WORD

²⁵“Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing.

²⁶So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ²⁷“Your brother has come,” he replied, “and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.”

²⁸“The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ²⁹But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’

³¹“ ‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³²But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours

was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' ” —*Luke 15:25-32, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

The story does not at all end with the return of the son from the far country. Perhaps this sequel to the return is much more suited to the needs of those to whom the parables were spoken — i.e., to the Pharisees. Surely these words speak to our needs more directly than a recital of the events concerning hogs and harlots. We are amazed at the petulant childish anger of the older brother! Or are we? Lord, sad to say not all who remain religious share the heart of the father. Did this son grieve and pray over the leaving of his brother? Not at all. “He asked for it, he got it” — was his attitude. He can not at all understand the celebration!

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 how many of your heart interests are mine? In word — yes — but in deed and in truth how much do I share your heart? My emotions will betray me. Do I enter into the house of praise when someone is saved? Have I stood back in wide-eyed wonder at the resurrection from the dead? Have I longed for the return of the lost — and rushed out in open armed welcome? To each of these questions the answer is “no.” But isn’t this overdoing it? Ask the father — he did it! Who is this hardhearted — and calloused son? “It is I!” Dear God forgive me!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the music of salvation. (2) Thank you that we can dance for the joy of forgiveness. (3) Thank you that even nonmembers of the family can express the meaning of salvation. (4) Thank you for the clear picture of self-centered lostness in the life of this brother. (5) Thank you that my service for you need never be that of a slave. (6) Thank you for the poignant words of the father: “. . . everything I have is yours.” (7) Thank you for those beautiful words: “we had to celebrate and be glad.”

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . this brother of yours was dead and is alive again.” This expression was used twice by our Lord to describe salvation. It became a very popular expression among his apostles. It does describe from heaven’s viewpoint just what takes place in this incredible transaction. A new life has come into our bodies! We were once “dead in trespasses and sin” — then someone told us the good news and when we awakened as to who we were and where we were, a new life began. Our new life is to be shared not only

with you but with your Son. It would seem all of our life should be a celebration! Indeed your Son’s words were: “we had to celebrate!” Indeed we do!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How can I request of you from this text? (1) Deliver me from the dullness of the life of the older son. (2) I want to be in a constant attitude of joyful gratefulness. (3) Give me wisdom in my selection of music to express my salvation — but give me music! (4) Am I to be physical in my expression of joy? — (What a stuffed-shirt question.) (5) Deliver me through this pigpen life to your external home, “safe and sound.” (6) Deliver me, deliver me, from jealousy over the reality of salvation seen in the lives of others. (7) It is easy to misjudge the motives of others — help me not to start.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You are speaking to me in this second: (1) “True joy that lasts is found in pleasing others.” (2) “Your service to me is always as a son.” (3) “All that I have is yours.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Angola — Points for prayer: (1) *Pray for the peace of this unhappy land.* Many areas of the centre and south are scenes of both bitter civil war and confrontation with South African forces from Namibia. There have been enormous casualties through fighting and famine. Many have fled to surrounding lands. Pray for the gospel and a government that honours God. Praise the Lord for thrilling accounts of full and growing churches in most areas! (2) *Many refugees have fled to Zambia, Zaire and Namibia.* Pray for the Christian workers ministering to their needs in Namibia; most of these refugees are being evangelized for the first time. Efforts are being made for the evangelization of the refugees in Zambia (*AEF-Ev. Ch. of Zambia and Brethren*); there are over 50 assemblies of Chokwe refugees among them!

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Years I spent in vanity and pride,
Caring not my Lord was crucified,
Knowing not it was for me He died
On Calvary.

By God’s word at last my sin I learned;
Then I trembled at the law I’d spurned,
Till my guilty soul imploring turned
To Calvary.

WEEK TWO

—Saturday—

Singing is such a beautiful way to express my worship! I gladly do it just now. This morning is the best of times!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble. O my strength, I sing praise to you; . . .” (Psa. 59:16,17a). I am glad to find someone with strength — mine has run out! It would seem David and others spent a good deal of time singing. How can I actually sing of your strength? I could compose a tune for the psalms before me and sing them to you. These are beautiful descriptions of your strength right here. Praise your name! It would also seem that the morning was a favorite time of the day to raise praise to you — perhaps at the morning sacrifice.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I too have a real penchant for the morning. It is so much easier to lift my heart to you in the freshness of a new day — in the quiet of being alone with you. As the day wears away there is always the joyful thought that “in the morning I will sing of your love.” I can, and do sing of your love in some afternoons when I did find rest and refreshment — but it is especially in the morning I can sing praises to you. It would seem David says that often he must leave the scene of battle and hide in the fortress. How good to know there is always a place of refuge in time of trouble.

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

Here are the attributes of yourself as found in these verses: (1) *Strength* — how is it I feel so weak? (2) *Love* — why am I insecure? In your love is the source of my greatest confidence. (3) *Fortress* — a place of protection and conquest. (4) *Refuge* — one to whom I can escape. In each of these words I find not only

your greatness but my smallness. It is most helpful to confess my need to the one who meets such need so abundantly! I am without strength — you are strength itself. I am full of confused resentment — you are total love. I have been so often defeated — you are a fortress that has never been overcome. I am frustrated and confused — you are a place of peace and calm rest.

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

When the woes of life o’ertake me,
Hopes deceive, and fears annoy,
Never shall the cross forsake me:
Lo! it glows with peace and joy.

Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
By the cross are sanctified;
Peace is there that knows no measure,
Joys that thro’ all time abide.

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

HIS WORD

Jesus told his disciples: “There was a rich man **16** whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. ²So he called him in and asked him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.’

³“The manager said to himself, ‘What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I’m not strong enough to dig, and I’m ashamed to beg — ⁴I know what I’ll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.’

⁵“So he called in each one of his master’s debtors. He asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’

⁶“ ‘Eight hundred gallons of olive oil,’ he replied.

“The manager told him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred.’

⁷“Then he asked the second, ‘And how much do you owe?’

“ ‘A thousand bushels of wheat,’ he replied.

“He told him, ‘Take your bill and make it eight hundred.’”

8“**The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light.** 9I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.” —*Luke 16:1-9, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

My Lord is speaking in an area where all of us will give attention — he is talking about money! You are the rich man — I and all your children are the “manager” of this parable. We are contrasted with “the people of this world” as “the people of the light.” How I do want to enter fully into the meaning you have in these words! I am a manager — my time, energy, talent and money are all an investment of yourself in my responsibility.

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 shall, I will, I do give an account to you. There is no avoiding it. I shall always be short — i.e., I do not fulfill my management as well as I could — or as you want me to — i.e., ideally speaking. I will lose my job — death will see to that. I must be planning now or I will have no time to plan. It is here in this life or there will be no time. A large part of my management has to do with money. This is but coined life. Money is the sum total of all else you have given us. What we do with money is really what we are doing with all you have given us. How important it is that I use the wisdom you have promised!

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 Jesus spoke so often about the best use of money. (2) Thank you that Jesus told me for whom I worked — even yourself! (3) Thank you for the abundance of your provisions loaned to me for use. (4) Thank you that you expect me to be able to give a good accounting. (5) Thank you that I can use money here to improve my place in the life to come. (6) Thank you that Jesus commended shrewdness. (7) Thank you for the eternal dwellings where there will not be the hassle we have here.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.” What a wonderful way to use money! Dear Lord, is it possible? Of course it is, or you would not have asked us to do it. How much of my money has been, is now being invested in the

salvation of men and women? We should be able to answer such a question very specifically. Jesus has said there will be a conscious enjoyment of what he calls “eternal dwellings.” We will sustain our identity and will recognize the friends we have made here. What a wonderful prospect.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In this parable is an area for requests we do not usually consider: (1) Keep me aware just how rich you are in the treasures of “the eternal dwellings.” (2) It is possible to waste the wonderful possessions you have given me — deliver me from this. (3) I do ask for the wisdom you promised to discharge my job in a manner that pleases you. (4) I want to enjoy all the light you have given me — and use it to enlighten others. (5) How can I use the wealth of this world — and not be used by it? (6) Open your word to me concerning “the eternal dwellings.” (7) Keep me excited about meeting there those I have befriended here.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

These words must have probed the hearts of his disciples — may they do the same for me: (1) “Shrewdness in business is a commendable quality.” (2) “You *are* a manager — you *must* give an account.” (3) “I have a whole new world for you after this one.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Angola — Points for prayer: (1) *There has been an increase in witchcraft in many areas since independence.* Many believers have suffered persecution as a result. Pray for such a manifestation of the power of God that many of Satan’s captives may be freed. (2) *The Church in the government-controlled areas* nearer the coast was more nominal in the past. Suffering is purifying many but causing bitterness, hatred, and a tribalistic spirit among others. Over 53 congregations of Christian refugees have been formed in the area. The Church is under considerable pressure, and some leaders have compromised with Marxism. There are limitations on youth work and the building of new churches. Pray for the witness of the Christians in times of much intimidation and persecution. The Evangelical Fellowship of Angola was formed in 1974, and provides a means of fellowship among believers and a channel of communication to the authorities.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Alas! and did my Savior bleed?
And did my Sov’reign die?
Would He devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?

WEEK THREE

—Sunday—

The world and life to come seem so near at times — especially when I lose myself in your presence. Receive my adoration!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

"I love to dwell in your tent forever and take refuge in the shelter of your wings. For you have heard my vows, O God; You have given me the heritage of those who fear your name" (Psa. 61:4,5). You have put within us the strong desire to live forever. There is a tent where we can live forever — praise your name! There is a place where we can gather to you as chicks under the protection of their mother. How we long for such a place! You have not given us even one desire you will not fulfill. Indeed you are listening! You have heard the cries of my heart — you have marked the promises I have made to you.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Even in this life you have given me a rich heritage. Of all the several billion people who presently inhabit this globe I enjoy a treasure far above the majority. I could compare the material heritage of America with the rest of the world and the principle would hold — but this is an inheritance "of those who fear your name." I want to once again open the door of the house of your treasure. I can walk into any room and pause to marvel at the beauty and value of what I see. I step into *the room of redemption*. Here I can stay for a long time in contemplation of all you have given for our appreciation. "Thank you" — such words seem so empty of the meaning that should be present.

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

I do indeed long to dwell in your heart forever — but for what purpose? Dear Lord, move my heart to reach out to those who have no such promise. Your Son came to take a host home with him. May I remember all men have such a longing that only you

can satisfy. I want to freely confess that I have not at times believed you were listening to my vows — or prayers — or my cry when I hurt. Forgive me. I am delighted to say your patience was much longer than mine. You awakened me and led me to a new view of my heritage — praise your name — your mercy endureth forever!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I need Thee ev'ry hour,
In joy or pain;
Come quickly and abide,
Or life is vain.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁰"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. ¹¹So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? ¹²And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?

¹³"No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money." —Luke 16:10-13, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

In what sense does my Lord use this word "trust"? He is discussing financial responsibility. If what we receive of money is used in such a way that our employer is benefited — or we as an employer show a profit we are to be commended — we have been responsible. My Lord expects that kind of service. However he is not only speaking of the profit and loss

ledger — he marks dishonesty. If we cheat on a test in a class of the school room we will cheat in the larger class called "life." Honesty and responsibility are heavenly principles. My Lord has a right to expect this of me — *and he does!*

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

What are "the true riches" of which our Lord spoke? Is he speaking of the gospel entrusted to his servants? This does seem to be a reasonable conclusion. What shall we do with that which is our own? Paul spoke of "my gospel" — as if it belonged to him — as indeed in a sense it did! We are now also faced with another monumental decision: how shall we use the principles of honesty and responsibility? Shall we accumulate money as such — or shall we become rich toward God? When you draw the double line under our life how will the balance read? Have we really developed a love for yourself or for money? I ask these questions because I must and will answer 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 we are all entrusted with the ability to give an account. (2) Thank you that there will be a day when all the books are balanced. (3) Thank you for the little things in which I can please you. (4) Thank you for the wonderful "true riches" you have given every child of yours. (5) Thank you for being my Master — I surely want no other. (6) Thank you for the love you have given me for yourself. (7) Thank you I can serve you and expect the reward of "true riches!"

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"*You cannot serve both God and Money.*" In our day and time it would seem men do not do much of a job serving either one. Total selfishness is the rule of the day. This is a larger god than money. However even in the service of self money has a large place. The principle here taught is that to whom we give our time — thought and energy his we are. If you are not often in our mind — if our energies are not directed by yourself then you are not served. Dear Lord, I do need a careful reevaluation of my service. In a very real sense I am reevaluating my devotion to you.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I do want to ask and receive in application of what you have taught me: (1) Trust me with "the very little" of this one day — and I will remember. (2) Purify my motives in using what money you have given to me. (3) Deepen my appreciation of the value

of "true riches." (4) It fills me with concern that I might use your goods to your advantage — help me. (5) I do love you as my Master — enlarge my heart. (6) Give me a real hatred for the god of this world. (7) What a privilege to serve you today — may my heart be tender toward you.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these words I want to hear you speak just to me: (1) "If you are dishonest in little things you are dishonest." (2) "You serve me in little things as truly as in great things." (3) "You very likely do not know the difference."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Antigua — Points for prayer: (1) *Political instability* and exotic extremism in Dominica, Grenada and Jamaica sent ripples of anxiety through the Caribbean. Pray that God may overrule in the affairs of men. With many new, inexperienced, little governments battling to solve the insoluble, Christians must be ready for the possibility of atheistic persecution and indoctrination of the youth. In Grenada in the early '80s, this had begun. Pray that committed Christians may be placed in leadership roles in their nations. (2) *Materialism and wealth* have sapped the spiritual vigour of Christians in the more prosperous Caymans, Bahamas, Bermuda and Virgin Islands.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

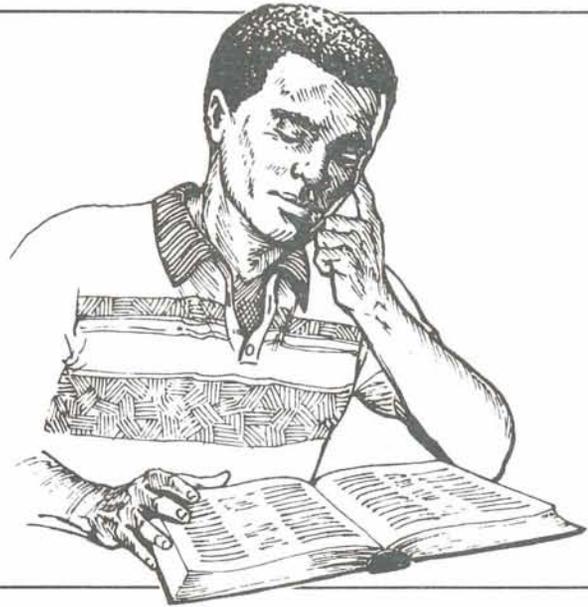
Break Thou the bread of life,
Dear Lord, to me,
As Thou didst break the loaves
Beside the sea;
Beyond the sacred page
I seek Thee, Lord;
My spirit pants for Thee,
O living Word!

Bless Thou the truth, dear Lord,
To me, to me,
As Thou didst bless the bread
By Galilee;
Then shall all bondage cease,
All fetters fall,
And I shall find my peace,
My All in all.

WEEK THREE

—Monday—

When one is truly tired the promise of total rest is most welcome. So it is with my soul and yourself. I enter this time of worship to find rest for my soul.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken” (Psa. 62:1,2). How often in the conflict called life does my whole being cry out for rest. There is sleep with very little rest. It is only in you I can totally relax and find restoration and refreshment. Such a fact applies to all men. How much fuller and stronger would our lives be if we but found our rest in you. In a very real sense the salvation of our bodies and minds — of our emotional nature would result. Thank you for this revelation of yourself!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Just now my body cries out for rest — but to sleep without a total commitment of myself to you is to defeat the purpose of repose. How delightful it is to lean my whole self upon you. There must have been many times and places in the psalmist’s experience when he needed a rock and a fortress, i.e., judging from the numerous references to such places of defense. This is surely true to my own life experience. I need a rock and a fortress real often. I am glad to say there has never been a time when you were not there with such protection and sanctuary. 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

It is a sad but true admission that I have fallen exhausted at the end of a day of battle and found no real rest. It was because I simply did not commit all of myself to you. My “soul,” i.e., total being did not seek my relaxation in you. It is too bad to fight the battles of life twice or ten times — i.e., in my dreams as well as in reality. What a promise to claim: “I will

never be shaken.” I do want to renew my commitment to “my rest, my salvation, my rock, my fortress!” Forgive me and renew my relationship with 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

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

¹⁴The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. ¹⁵He said to them, “You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God’s sight.

¹⁶“The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it. ¹⁷It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law.

¹⁸“Anyone who divorces his wife and maries another woman commits adultery, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.” —Luke 16:14-18, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Having ears to hear they heard not — or did they?

There was indeed a response! What a dangerous thing it was to sneer at yourself in the person of your Son. How could they do it? Most especially how could they do it when they were religious men who believed your word? Jesus gives us the answer: They "justified themselves," i.e., they had an explanation for their use of money that would look good in the sight of men. Perhaps other men would even defend their position. But God knew their hearts. What was so highly valued by these men as worship and service to you was actually detested by yourself. What a shock!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Our Lord's announcement of the kingdom needs to be heard by myself! John the Baptist was such a bright and shining light. He was understood when he said so urgently: "The kingdom of heaven is just at hand." Ever since John made the need of repentance so clear men have been treating their hearts violently — i.e., have been plucking out their eyes — cutting off their hands and taking any measures necessary to be ready to enter into the kingdom when it appeared. What a testimony as to the real meaning of repentance that must precede baptism! As I apply this to myself I see how far short I fall in dealing violently with my own sin. Most especially when I read that every word you have spoken — and have written through the prophets — will find fulfillment!

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 teaching. He touched those who were taught. (2) Thank you that there is not one word recorded here (or in many other places) of the reaction of Jesus to the sneering of men. (3) He did lay open their hearts — for this example I thank you. (4) Thank you that you indeed know my heart! (5) Thank you for the external reminder that you *do* have a value system. (6) Thank you for the willingness of many to truly repent. (7) Thank you for this clear word on divorce.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"*Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.*" How does the subject of divorce relate to money? To ask the question is to answer it. Anyone who is married knows how often the subject of finances threatens the marriage. Jesus is saying that in our human relationships there is nothing more important than marriage — stay married. Do not divorce! It is almost inevitable that if one is divorced he will marry again. Such a relationship would be adultery. (We are not ignoring the other references on this subject: Matthew 5:31,32;

19:1-9; Mark 10:11,12; Romans 7:1-3; I Corinthians 7:1-40, we are only meditating on this one verse.)

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Whatever requests arise from these verses will be so important to all my life: (1) Dear Lord, I need to pray often for deliverance from all love of money — this I now do! (2) Break my rationalizations — I want to face squarely my need. (3) Deliver me from the peer-pressure of pleasing men. (4) You can and do "detest" some things — help me to develop the same value system. (5) How often do I pray for a deeper understanding of your message as "good news." (6) I want to be violent in my treatment of all that prevents your rule in my heart. (7) Keep me open at all times to the needs of my wife.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Once again you speak to me on the deep level of my needs: (1) "The Pharisees were overt in their sneering at Jesus — are there others who do it?" (2) "I know all about your heart all the time." (3) "I will meet your needs — bring them to me."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Argentina — Points for prayer: (1) *A feeling of helpless despair swept through the nation due to the political and economic upheavals of the last decade.* This helped to open the hearts of many to the gospel. Pray that many may turn from superstition, witchcraft and sin to a living hope in Jesus. Pray for the young people and their salvation, as many have turned to immorality and drugs. Praise for the new air of excitement and expectation among Evangelicals for future advance! (2) *There is still prejudice against Protestants,* which is heightened by the activities of fast-growing sectarian groups such as the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses to witness to the Roman Catholic majority.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Be not dismayed whate'er betide,
God will take care of you;
Beneath His wings of love abide,
God will take care of you.

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.

WEEK THREE

—Tuesday—

Power and love seem contradictory qualities — but I need only look at your Son to see how they are perfectly in balance. Such a thought leads me to worship you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard: that you, O God, are strong, and that you, O Lord, are loving! Surely you will reward each person according to what he has done” (Psa. 62:11,12). What a blessed expression of your nature is in this text! You have spoken it and I have heard it. You are strong — indeed you are the very essence or source of all strength. It is comforting to be the child of one who is so strong. Such power could be overpowering in intimidation if I did not also know of your love. You are the sum total of this quality. Such two qualities being operative my expectation is with the psalmist! Surely you will reward each person according to what he has done — either good or bad.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. There is a sore temptation in praising you for these attributes: it is to assume I know where and when and how you should use your strength or just how you will express your love. I do not! It is enough to know you have all strength and are absolute love. I need not question or argue your use of your own qualities. The rewards of each man will be a perfect balance of your power and love. Praise your name! My praise today is in my confident expectation of the outworking of these qualities in my own experience. My confidence is strong that your reward based upon your strength and love will be found in my life!

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

To paraphrase the psalmist I could say: “One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard: that you, O man, are weak, and that you, O man, are a rebel. Surely life is unhappiness itself.” Such is the an-

tithesis of accepting your strength and love. Perhaps I should say; such is my option at not accepting your sovereign will in my life. As soon as I decide I know how you should use your strength and your love, i.e., in a given circumstance, we are in trouble! How often too I need to be reminded that I must let you be God? Dear Lord I rejoice that you do all things well!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim thro' this barren land;
I am weak, but Thou art mighty,
Hold me with Thy pow'ful hand;
Bread of heaven, Feed me till I want no more:
Bread of heaven, Feed me till I want no more.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁹“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. ²⁰At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores ²¹and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.”
—Luke 16:19-21, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Am I to find much of the world represented in these men? I believe it is true. I also believe a rich man actually lived who was and did all my Lord said. There was a poor beggar named Lazarus. This is a true story about real people. There could hardly be a sharper contrast than that drawn by my Lord. (Dear Lord, help me to think deeply and open my conscience to you.) If we were to consider the several billion people of the earth — how many would be classified as “rich,” i.e., as compared with the poor? Surely most

of America would fall into the first classification. What kind of clothes do we wear as compared with the rest of the world? (I am going to a large "rummage sale" today — what we throw away would be "purple and fine linen" as compared to the rags of the rest 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. How is it we have so much and the other nations of the world have so little? It is estimated by those who accumulate such facts, that Americans waste 18% to 20% of all the food we eat. We throw away 20 cents out of each dollar we spend for food. The beggar could get more than crumbs from the garbage cans of Americans. We have overcome many of the diseases that ravage the rest of the world. If we want to find parabolic comparisons they are here — but they are anything but complimentary! Jesus is telling us what will happen to the selfish after death. It is more than a sobering thought — it is stark, awful reality!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you that my Lord marked the physical condition of man — He does so today. (2) Thank you Jesus knows what I eat and what I wear each day — not that He cares what color I put on — or does He? (3) Thank you for your personal involvement in all of life — welcome, Lord. (4) Thank you that not even one beggar sits by the rich man's gate without your knowledge. (5) Thank you that all the longings of our heart are known to you. (6) Thank you that even animals do not go unnoticed. (7) Thank you for the multiple lessons I can learn from this text.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Even the dogs came and licked his sores." What a charming touch of homey interest for our Lord to bring the poor wild dogs into the story. Perhaps they were domesticated and belonged to the rich man or his neighbors. At least Lazarus never drove them off. It would seem he welcomed any small help he could get. I have seen thousands of such beggars and such dogs in India. They have not left since I have. There are such cases in Africa and Haiti. Outside whose door are they sitting? Would it be presumptuous to say that You will hold us responsible for not meeting the physical needs of men if we could? After all Jesus didn't say the rich man was condemned for not teaching the Old Testament to Lazarus.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Read this word *in thanksgiving* and requests. (1) Thank you for the rich man — we can see ourselves

so often in him. (2) Thank you Jesus was not afraid of what men would say. (3) Thank you for Lazarus — shock us again and again by his need! (3) Thank you that Jesus strongly implies Lazarus died of malnutrition — it says much to us about those who are dying today. (4) Thank you for the external contemporaneousness of this record. (5) Just now turn every one of these words of thanksgiving into requests. (6) Give me the courage to accept my part of the answers to these requests. (7) Deepen my humility in accepting your part of the answers.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in this example: (1) "Lazarus is yet sitting at your gate — it is not too late to feed him." (2) "If you are too busy to see the poor you are too busy." (3) "Genuine concern for the needs of others includes the whole man — but you *are* responsible."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Argentina — Points for prayer: (1) *There have been many conversions in the land since 1976*, but this has not resulted in the expected growth in the churches. The rate of backsliding is high. Pray for revival to stir the churches into new life. The dramatic impact in imaginative evangelism and church growth by "Vision de Futuro" is cause for much praise. Many believe that Argentina is on the threshold of great church growth; pray it into being. (2) *Areas of weakness in the Protestant churches are shared for prayerful concern.* a) Superficiality in conversions and inadequate follow up of those who profess faith in Christ. b) Divisiveness over personalities and doctrine — especially the charismatic issue. c) Insufficient leaders for the churches to be able both to teach the believers and mobilize them for evangelism. d) The high loss rate of believers' children to the world.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Beyond the sunset,
O blissful morning,
When with our Savior heav'n is begun.
Earth's toiling ended,
O glorious dawning,
Beyond the sunset, when day is gone.

Beyond the sunset,
no clouds will gather,
No storms will threaten,
no fears annoy;
O day of gladness, O day unending,
Beyond the sunset, eternal day.

WEEK THREE

—Wednesday—

Your love is indeed to me “better than life!” Life has no meaning without your love. I gladly enter the sanctuary of worship.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands” (Psa. 63:2-4). The heading on this psalm says: “A psalm of David. When he was in the desert of Judah.” David was in love with you. He missed being in your house. He missed most of all the beauty and wonder of your manifestation in the tabernacle. I am glad the temple was not yet built when this psalm was written — my body, your sanctuary today, is much more like the tabernacle than the temple of David’s son Solomon. If I cannot see you in the depths of my spirit I shall not see you at all.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. In this temporary tent I have indeed seen your power and glory. That you should live in me is one powerful thought — fact! What a glorious thing to be your child! Surely the love I see in you and the salvation you give is “better than life.” In many ways I can repeat with David: “My lips will glorify you.” I shall each day of my life attempt to see some other facet of your character and hold it up to you in adoration and praise. Can I promise that I will praise you as long as I live? Yes, yes, I want to commit all the days I have left to this best part of living. It is only because of your grace I can lift my hands to you in adoration! 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

I do not look often enough within my heart to behold your power and glory — I am too often looking for something else! Dear Lord, forgive me. Your love is better than life because it lasts longer than life —

because it has the only meaning for life — there is no meaning without your love. Why then am I so often occupied with meaningless pursuits? I have lifted up my hands to accomplish a thousand things — but it was not to thank you or praise you. Just now it is to ask your forgiveness. I am glad to claim your promise of cleanness and lift up my hands again in wonder and adoration.

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

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

HIS WORD

²²“The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. ²⁴So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’

²⁵“But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony.’ ” —Luke 16:22-24, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I do hesitate to enter fully into the meaning of this text — there is so much I want to absorb — and so much I do not know. There seems to be an obvious reference here to a conscious existence after death. The beggar’s death did not at all end his existence —

indeed it only started a whole life beyond death. There was evidently a funeral and burial ceremony for the rich man. Perhaps the body of Lazarus was thrown into the garbage dump called Gehenna. It is more than amazing that the spirit of the rich man went to the eternal corollary of the place where the body of the beggar was thrown.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. In death there is no loss of identity and only a very momentary loss of consciousness. How I do want to remember this as I enter the stream of life today. Abraham was "gathered unto his people" (Gen. 25:7) when he died. Such is a plain reference to the conscious existence of his ancestors in the spirit world. The beggar evidently shared a place with Abraham since he shared Abraham's faith. The awesome fact that the rich man lived outside the body in a place of torment is almost more than the mind can assimilate. I want to mark the facts here given: (1) He could see. (2) He could evaluate. (3) He could speak. (4) He could feel — pain or pleasure. He has been there, and is there now.

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you that I can actually look forward to death. (2) Thank you for a place at Abraham's side — since by faith I am his child (Gal. 3:25-27). (3) Thank you that no one can bury me — only my body. (4) Thank you that Jesus told this story — we wouldn't believe it from anyone else. (5) Thank you that I am a conscious spirit being that shares all the qualities of yourself — external, invisible — conscious. (6) Thank you I shall have all eternity to remember the value of the right choices of this life. (7) Thank you for a saviour who has removed all fear of death.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... I am in agony in this fire." What a thought this is! Since the rich man was suffering as a disembodied spirit being we can believe he is still in that same agony! It is helpful to remember that all men are created in the image or likeness of God — and "God is Spirit" (John 4:24). Since we share his nature we relate the capacity of suffering or joy to our spirits not our bodies. God feels without a physical body. All five senses are resident in the human spirit and operate through our bodies. The only thing that suffers from a burn in this life is our spirit. The damage to the body from a burn causes no problem when once the spirit leaves. We do not like to face the reality of this text. There have been many attempts but it still stands as an eternal warning.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

(1) When the time comes for me to die may I be as ready as Lazarus. (2) Keep me afraid of the awful results of dying outside your Son. (3) I am ready for the angel convoy anytime you want to send them. (4) How glad I am for the excitement I feel toward the beauties and adventures on the other side of my last heartbeat. (5) I am glad the exchange of conversation is between you and the lost — keep all these thoughts fresh in my mind today. (6) I want to remember that all my senses will be exercised in the world to come — how I do anticipate it!

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me here in preparation for over there: (1) "The time is coming for your exit of this body — but you will not die — only your body." (2) "I have the angels all ready for your coming into my presence." (3) "You will have no memory of the lost."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Argentina — Points for prayer: (1) *The "Allianza Christiana de las Iglesias Evangelicas" (ACIERA)* was formed in 1982 as a rallying point for Evangelicals. Its purpose is to promote evangelism and give a united stand for biblical truth nationally and internationally. Pray for a unity of believers that will speed the evangelization of Argentina and the world. (2) *The immigrant minority Churches* make up approximately 20% of the Protestants. They have attended to the spiritual needs of their own communities (such as the Italian, Danish, Dutch, Welsh, etc.) but have not evangelized the Spanish-speaking majority; though some, such as the Italian, Russian and Chilean believers, have evangelized their own groups. They are in decline, partly because their Spanish-speaking children do not feel at home in the churches.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Beyond the sunset's radiant glow
There is a brighter world, I know,
Where golden glories ever shine,
Beyond the tho't of day's decline.

Beyond the sunset's purple rim,
Beyond the twilight, deep and dim,
Where clouds and darkness never come,
My soul shall find its heav'nly home.

WEEK THREE

—Thursday—

Indeed — when compared to your greatness I am less than “a little bird” — I am a startled infant! But you love me and ask me to find shelter and protection. I gladly worship you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. I stay close to you; your right hand upholds me” (Psa. 63:7,8). I am surprised there are so many illusions or references made to yourself as a bird. The qualities of a mother bird and her young must have made a very strong impression on David. He must have been a very avid “bird watcher.” There is so much we can learn from your book of creation. The songs of contentment and protection issuing from the throats of the young birds are a beautiful parallel to the songs David sang (some of them we are reading today). The figure changes and David now speaks of you as a father who extends his hand in help and love to his child.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I am glad to see myself in some of the habits of the feathered creatures. As a large flock of birds passes overhead I have often wondered how anyone could separate one bird from the immense multitude I see. Yet your Son reminded us that he did not see a flock — but one bird at a time — and he knew each one. There have been billions of persons who have passed over the horizon of life. Not one of them without personal identification. How comforting to know you know all about us all the time. I want to move in close to you not only as a young bird to his mother, but as a child in need of the strong hand of his father.

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 will be a simple matter to confess my sin of failing to sing in the shadow of your wings. I have sung some brief songs in the shadow of some illustrious friend or “big man” of this life. I have even sung a

song or two in the shadow of some accomplishment I thought worth a song. But somehow I fail so often to recognize all help comes from above — even from yourself! I have far, far more reasons to sing in your presence than in the presence of anyone else! Forgive my blindness. I want to tune up right now! How good it is to draw near to you! What strength and help I immediately receive when I do! Forgive me for forgetting.

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.

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

HIS WORD

²⁵“But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. ²⁶And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’

²⁷“He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father’s house, ²⁸for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’

²⁹“Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’

³⁰“No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’

³¹“He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’ ” —Luke 16:25-31, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It does seem incredible that you would address the rich man as “son” — but you did! All the capacity of

consciousness was present when you spoke to this man. He could hear, he could speak, he could feel, he could remember. All the functions of his brain were in operation without his brain. This should teach us as clearly as anything can be taught that the brain is the instrument through which the spirit of man works while man is in his body — but he does not need his brain to sustain his consciousness and expression. There is no second chance! There is a gulf fixed — permanent — unchanging. There are no changes after death! There is no argument here or hereafter that is going to alter this fact.

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 one thing to relate all this record to someone else. It is something else to allow these words to live in your own heart. I want to do this. In this attempt I can express all the areas of worship: (1) I can confess I am unprepared without your grace and love and the blood of your Son. (2) I praise you from the deepest depths of my being for salvation from torment — or “agony in this flame.” (3) I can intercede for others and tell them of the One who can and will save them from hell to heaven. (4) I can thank you forever for the wonders of redeeming grace. (5) I can ask you to keep me living in the light of eternity. How poorly I have expressed all of this when I consider what is fully involved.

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 knowledge — your constant up-to-date knowledge of my need. (2) Thank you for the tremendous number of “good things” I have received in this life — not one of them apart from you. (3) Thank you for the word “comfort” which so well describes your relationship with me. (4) Thank you I need not trouble myself over your decisions in the actual world. (5) Thank you that all brothers of mankind can be saved by the provisions you have made — Moses and the prophets — and today my Lord and his apostles. (6) Thank you for the plain word from Jesus that spirits from the world of the dead are not coming to convince anyone of anything. (7) Thank you I am convinced by your messenger — help me to convince others.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.” Our Lord knew the hearts of all men so this statement is to be received at its face value. Would others be convinced? Perhaps, but their faith would be based on a one-time occurrence that could not help anyone else. The principle of continuing universal faith is found in the words: “they have Moses and the prophets — let them hear them.” Faith comes by hearing the word of the Lord. If one rejects

the evidence for the truthfulness of your word then all supernatural events will be suspect. The apriori assumption is that you are not speaking to men today through your word, indeed there are no supernatural occurrences of any kind. One rising from the dead could be explained away by naturalistic philosophy.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

There is so much in this test about which I want to pray: (1) I want to remember the good things of this lifetime before I leave it. (2) I want to attribute every good gift to you and thank you for it. (3) How I do look forward to the comfort of your presence in the world to come — help me to enjoy it now. (4) Dear Lord, I can bridge the chasm now — I want to do it for someone today. (5) While it is day give me the courage to warn people of “this place of torment.” (6) I want to appreciate the awesome task of being your trumpet of alarm. (7) Give me the same confidence your Son had in the convincing power of your word.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What are you saying to me personally through these verses? (1) “Repentance is the one large need of man.” (2) “Men will change their minds five seconds after death — but it will be too late.” (3) “My word, and Son will save men if they can only be told.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Australia — Points for prayer: (1) *Australia has become a very secular society*, and the same materialism, permissiveness and rejection of traditional authority characteristic of the whole Western World is just as discernible here. There has been a greater openness to the gospel since 1977, when Christians began taking the trouble to reach people on their ground. (2) *The decline in church attendance is causing deep concern* (1966 35%, 1976 18%). This decline is most noticeable in some of the larger and more traditional churches, but there is some growth in the more evangelical denominations, particularly in the various Pentecostal and charismatic churches and groups. Pray for revival.

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 THREE

—Friday—

Our sins do indeed “overwhelm us” — but your love and mercy is greater than all our sins. I bow in joy and wonder before you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Praise awaits you, (or befits you), O God, in Zion; to you our vows will be fulfilled. O you who hear prayer, to you all men will come. When we were overwhelmed by sins, you atoned for our transgressions” (Psa. 65:1-3). This is such a meaningful reference! I want to consider the qualities that appear right on the surface (1) You are worthy of praise — praise and yourself go together. It seems natural knowing who you are to lift up praise. (2) Such praise comes from those who know you and understand your purpose. Zion today is the body of your Son or his church. (Cf. Heb. 12:22-24). It is from the lips and hearts of those who respect and worship You this praise arises.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. (1) Have we taken up any promises — which we have turned into vows? It is to you we fail or fulfill. It is no light thing to promise and not fulfill when you are the one to whom or with whom the promise was made. (2) What high praise should arise from our hearts as we consider the many answers to prayer you have given us! Ultimately all men will come to give an account before you — just now it is a great comfort to know all we could and should come to you in recognition of your sovereign goodness. (3) “When men were overwhelmed by sins, you atoned for our transgressions.” Perhaps this should be the first reason for our praise. Had you not brought us back to yourself through the blood of the covenant we would have nothing for which to praise you.

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

I want to be able to say that in each day “praise awaits you” — but there have been days and days when this was not true. Dear Lord, I have improved

— but not like I want to — or as befits your wonderful self! I do know that I have consciously vowed to you — but I have made some very serious promises and they have failed of fulfillment. In this I ask your forgiveness. Such a sin will indeed overwhelm me if I cannot find atonement. Why am I so slow in carrying everything to you in prayer? As the song writer said “Oh what peace we often forfeit, oh what needless grief we bear — all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.” This I want to do for *this* day. I come to cast all my care upon you for I know you care for 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

Tis the blessed hour of prayer,
when our hearts lowly bend,
And we gather to Jesus,
our Savior and Friend;
If we come to Him in faith,
His protection to share,
What a balm for the weary
Oh how sweet to be there.

HIS WORD

17 Jesus said to his disciples: “Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come. ²It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin. ³So watch yourselves. “If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. ⁴If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.” —Luke 17:1-4, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

My Lord is discussing enticement to sin. This is

satan's work — but it will get into the fellowship of the saved. Even when we do not expect it — lo, a strong temptation presents itself before us. This is inevitable, but woe unto that man through which such enticement is presented! In the day when the church pressed ahead in meeting the needs of all the people. Ananias and Sapphira presented the enticement of gain through lying. When the number of disciples was multiplying exceedingly the enticement of complaining against the authority of God in the person of the apostles was offered. It would have been so much better for the whole body of believers in Jerusalem if Ananias and Sapphira had died before they tried to deceive. It would have been better if the murmurers had been sunk in the sea before they began their gossip campaign.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Who are the "little ones"? The new Christians! How very valuable they are to our Lord. How much care do we take with them? The stumbling is serious — a fall that results in loss. The "little ones" are led into sin and loss of relationship with you. The answer to this need is just as important. Instead of gossiping about our brother — or worse yet, to gloss over his sin and lead others into it. We should "rebuke him." This is indeed the last thing we even consider. This is the first thing our Lord considered. We have all known brothers who need such rebuke real often. Some brothers readily break down and repent. Then forgive him! The temptation is to harbor reservations and not freely forgive from the heart. Jesus says otherwise — even up to seven times!

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 "disciples" or "learners" who were anxious to be taught from our Lord. (2) Thank you for the warning of the pervasiveness of sin. (3) Thank you for making us responsible for the "causes for sin." (4) Thank you for loving the new Christians so much. (5) Thank you that you told us "brothers" would sin and cause sin. (6) Thank you for the plain instructions to rebuke our brother. (7) Thank you for repentance and its changing power.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him." Such a beautiful generous attitude! As we look back of these words to the one who spoke them we take great courage — because: he would not recommend to others what he himself would not give. If we sin against our Lord seven times in one day — and we surely do — and seven times we are truly sorry and want to change, he is ready to forgive us.

What causes such repeat performances in sinning? Can we chart the course of sin? It is an interesting fact that our Lord does not ask such a question. It would seem he believes love as expressed in forgiveness will do it all!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In this whole sin question I need to ask your help: (1) Keep me on guard to detect the occasions of sin before they arrive. (2) May I know people well enough to determine their weaknesses and protect them. (3) Give me the tender love for the new Christians I find in my Lord. (4) Give me the courage and humility necessary to rebuke my brother for his sin. (5) How important it is that my conduct be above reproach. (6) I want the same heart of forgiveness I see in you and your Son. (7) Teach me how to truly repent.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I am sure you can say something very special to me from this text: (1) "Things that cause people to sin can come from very unexpected places — "so watch." (2) "The external value of one person needs to be seen again and again." (3) "I will give you wisdom if you will open your mouth to rebuke your brother."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Australia — Points for prayer: (1) *The Evangelicals are strong in the Sydney Anglican diocese, and in the mainline churches, several have evangelical majorities while all of the rest have significant and active minorities. Pray that overall there might be a greater return to biblical truth and emphasis on evangelism and missions in the churches.* (2) *The missionary vision of many Australians has been encouraging. Pray that this vision may be shared so that missionary concern becomes a normal part of church life. Pray for the well-filled Bible schools and theological colleges which are training many for the mission field. Pray also for those who have gone out that all, whether in home or mission ministries, may have a heart for world evangelization.*

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels descending bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

WEEK THREE

—Saturday—

I believe you are in the process of delivering us — even now! You anticipate our problems — you love without thought of return. Gladly do I worship you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Come and see what God has done, how awesome his works in man’s behalf! He turned the sea into dry land, they passed through the river on foot — come, let us rejoice in him” (Psa. 66:5,6). I delight in recording these words because I know their setting or background. I want to first express my praise for your essential nature that you have such an interest in the history of man. Truly history is but a record of how you have dealt with man! All your works (whether we knew it or not) were for our benefit. The Red Sea became dry land and your children were delivered from the host of Pharaoh. Praise your name.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Indeed, indeed. I can call all heaven and earth to behold what you have done on my behalf! My experience is no different than ten-thousand others who have also discovered the wonders of your care. It would seem that many of those who left Egypt did so reluctantly and were ready to place a new construction on your deliverance. So it has been with me — I can explain or explain away your awesome works. I can rejoice in him or gripe about the wilderness — it all depends upon my heart. Just now it is turned to you in wonder and praise. May it ever be so. There are ten-thousand reasons for praising you. I want to remember that you are love and mercy. I then interpret your acts in this context.

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 truly easy to relate to the actions of Israel. They soon forgot all the wonder of the Red Sea — the joy at the Jordan was soon gone. How could they be so blind and hard-hearted? We need to ask ourselves the same questions. How could we forget so much so

soon? The sea of external death and judgment has parted and we walk through it to safety. The waters of death are parted and we are delivered through to Canaan’s side. We do rejoice together for a while. But how easy to forget! Forgive me. I need to come each day and look again — just as if I had never seen it before. I want a fresh look at Calvary and the open tomb! By this means I will remember. I can also stand by his table next Lord’s day and remember him.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

’Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to take Him at His word,
Just to rest upon His promise,
Just to know, “Thus saith the Lord.”

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

HIS WORD

⁵The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!”
⁶He replied, “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it will obey you. ⁷Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, ‘Come along now and sit down to eat’? ⁸Would he not rather say, ‘Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink’? ⁹Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? ¹⁰So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.’”
—Luke 17:5-10, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

When the apostles got a real clear view of the kind of

life our Lord wanted them to live they cried out "Increase our faith." They are saying in essence: "We cannot live like that — i.e., forgiving and being forgiven — guarding against all occasions of stumbling. To do that we will need much more faith. It is indeed interesting to hear the words of Jesus on this subject! He *did not* say "If your faith was *as small* as a grain of mustard seed." He used the mustard seed because life was in it to produce. Jesus was discussing the quality of faith — not its quantity. The mustard seed faith will produce because God's own life is in it.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How I need to hear what my Lord says about the servants: "We must constantly remind ourselves that whatever God cares to give us is up to him. There is nothing coming to us of good we deserve! We can take no credit for our world, our wisdom, our opportunities. We are indebted to Him for everything. Even our expressions of thanks to him adds to our indebtedness to him because even our thanks is borrowed. We would not even know how to say thanks as we should without his revealed word. . . . Only when we recognize he *gave* us our freedom to choose him or not shall we be good servants. When we have this perspective work in his vineyard is welcomed as a privilege and not as a necessary evil. Work ceases to be work and becomes a way to express appreciation when we acknowledge that we are unprofitable servants" (*The Gospel of Luke*, Paul T. Butler).

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 I can have the rich privilege of serving you. (2) Thank you for the unmerited invitations to gather around your table. (3) Thank you I can plow in your field. (4) Thank you I can look after some of your sheep. (5) Thank you you have cared enough about me to tell me what to do. (6) Thank you for grace upon grace given to this unworthy servant.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

" . . . We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty." How much lighter would be all our service if we but had such an attitude toward our service to our Lord. We have been bought with a price therefore our service is expected. When we consider the option of belonging to the evil one and serving him our duty seems a joy! The thought behind this expression is that whatever we do it would never repay the debt of love we owe. It is our love for him and what he has done for each of us that moves us into this freedom of service. How much such an attitude is needed each day of our life. Open my heart to receive it.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

If I could but adequately ask in this area I would serve you so much better: (1) Lead me into your field and to the plow of your choosing. (2) I do want to feed your sheep and care for the lambs. (3) I want to remember my place at your table is not at all deserved. (4) Guard me from always expecting thanks for my service. (5) Let me be an uncomplaining part of your whole work force. (6) I am indeed an unworthy servant since in many areas I have not even done what I was told. Forgive me.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As the apostles must have been somewhat shocked by the words of your Son may I receive these words: (1) "Your faith will increase as you listen more and more to my words." (2) "There is divine life, *my* life, in real faith." (3) "What I have commanded will be done."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Austria — Points for prayer: (1) *Austria is a mission field with only a small evangelical witness.* No more than 20% of the people are estimated to have ever had contact with the gospel. Many have had dealings with the occult, and the illegitimacy and suicide rates are among the highest in Europe. (2) *Many areas are without a permanent witness*, though this lack is beginning to be met. It is reckoned that only about 160 out of the 4,000 towns and villages have a group of believers that regularly meets together. There are still about 55 towns of over 5,000 people with no permanent witness. Most of the believers are found in the cities. Pray for a great harvest of souls. Pray especially for the 300,000 people in the easternmost province of Vorarlberg, reputedly the "hardest" area in the land.

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.

His name above all names shall stand,
Exalted more and more,
At God the Father's own right hand
Where angel hosts adore.

WEEK FOUR

—Sunday—

Our best intentions are full of selfishness — our desire for you is admixed with desire for personal gain — yet you love us and listen and answer. Receive my wonder and praise!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Come and listen, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me. I cried out to him with my mouth; his praise was on my tongue. If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; but God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer” (Psa. 66:16-19). Such beautiful qualities of yourself are seen in these verses: (1) You are an intelligent attentive divine person who gives ear to what we may say. (2) What you have done is an expression of love and it makes us glad to tell you about it — yea, to tell all the Christian world about it! (3) You allow us to address you directly — (through your Son) — our request came mingled with praise.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. If I cherish, i.e., love sin — any sin — you will not hear me — or anyone else. This is obvious — how can you answer someone who is in rebellion against you? This is not discussing sin per se it is discussing the love for and continuance in sin. David was not at all perfect — the Lord *did* hear his prayer — why? Because he did not cherish such sin — he hated it — abhorred it and wanted to be rid of it! He turned from it and forsook it. Such must be true in my heart. (5) You are pleased with the recital of what you have done for me. How tenderly good this is — allayed as it is with my own selfishness.

How do you personally relate to this quality of God? Speak it out or write it. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

I could call all “who fear God” and tell them all I have not done for you. It would be a simple matter to enumerate all my weaknesses and sins. But it is before you I must pour these out in confession — for your cleansing — as indeed I do — and accept the fact that I am whole — clean — pure! In a very real sense I am

kept pure by your mercy and grace and not my conduct. It is mercy that gives faith a voice. It is only because of Calvary I can come to you. It is Calvary that keeps me pure before you. I do not want to cherish any sin in my heart — indeed I do not! I hate sin and satan. 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, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high:
Hide me, O my Savior, hide,
Till the storm of life is past;
Safe unto the haven guide;
O receive my soul at last!

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

HIS WORD

11 Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ²This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair. ³So the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick.” ⁴When he heard this, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.” ⁵Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days. —*John 11:1-6, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

As we begin this beautiful record we do so with the thought of finding more here than ever before. Dear Lord, may it be so. John wants us to as much as

possible appreciate all who are involved in this incident. There are a good number of men named Lazarus — and women named Mary. John distinguishes these persons for us. He even does so with Mary in an incident out of context — Mary never anointed our Lord's feet until just before the triumphal entry (John 12; Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9). But we *must* know who she is so John identifies her. Lazarus and Martha can be unique as those who live in Bethany. Jesus felt more at home here than anywhere else except heaven.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Jesus was a long way from Bethany — and Lazarus was sick — very sick — sick unto death. A messenger was sent with a most urgent request that Jesus come and help. The answer Jesus gave the messengers was hardly expected! “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it.” Even though death was going to be a part of the sickness death would *not* be the ultimate end of it. The character of our Lord would be shown for them — i.e., his deity as never before through this sickness. How I need to stand real often before the open tomb of Lazarus!

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 personal love of Jesus. (2) Thank you that sickness is of concern to Jesus. (3) Thank you for the personal identity all of us sustain with Jesus. (4) Thank you that the sisters immediately thought of Jesus when they had a need. (6) Thank you for your planned delays in my life. (7) I want to be yielded to your power in my life.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Jesus loved Martha and her sister Mary and Lazarus.” He loved them enough to know what was for their good. He loved them enough to know that the glorification of God's Son was more important than their personal needs. These three persons were individuals to Jesus. He knew them better than they knew themselves. He was always ready to meet their deepest need. I believe my Lord is just that personal today. He is present — and as near as prayer. He might delay to better bring glory to himself. But he is there and he loves me. When I am ready to put his glory ahead of my personal desires so many of life's problems will disappear.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

(1) I want to be ready the next time I am sick to see it

as a means of glorifying your Son. (2) How I want to honor him in every way I can — open my eyes to identify ways to do this. (3) Keep me always aware that what we call “the end” can many times be only the beginning of a means of glorifying your Son. (4) May I yield my whole self to your will in sickness and in health. (5) I wonder what Jesus did in the two days of delay? Guard my heart from probing in areas where I have no place.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

(1) “Being well (or sick) is not the goal of life — to bring glory to my name is life's purpose.” (2) “I love both the sick and the well.” (3) “If I am not glorified through it, I am not in it.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Austria — Points for prayer: (1) *The land is nominally Roman Catholic*, but there is a marked drift away from the church in the cities. Nevertheless, people still fear to have too much contact with Evangelicals thinking them to be a sect. Pray that the barriers to the entry of the gospel into their hearts may be broken down. (2) *There is much formality and lifelessness in the Evangelical Lutheran and Reformed Churches*, and they are losing 2,300 people annually. There are a number of Bible-believing pastors, and their number is now being increased by graduates (15 in 1982) of the Free Evangelical Seminary in Basel, Switzerland. Pray for the Pastors' Prayer Fellowship, an evangelical fellowship within the Lutheran Church. Pray for a move of the Spirit of God in these churches that will make them a force for the evangelization of the land.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne
We pour our ardent pray'rs'
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts and our cares.

WEEK FOUR

—Monday—

We do indeed love you because you first loved us! My very soul hangs upon your mercy! Lead me today into the joy of forgiveness!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me” (Psa. 66:20). How very often have men wanted to lift their hearts and voices as they repeat these words of David? We praise you first of all — and perhaps most of all because you have not rejected our prayers. We lift up such inane and stupid words! We ourselves can see large gaps of ignorance and selfishness. We feel that most of our praying is praying amiss. At least at times this is true. We have no other words than praise and wonder when you accept and answer such feeble efforts.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. If there ever was a man who could identify with this verse it is myself! I have prayed for an out-pouring of your love into my heart and you heard my prayer. Praise your name. I have come to you for so many requests that I know sound ridiculous to you (they sound that way to me when I read them later), and yet you have not withheld your love. I am full of joy and praise because of your mercy. The thought of a positive answer is implicit in this verse. You have not rejected my prayers because you have heard them and answered them. You have more than adequate reasons for withholding your love — but you have not. 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

There is a call for my own responsibility in all your goodness — it does lead me to repentance and a renewing of my mind. There are people of my acquaintance who seem to be proud of their own ignorance — and even glory in it! Dear Lord, deliver me from such perverseness. It is my privilege to open your word — and search it night and day for your will in

my life. I believe when my mind, will, emotions and conscience are saturated with your word my prayers will be such as are heard. Forgive me for failing to so prepare my heart that my prayers can be in your will and therefore heard. In the midst of all this effort I am ignorance itself. It is your love that opens heaven’s doors. Praise your name!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

⁷Then he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.”

⁸“But Rabbi,” they said, “a short while ago the Jews tried to stone you, and yet you are going back there?”

⁹Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? A man who walks by day will not stumble, for he sees by this world’s light. ¹⁰It is when he walks by night that he stumbles, for he has no light.”

¹¹After he had said this, he went on to tell them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.”

¹²His disciples replied, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.” ¹³Jesus had been speaking of his death, but

his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

¹⁴So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, ¹⁵and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

¹⁶Then Thomas (called Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." — *John 11:7-16, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

This is one precious passage of scripture. I praise you for it! The fear of the apostles was real — and well-founded — their master was in danger of being stoned. He had blasphemed by calling himself the Son of God. The disciples could see the determination in his face — they could hear it in his voice. His answer is not easy to follow. It was no doubt much easier for them than for me. Is Jesus saying that while he has the light of day or one hour of opportunity he will avail himself of it? Is he using the twelve hours of the day to tell the disciples that the night of his own death has not yet arrived? We believe he is.

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 slow of heart were these men! But no slower than myself to believe all the scriptures have said about your dear Son. Did our Lord expect the disciples to understand his figurative use of the term "sleep" — we believe he did. What a beautiful way to describe the death of someone who has died in yourself! *Restful, awaiting the morning, peaceful* — nothing more to disturb. But this is only in reference to what we see, i.e., the body. In the other world to which they have gone they are: (1) *Active* in the joys of the Father's presence. (2) *Fulfilled* in the reunion with loved ones. (3) *Energetic* in the liberation from the flesh — to tire no 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 for the courage of my Lord. (2) Thank you for his divine foreknowledge. (3) Thank you for your gracious protection of our Lord from the hatred of the Jews. (4) Thank you for the light of "the other world" who has come into our lives. (5) Thank you that death of a Christian can be but a sleep for the body — an awakening of the Spirit in the world to come. (6) Thank you that Jesus spoke both so tenderly and yet plainly about death. (7) Thank you for the courage of Thomas who was willing to die with Jesus.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Then Thomas (called Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'" Are we to understand that this is the "doubting Thomas" of whom we have heard before? Yes, this

is the same man. Had we not better revise our estimate of him? He appears here as anything but a timid unsure follower. Perhaps his doubts were not a result of timidity — but disappointment. Be that as it may — and we simply do not have enough information to form a conclusive opinion. Here we are confronted with a man ready to die for his faith. He is also ready to enlist others in this commitment. We admire his willingness to give his life for his Lord. In another sense we are called by our Lord to do this very thing.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

(1) Jesus left a safe hidden place to enter a hot bed of hatred — am I as willing to suffer if need be? (2) I do need your wisdom to know your timing in my service for you. (3) How I want the tender personal concern I see in the actions and attitudes of my Lord. (4) Give me the patience and plainness of Jesus as I deal with other people. (5) How I want to be able to speak as naturally with you, (not without reverence) as the disciples did. (6) It is good sometimes for my Lord to delay one answer that he may give one better — how I want to know when this is happening — help me!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to my heart in these verses: (1) "Death is no problem at all with Jesus." (2) "I can as easily awaken the dead as you can awaken the sleeping." (3) "You can live for him and die in him."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Bahamas — Points for prayer: (1) *The Caribbean is a paradise gone wrong, and now an ideological war zone.* The potent mix of poverty, overpopulation and limited hopes for future development makes it a breeding ground for revolution for many newly independent, scarcely viable Caribbean states. (2) *The economic and political traumas of the past 15 years have shaken the Caribbean.* The unconverted have become more receptive and Christians more aware of their responsibilities to both evangelize and influence the standards of society. Praise God for this. Violent changes cannot be ruled out. The widening gap between the rich and poor in the region could be disastrous.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Do not wait until some deed of greatness you may do,
Do not wait to shed your light afar,
To the many duties ever near you now be true,
Brighten the corner where you are.

WEEK FOUR

—Tuesday—

There will be a time when all men of every nation shall praise you. I want to get in practice for that glorious time even right now in personal worship!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you. May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples justly and guide the nations of the earth”(Psa. 67:3,4). These are undeveloped, unappreciated, unappropriated qualities of yourself. But they are true and real acknowledged by men or not. You are true if every man is a liar. Praise your eternal reality! There does seem to be a cumulative expression of your approach to us: (1) We are given mercy. (2) We are then informed, “thy way is made known to us.” (3) We then praise you. Will there ever be a day when these words find literal fulfillment? Has there been a time when they were true? I ask full of poignant hope!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. There is a kingdom made up of all nations — in it the peoples are glad and praise you. In it they sing for joy. Over this kingdom you do rule the peoples justly and guide them with your word. I refer, of course, to the church of your Son. To the extent that I am ready to receive these words with meekness they become a reality in my life. If I want the “peoples” to praise you I must praise you. If I want the nations to be glad — where is my joy in your presence? If I long for your control of the nations how is it I wonder about your control in my own life? Dear Lord I see the answer within not without!

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

I accept the eternal principle: the more I praise you the more reasons I will have to praise you. It is like the circular action of the evaporation of water and the falling of the rain. How is it then that I do not spend most of my time lifting praise to you? Am I speaking

out of nonsensical enthusiasm or am I seeing life as you do? Forgive my carnal attitudes. The gladness and the songs of joy are a result of your *ruling!* How happy I have been when I yielded to your word in my conscience. Teach me to adopt such an attitude for a habit of life.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

True-hearted, whole-hearted, faithful and loyal,
King of our lives, by Thy grace we will be;
Under the standard exalted and royal,
Strong in Thy strength we will battle for Thee.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁷On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁹and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. ²⁰When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

²¹“Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”

²³Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

²⁴Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

²⁵Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; ²⁶and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

²⁷“Yes, Lord,” she told him, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.” — *John 11:17-27, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I sometimes wonder how I could be so exceedingly

privileged to be able to travel verse by verse through the account of your dear Son and tell you what this record means to me! What a joy it is! But, I am always frustrated at my inadequate expressions. I am more so before these words. I want to enter the company of the mourners ahead of the coming of Jesus. What were they saying? What questions were they asking? Someone came to report the coming of Jesus. He had travelled the usual route from Perea. How far away from her house did Martha go before she met your Son? To all these questions I know you have a totally accurate answer — I can only ask them — but it does help me to relate 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. Out comes the biggest little word in the human vocabulary: "If." How many things would have happened "if" — how many things would not have happened "if." Praise your name — there are no "ifs" with you! What a beautiful faith we see in the eyes and words of Martha — how longingly — lovingly she must have looked into the face of your Son. I have her kneeling before him in my imagination. Did Martha think that Jesus would ask for the resurrection of her brother? It would seem she didn't. At least she didn't answer our Lord's words, "Your brother will rise again," as if they related to the present. She just knew that when Jesus was present and handled a problem it would be all right! How I want this same kind of faith.

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 delays of Jesus — they are planned to confirm our faith. (2) Thank you for those who offer comfort — whoever they are. (3) Thank you that the presence of Jesus takes precedence over any other circumstance. (4) Thank you for the confidence in the power and love of Jesus seen in the words of Martha. (5) Thank you that Jesus did not rebuke her but sought to fan the flame of faith in her heart. (6) Thank you for the assurance that Lazarus was alive even though his body was dead. (7) Thank you that right now my Lord is the resurrection and life for me and all who believe.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

" . . . and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" Jesus was asking Martha on behalf of his brother Lazarus. Lazarus had lived and believed in Jesus as the Christ the Son of God. His body was dead but he was not. What reassurance this was to the heart of Martha. This promise is for "whosoever." It is interesting to notice that our faith does not stand on the exciting testimony of Lazarus — but upon the words of our Lord. Undoubtedly

Lazarus was asked what he saw and heard and felt while he was dead. We believe it is significant that there is no report. It is enough to accept the beautiful words of Jesus.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

(1) Help me to stand once again at the tomb and receive the full impact of this stupendous miracle! (2) Neither sister understood the actions of Jesus — we need not understand him to believe him. (3) I want to cease second guessing your actions in areas where I have no place. (4) Help me as I look beyond the grave. (5) Teach me over and again the meaning of these words: "whoever lives and believes in me will never die." (6) Lord, I believe, help my unbelief. (7) It is good to confess all alone to you that I do believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, . . . "grant me your forgiveness."

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I want to remember these words for the rest of my life: (1) "All men will rise again." (2) "I am the resurrection and life, for this day and every day." (3) "For your spirit — the real you — there is no death."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Bahrain — Points for prayer: (1) *Bahrain has provided a good base for Christian witness* since the beginning of this century. Pray for continued freedom for the tactful witness through expatriate Christians. Pray especially for the one Arab-speaking congregation of around 150 (40% Bahraini) and their witness to the many Muslims who have never been exposed to the gospel. (2) *There are a number of avenues for tactful witness* to the Arab majority. a) The expatriate Christians employed there — meeting in churches and house fellowships. b) The Christian missionaries serving in the country. c) The well-known American Mission Hospital which has a good reputation. d) The Christian bookstore with a high annual sale of Christian literature.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Sowing in the morning, sowing seeds of kindness,
Sowing in the noontide and the dewy eves;
Waiting for the harvest and the time of reaping,
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.

Sowing in the sunshine, sowing in the shadows,
Fearing neither clouds nor winter's chilling breeze;
By and by the harvest, and the labor ended,
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.

WEEK FOUR

—Wednesday—

I truly feel like a pilgrim in a foreign land — like a widow without a husband — like a child without a father. You are the answer to every one of these needs. I enter this place of worship to find your solutions!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families (or the desolate in a homeland) he leads forth the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land” (Psa. 68:5,6). Such blessed characteristics of yourself appear in these verses! We all at times feel deserted by everyone. Even our mothers and fathers have somehow forgotten us. You have not! All the strength and love found in the ideal father are found in yourself. *However* — we must establish an intimacy with you in prayer before this can be a reality to us. It would seem you have a particular interest in the needs of the widows. They do have a cause and you are ready to plead it.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. We do need to read these verses in the context of Israel who has left Egypt and finds itself in a desert. After a few years of wandering there are indeed the fatherless and widows. The qualities these orphan people found in you are a real source of strength to me: (1) A defender of those who cannot defend themselves. (2) Are we to understand that some who had lost their families in the Exodus have found them again! What joy there must have been in the camp! (3) They were once prisoners of Pharaoh they are now free — songs of praise and wonder come from their hearts through their lips.

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

I need more of the qualities I see in these verses. How much real personal interest have I found in my heart for the fatherless and the widows? Open my heart — expand my horizons — deepen my sympathies. I know some children who have no parents — I know

several women who have lost their husbands. Can I share the songs of those who have escaped the bondage of some long endured habit? Dear Lord, if life gets dry and dull it is because I have harbored rebellion. I want the liberty here described! Praise your name!

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

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.

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

HIS WORD

²⁸And after she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.” ²⁹When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

³²When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. ³⁴“Where have you laid him?” he asked.

“Come and see, Lord,” they replied.

³⁵Jesus wept.

³⁶Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”

³⁷But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?” —John 11:28-37, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Jesus was not to leave Mary in the home to grieve without him. We wondered when Martha left why Mary stayed. Did she feel, like some of us, that somehow her brother's death was her fault and she was afraid Jesus would not want to see her? The distortion of grief could easily have made her feel this way. When Martha whispered in her ear that Jesus had made a personal request for her presence — and perhaps added a word of comfort from the Lord she fled her loneliness to meet with him. How typical this is of our need for him. But the meeting was not to be as private as Mary would have wished. There were Jews who for whatever reason accompanied her to see what would happen.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. When I remember that my Lord is as much alive today as an omnipresent being as he was in Judea, I am moved deeply. My Lord shares today the grief and loss of those who leave this life for the next. Jesus *did not* see as other men did. He knew what he would do before he left Perea. He, however, also knew the sharp loss felt in the heart of Mary and Martha and some of the Jews. This knowledge moved him in spirit and troubled him. How exceedingly full of comfort is this thought to me! He does care and shares when my heart is broken and in need of healing! Jesus wanted to stand in the very presence of the problem that he might better confront and solve it. So he does just now.

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 personal interest Jesus had in the lives of all who followed him. (2) Thank you for the private intimate interest my Lord has in my life and needs. (3) Thank you that I can rise up quickly at any time and go to him who loves me so. (4) Thank you for the repeated mistake of misinterpreting our Lord's actions — it is so like us today. (5) Thank you Jesus was not ashamed to show his emotions in public. (6) Thank you Jesus did not display his emotions in public — it was spontaneous. (7) Thank you Jesus wanted to stand in the very presence of death to overcome it!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" Is it at all possible to share the emotions that swept over the heart of our Lord at this time? Perhaps not, but we can "weep with those who weep," there is not another divine capacity with more help in it. Even when our Lord came to the tomb to remove the cause of weeping he wept! If the Jews only knew the depth of his love they could have said

much more. How unselfish was the love — were the tears of my Lord! There were some who were not moved at all — Jesus did not act according to their schedule or place so they criticized him. In the face of deep human need how do we respond?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

(1) I am so glad for the designation: "The teacher" — I want to sit at your feet. (2) Help me to hasten to your side in every need. (3) Move me as my Lord was moved — so I can indeed weep with those who weep. (4) Guard my heart that I not decide what you can do and what you can't do in meeting my need. (5) Open my heart to learn all the lessons concerning death found in these verses. (6) May I welcome your decision if this day death should come. (7) May my public conduct perfectly match my private attitudes.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You are saying much in these verses: (1) "The teacher is here." (2) "I am touched by the infirmities of men today." (3) "I am always on time — if men can see it or not."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Bangladesh — Points for prayer: (1) *Bangladesh has been a hard field for the gospel.* Revulsion at the cruelty of Pakistan's repression in the name of Islam in the 1971 civil war temporarily weakened Bangladeshi loyalty to Islam. These influences are now lessening, and many obstacles are being raised to hinder the entry and activities of missionaries. Yet the vast majority of the population has never once heard the gospel. Pray for the hold of the powers of darkness on the land to be loosed. Pray for a stable, moderate government. (2) *There are signs of an abundant harvest to be reaped. Pray it in!* a) There are many aid programmes through Christian relief organizations. The intermission "HEED" Bangladesh, *WV, TEAR Fund*, etc. have opened hearts to the Christian message. Pray for eternal fruit among tribals, Hindus and Muslims. These programs have been under increasing attack by enemies of the gospel.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

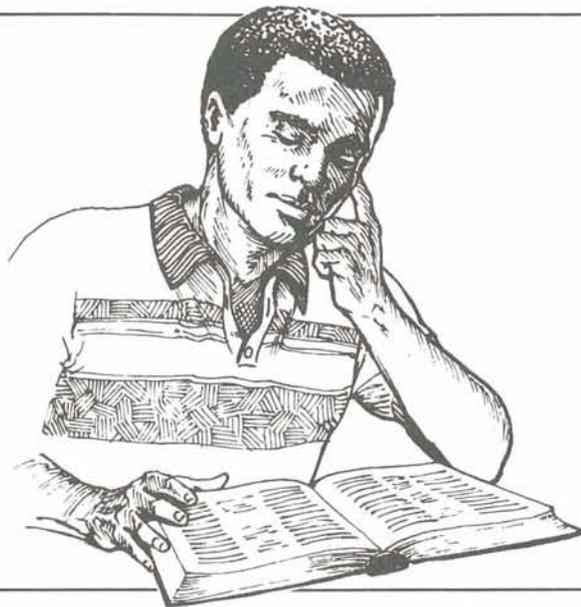
Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;
Holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty!
God over all, and blest eternally.

Holy, holy, holy! all the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns
Around the crystal sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
Who wast, and art, and evermore shall be.

WEEK FOUR

—Thursday—

You are only awesome to those capable of awe — your strength and power are only real to those who know the One who has such power and strength. It is my privilege to find this experientially true right now!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“You are awesome, O God, in your sanctuary; the God of Israel gives power and strength to his people. Praise be to God” (Psa. 68:35). Of what sanctuary is the psalmist singing? Was it the tabernacle? The temple? The effulgent brightness of the Shekinah would indeed be awesome as seen between the wings of the cherubim as they knelt on the mercy seat. The fire and smoke that filled the holy place in the temple must have moved the priest with fear. Today we could look up into the canopy of space and consider the firmament as your sanctuary. We could agree with the psalmist: “You are awesome, O God, in your sanctuary.” The heavens are declaring your power and strength. However such power and strength are available for us — this is one overwhelming thought — we are prostrate before you in wonder and awe.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. How I would like to be able to relate back and share the feelings of the writer when he penned these words. Is David saying that because he worshiped in the sanctuary he was able to relate your power and strength flow? As for me, this is altogether true! It is only when I have had a solid time of worship I am able to see how you help me and empower me in the routine of life. You are indeed awesome, but until I renew this fact I walk in my own strength.

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

I do believe that if you but drew the curtain of the world back and let us see eternity and infinity as it really is we would all be full of awe. We would all declare with real meaning. “You are awesome, O God, in your sanctuary. . . .” But then we would not be living by faith — but by sight. We would also soon forget what we saw and would seek another sign to

titillate our emotions. If we were denied such an experience we would likely reject our relationship with you. I believe our Saviour’s words “blessed are they who having not seen yet believe” (John 20:28) refers to a greater blessing for those who live by faith until we all live in eternity in your new heaven and new earth.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;
Holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty!
God over all, and blest eternally.

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

HIS WORD

³⁹“Take away the stone,” he said.

“But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”

⁴⁰Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?”

⁴¹So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴²I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

⁴³When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

⁴⁵Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him. ⁴⁶But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. —John 11:39-46, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

The reason for our Lord's concern here was different than before. In this case it was because of the statement of disbelief. It would seem the friends of Jesus were those with above average means. Only those who could afford it would have a tomb cut out of the side of a hill. We remember the tomb of our Lord which was owned by Joseph of Arimathea. Even as his order to take away the stone is being carried out Martha is remonstrating with him: "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days." Poor woman! This was the very point of all the delay. How poignant are the words of Jesus: "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Since my Lord's present work is to make intercession for me I want to learn much in the prayer he prayed for others. How brief and to the point — and yet how full of meaning. I want to look at each word and each phrase: (1) There is immediate identity with you as "Father." (2) Gratitude for your involvement in his life. (3) Confidence that you have already heard his prayer about his coming resurrection. (4) Continuing confidence in your continual presence with him. (5) A candid admission that this prayer was prayed to identify him before the crowd as your Son and their Lord. The loud voice he used in calling Lazarus back from the unseen world was also for the crowd's benefit.

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 my Lord was never apathetic or indifferent to the needs of men and women. (2) Thank you for the physical aspects of this miracle — they give great credibility to it. (3) Thank you for the very natural response of Martha to the opening of the tomb. (4) Thank you for the revelation of your church by this resurrection. (5) Thank you for the example of prayer my Lord gave me. (6) Thank you for that wonderful loud voice: "Lazarus, come out!" (7) Thank you for the simple yet astounding words: "The dead man came out, . . ."

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Jesus said to them, Take off the grave clothes and let him go." How many sermons and lessons have been brought from these beautiful words? We are all too prone to live in the grave clothes of the old life. Lazarus had only lived four days in such wrappings — when men have been years and years in such garments it is easy to see why the words of Jesus are necessary. How challenging is the command,

" . . . let him go!" There are no limitations to the new life — i.e., in creative expression for our Lord. I believe Jesus says this to every newly raised person. He liberates them to serve and grow. The sky is the limit — "Let him go!"

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

(1) Move me as deeply as my Lord for the multitudes still deal in trespasses and sins. (2) I want to hear the preparatory words of Jesus: "Take away the stone" — what stone must be removed before the newness of life can express itself through me? (3) Give me the confidence and patience of my Lord in the face of trying circumstances. (4) Teach me to pray like my Lord — just now. Right here. (5) Is there someone today who will hear the cry of the good news and come forth to new life — lead me to him.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me. (1) "If you believe you will see my glory too." (2) "My Son did this for a purpose; the end was not in raising Lazarus." (3) "Continue to walk in your newness of life."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Bangladesh — Point for prayer: (1) *Unreached peoples:* a) *Hindus* — All the higher castes are unreached; of the 29 lower castes, there are four which have shown some response to the gospel (over 2% Christian), in six others there are a few Christians; but in the other 11 there are hardly any. Pray that Hindus may be won in large numbers — they feel insecure as a minority in a Muslim country. b) *The Muslim majority* has hardly been touched by the gospel, most evangelism is being directed to the religious minorities. Only 25 full-time Christian workers are giving the major part of their time to evangelize these 82 million people. c) *The Biharis* are Muslims who are unwelcome in Bangladesh but are not allowed to return to India or go to Pakistan. They live in large refugee camps. Pray that their dilemma may bring an openness to the gospel.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

My father is rich in houses and lands,
He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands!
Of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold,
His coffers are full, — He has riches untold.

My Father's own Son, the Savior of men,
Once wandered o'er earth as the poorest of them;
But now He is reigning in glory on high,
Preparing a place for the sweet by and by.

WEEK FOUR

—Friday—

Singing is such a time of refreshing! I do need such an experience real often! Today I gladly accept your transformation by the renewing of my mind!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I will praise God’s name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving. This will please the Lord more than an ox, more than a bull with its horns and hoofs” (Psa. 69:30,31). It is a task I enjoy, i.e., lifting the qualities of yourself in song! There are so many songs that extol one or several of your attributes. I never tire of singing them. Perhaps the one characteristic of yourself that stands out above all others is that you are a giver. The gifts of your grace flow in abundance. This being so the one response I must give above all others is thanksgiving. It is remarkable to me that I can bring pleasure to you in this response — but I am delighted it is so.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

I hope I have represented the basic response of man to your nature and goodness. It is my own personal reaction to yourself I want to now lift before you. Perhaps my expression would be a song of thanksgiving. “For the beauty of the earth, for the glory of the skies, for the love which from our birth over and around us lies, Lord of all to thee we raise this our sacrifice of praise — or this our hymn of grateful praise. For the wonder of each hour of the day and of the night, hill and vale, and tree and flower, sun and moon, and stars of night, Lord of all to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.” These lovely words of the song writer I want to make mine in expression of praise.

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

Then there are the times when I forget all about you! Horrors — could it be? You know it can. Forgive me! But, why? Why am I so blind? I could not and would not do it of myself. I do indeed have some help. The

evil one is there. Satan — the deceiver has spoken to me — i.e., my spirit. There is the environment perfectly suited (by him) to his work. There are influences constantly present to turn my thought away from you. Dear Lord in all these areas — I resist him. I draw near to you. I open my mind to you. Forgive me. I want to praise you today far more than only this once. Help me!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

O to be like Thee! blessed Redeemer:
This is my constant longing and prayer;
Gladly I’ll forfeit all of earth’s treasures,
Jesus, Thy perfect likeness to wear.

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

HIS WORD

⁴⁷Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin.

“What are we accomplishing?” they asked. “Here is this man performing many miraculous signs. ⁴⁸If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”

⁴⁹Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, “You know nothing at all!

⁵⁰You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish.”

⁵¹He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, ⁵²and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. ⁵³So from that day on they plotted to take his life.

⁵⁴Therefore Jesus no longer moved about publicly among the Jews. Instead he withdrew to a region near the desert, to a village called Ephraim, where he stayed with his disciples.

⁵⁵When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, many went up from the country to Jerusalem for their

ceremonial cleansing before the Passover. ⁵⁶They kept looking for Jesus, and as they stood in the temple area they asked one another, "What do you think? Isn't he coming to the Feast at all?" ⁵⁷But the chief priests and Pharisees had given orders that if anyone found out where Jesus was, he should report it so that they might arrest him. — *John 11:47-57, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

The enemies of our Lord were worried! Something must be done. How remarkable it is that none of them even thought of acknowledging him as their Messiah and asking Jesus what to do. There was not the slightest hint in their words that Jesus had not performed "many miraculous signs." In particular it was raising Lazarus from the dead that precipitated all this excitement. It was not a matter of *your* work through *your* Son it was *their* temple and *their* nation. *Their* job — *their* security was at stake. There is such a remarkable statement made here concerning Caiaphas it is difficult for me to assimilate — he is making a prophecy concerning my Lord's death.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Jesus is to die for the nation of Israel — but also for the consolidating of the Jews who were scattered. How to reconcile your plan with the plots of men is always a problem. It is best left in your hands — since it is indeed in your area of work — it is not my work — but yours. The shadows are lengthening — the sky is darker. My Lord must now leave Jerusalem lest he die prematurely. We have a difficult time locating Ephraim — it is just as well, our Lord wanted his whereabouts kept secret. It is almost time for the Passover — the last Passover our Lord will eat. The city of Jerusalem was full of those who came to wash in the holy water of the holy city.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you that Jesus caused such a stir that the supreme court called a special session. (2) Thank you for this insight into just how blind and deaf some people can be to the deity of your son. (3) Thank you for this example of what happens when men get worried about power and position. (4) Thank you for the prophetic gift that operated in the most unlikely circumstances. (5) Thank you for the wonderful power in the death of your Son — not only to draw the nation of Israel together — but all the nations of the world. (6) Thank you that no plot of men is at all adequate to trap my Lord. (7) Thank you for the deep thoughts that must have filled the hearts of Mary, Martha and Lazarus.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... it is better for you that one man die for the

people than that the whole nation perish." Was there no option? Could not the whole nation accept their Messiah and yet remain under Roman rule? We can only imagine the endless discussions that were carried on in the Sanhedrin as to the identity of their Messiah. They were unanimously agreed the Messiah would not be like Jesus. The source of authority was not the Scriptures but their traditions. How much better it was that he die for the nation (yea, the world) has never been stated. Caiaphas was right but he really knew not what he said. The paradox of the cross will forever stand before us a real source of wonder.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

(1) Guard my thoughts that I do not become the source of authority. (2) May I look again back to the signs to the one who did them. (3) I believe — increase and deepen my faith. (4) Move freely, dear Lord among all the changing affairs of this day. (5) In whose home did he stay in Ephraim? Welcome to my home — keep me aware of your presence. (6) There were no plots of men not known to you — may I believe this for today.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me. (1) "My Son must be either stopped or accepted — i.e., when his message is known." (2) "It was eternally better that one man die for the people than that the whole world be lost." (3) "There is no contradiction in the free-will of man and the foreknowledge of myself — there are factors you do not understand."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Bangladesh — Points for prayer: (1) *Missions* have been welcomed for their social uplift programmes, hence the emphasis on institutions and aid programmes. Since 1980, increased limitations have been placed on missionaries with all projects, plans, and finances needing government approval and strict quota ceilings for the number of missionaries allowed. Yet reinforcements are needed. Pray for visas, patience with red tape, and strategic usefulness for the small missionary force in a pressurized situation. (2) *Christian literature is in great demand because of:* a) Mass distribution by *Young Christian Workers, EHC, UBS, etc.* b) *Bible Correspondence Courses* run by *ICF* and others. c) A great yearning in the hearts of many for viable spiritual answers.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Sinners Jesus will receive;
Sound this word of grace to all
Who the heav'nly pathway leave,
All who linger, all who fall.

WEEK FOUR

—Saturday—

What a joy it is to run into your “city of refuge” even the closet of prayer! I am hiding and being restored in you! When the storm is over awaken me to “the newness of life.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“In you, O Lord, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame. Rescue me and deliver me in your righteousness; turn your ear to me and save me” (Psa. 71:1,2). How often did David express this thought? I have not counted them but there are many examples. How is it that such expressions have been preserved all these years? Is it not that we are all daily in need of you as our refuge. Each day we feel very vulnerable. Very often we need a delivery — we have no righteousness of our own. Even today I will cry out to you in my need: “save me!” How wonderfully sufficient you are!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. What I have said for myself I have said for all. The powerful qualities of: (1) protection and security; (2) acceptance and self-esteem; (3) rescue and deliverance; (4) imputed righteousness; and audience to our prayers; (5) grace and salvation are needed by all men. Most especially do I want to rejoice in you. How open I am to Satan you alone can know. What seems to me as a safe retreat might be the very lair of the enemy. Dear Lord, how I do need your protection and security. If it were left up to me I could never come before you and ask on my own merit to be accepted by you. My self-esteem is nil! But you have accepted me in him — praise your name! What comfort!

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 easy it is to forget the bounties of your goodness. I want to list seven of them and freely confess my sin in every area: (1) *Protection* — I step outside the refuge — why? No matter, I am guilty. (2) *Security* — you alone are my security. Such is

threatened by my indifference. (3) *Self-esteem* — I can accept myself only because you accept me. (4) *Rescue* — why do I need this? Because I am the constant needy person, I gladly reach out to you. (5) *Deliverance* — praise God I am glad it is so — I have found it so. (6) *Imputed righteousness* — how often do we attempt to substitute our goodness for his righteousness — it will not suffice! (7) *An audience with you for prayer time* — I do want to make this much more often.

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 floods my soul for Jesus has saved me,
Freed me from sin that long had enslaved me,
His precious blood He gave to redeem,
Now I belong to Him.

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

HIS WORD

¹¹Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. ¹²As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance ¹³and called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!” ¹⁴When he saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed. ¹⁵One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. ¹⁶He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him — and he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?” —Luke 17:11-19, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

As my Lord begins his last visit to Jerusalem I want to walk with him. He moved from Bethany up to the

border of Samaria and Galilee — doubtless to join a caravan on their way to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. On the edge of a village — standing apart from the crowd were ten lepers. The disease of these men was evidently a scaly infection that made them unclean in the eyes of the priests. I do wonder how these few men knew Jesus. My Lord challenged them — upon their loud cry for mercy he issued a command. It was in the act of obedience they were cleansed. This seems most significant 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. On their way they were made whole. The nine Jews had good reason to follow through on the command. They would not be admitted to the temple for worship at the passover until they had been pronounced clean by the priests and had completed the ceremony for cleansing! But the Samaritan had nothing to gain by going to the priests. He went none-the-less but not before he turned back and with a loud voice praised God as he fell at Jesus' feet. Why didn't the nine return? Did they imagine their leprosy would have returned if they did not complete the command of Jesus? We know whatever excuse they might offer was not acceptable to our Lord. He was disappointed.

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 courage of these men to call out — a good example for us. (2) Thank you for reminding me that misery loves company — there are many miserable lonely people in the world today. (3) Thank you that my Lord can heal with but a word. (4) Thank you Jesus did not place any conditions on the healing except obedience — this presupposed faith. (5) Thank you that Jesus healed nine men he knew would be ungrateful. (6) Thank you Jesus did not require gratitude for the healing — it was spontaneous or not at all. (7) Thank you that the one who had the least thanked him the most.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" ". . . arise and go; your faith has made you well." Suddenly this Samaritan knew two things: (1) he knew he was healed; (2) he knew Jesus was the Messiah the Son of God. His faith was not long in coming! His faith made him well in more ways than one. His healing was of his spirit as well as his body. The nine were cleansed on the outside — but not on the inside. If we have no hope in Christ in this life — i.e., this physical world we are to be pitied. Unless our Lord heals our hearts we are not whole.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

(1) My Lord yet travels the highway of life on the border between here and there — "Jesus, master, have mercy on me." (2) I have problems no man can solve — "Jesus, master, heal me." (3) May I find your answer as I obey you — I know I will. (4) How I need to develop the beautiful quality of gratitude. (5) Open the eyes of my heart to see your Son as the source of wholeness in every area of life. (6) I want to begin this day in praise and thanksgiving — assist me my Lord to do so.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me. (1) "All men are in need of healing — you are the means I have to do it." (2) "I am always your master." (3) "Gratitude is the one quality I seek most."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Bangladesh — Points for prayer: (1) *The Scriptures* — distribution of portions and sales of Bibles has risen year by year. Pray specifically for: a) The Bible Society and its extensive ministry of production and distribution of Scriptures. The Bible is in 13 languages and the NT in three. b) The 20 full-time Bible col-porteurs. Only 1,800 Bibles were distributed in 1983; Bibles are in short supply due to import restrictions. c) The wise distribution of the NT for Muslims — 60,000 distributed since 1981. It is well received by Muslims, but there is opposition from many churches. Pray for either permission to import more, or for the printing of a new edition in Bangladesh. Pray for the translation of the OT now in progress. d) The translation of the Bible into tribal languages — at least six, and possibly nine, translations are needed; work is in progress in three of these.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Christ, the Lord, is ris'n today, Hallelujah!
Sons of men and angels say, Hallelujah!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Hallelujah!
Sing, ye heav'ns; thou earth, reply, Hallelujah!

Love's redeeming work is done, Hallelujah!
Fought the fight, the battle won, Hallelujah!
Lo! our sun's eclipse is o'er, Hallelujah!
Lo! he sets in blood no more, Hallelujah!

WEEK FIVE

—Sunday—

What powerful and beautiful pictures of yourself: “my rock” — “my refuge” — “my hope” — “my sovereign” — “my confidence” — I bow before you in wonder and thanksgiving.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Be my rock of refuge, to which I can always go; . . . For you have been my hope, O Sovereign Lord, my confidence since my youth. . . . My mouth is filled with your praise, declaring your splendor all day long” (Psa. 71:3a,5,8). How delightful to be again in worship to you! Here are several attributes of yourself I have lifted from your word. I want to hold them up before you in praise: (1) “My rock of refuge” — lifted up above the sordid and ordinary — a view of life from your perspective — praise your name. (2) You never tire of my coming to you. Several times this day I can repair to my rock and be refreshed and renewed. (3) You are a Sovereign Lord in whom I can place my total hope — indeed I do!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Whereas the thoughts above are personal I believe any man or woman could take my place and say the same things. Just here I do want to personally lift up praise to you! Since that first day when I full of trembling came before you you have been my confidence. Dear Lord, my confidence was not in myself — you have given me the deep strong assurance of spirit I find in myself. (Not always for my faith is not as constant as yourself.) Dear Lord, how glad I am to so acknowledge you. I promise just here that today my mouth will indeed be full of your “splendor.” There are so many who need to hear it.

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

In the five areas of praise are five areas of need: (1) How is it at times I feel deserted and alone? I have forgotten the high rock of refuge — oh, what a loss! (2) Why do I imagine you have run out of patience and will not hear me? If I am ready to repent — (and

dear Lord, you know I am) you are ready to forgive. (3) I am often frustrated and confused in the midst of change — have I forgotten my Sovereign Lord in whom I can place my hope? Forgive me! (4) I hasten back to my first love — I return to the confidence in you — not in myself! (5) “The early dew of the morning is often gone at noon” — not today! Forgive me and keep me tender-hearted.

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, Thy dying love
Thou gavest me;
Nor should I aught withhold,
Dear Lord, from Thee:
In love my soul would bow,
My heart fulfill its vow,
Some off’ring bring Thee now,
Something for Thee.

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

HIS WORD

18 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. ²He said: “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. ³And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’

⁴“For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care about men, ⁵yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually wear me out with her coming!’”

⁶And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? ⁸I tell

you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" —*Luke 18:1-8, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I do indeed want to understand fully what you are saying to me in this text. It is clear — Jesus told us what he wants to teach — “men (you and me) ought always pray and not give up.” Whatever else we learn if we do not learn to pray and not give up we have not learned what Jesus taught. It is a parable but the point has already been given. Dear Lord, I want to learn. Teach me. My Lord is telling me of the kind of society in which I will find myself. Just like the unjust judge. He is representative. Not of yourself but of society. Indeed the world in which I live is much like Sodom or in the days of Noah. What am I to do? I am to pray without ceasing — I am to be just like the widow.

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 often when I finish the above section have I asked myself — “Have I represented what you said?” Dear Lord, I surely tried. In this time before you I apply your word like a sword to my heart — like a mirror before my face. Why do you often delay your answers? Is it because you do not care? No, no, no! It is because I am not yet ready to receive your answer. OK, you have answered and I have been so dull I did not even know it. OK, you are answering in installments. At any juncture I *know* you are eager to answer me “speedily” — yea, “quickly” — but your speed is not mine. As compared with ten million years if you delayed a lifetime your answer came in the same second I made the request.

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 my Lord knew the needs of his disciples and moved to meet them. (2) Thank you it is possible to “always pray.” (3) Thank you you are letting us know more and more what this parable means. (4) Thank you that you decide when and where and how our requests shall be answered. (5) Thank you for the promise of ultimate justice in all of life. (6) Thank you for the promise that by your estimate you will *not* keep putting us off. (7) Thank you for the warning that your Son is coming and does not expect to find a large amount of “the faith” on the earth.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“ . . . when the Son of man comes, will he find (the) faith on the earth?” Dear Lord, I want to say, “yes, yes,” but if you should come now there would be

many more who have never heard your name alive upon this earth than were living when your Son was here almost two thousand years ago. Perhaps “the faith” has never become a reality to many, many of your followers. I am sure it hasn’t. What is the solution? You have left it with us: “we should always pray (worship) and not give up.” It is the integrating of what we believe into our very natures that will make the difference. Such will produce a faith that works — is alive — fruitful, productive.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

(1) I do so long to learn how to “always pray and not give up.” (2) Teach me true reverence. (3) Deepen my care for the needs of men. (4) Dear Lord I know your delay in answering is itself an answer — teach me what that answer means. (5) I am learning to worship you — but I have so much more to learn — keep me humble minded. (6) Should you come today may you find your truth in my heart. (7) Dear Lord, come today!

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in these words: (1) “I will see that all men everywhere of all time will get complete justice.” (2) “Your task is to keep the faith.” (3) “I will come and get you or come myself in just a few short years.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Barbados — Point for prayer: *Christian literature.* High literacy levels and lack of reading materials at affordable prices is a challenge. The enormous problems for publishing and distributing literature are created by the difficulties of communication, inflation and lack of foreign exchange in the widely scattered islands. CLC’s ministry has been unique. Thirty-eight workers in eight nations run bookstores, bookmobiles, correspondence courses, and publish the successful *Caribbean Challenge*, an evangelistic/teaching magazine with a 30,000 circulation in 29 countries. The latter is based in Jamaica. Pray for an increase in sales, literature workers and fruit from this ministry.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Thou, my everlasting portion,
More than friend or life to me;
All along my pilgrim journey,
Savior, let me walk with Thee.

Not for ease or worldly pleasure,
Not for fame my prayer shall be;
Gladly will I toil and suffer,
Only let me walk with Thee.

WEEK FIVE

—Monday—

Truly, truly, “my hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.” Teach me while in the closet of prayer how to tell others of your righteousness.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“But as for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more. My mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long, though I know not its measure” (Psa. 71:14,15). When one reaches a milestone called a birthday — and the number has past the three score the hope of accomplishing this task or that one seems much more illusive. Dear Lord, such is not my thoughts — I could wish such would not be the thoughts of any of your senior saints. We “will always have hope” in you! There is the bright wonderful hope of the life and world to come. But there is hope in all we do and are as your child.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Behind our expression of praise is the one for whom all praise is due — i.e., the reason for praise. The more I know you the more I want to lift my heart in words of joy and wonder. The investment I have made in the lives of men and women as I have taught them these past forty years provides me with a hope far beyond three score and ten years. I tell you this not because you do not know it, but to reinforce it in my own heart. Dear Lord, there is nothing in this life I need more than *hope*. The books you have enabled us to publish and distribute give me great hope. Long after I am in your eternal home men and women will read and learn of you and your love.

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

The psalmist’s words about my inability to truly measure your righteousness (or my sinfulness) is so eternally true! How much selfishness and pride are admired in all our efforts to serve you is somewhat evident to others and ourselves. To you it must be one

large pile of stubble! How I want to be taught genuine humility! Even in the expression I wonder about the answer. Dear Lord, as you alone know my heart teach me! How true it is that no man can know his own heart! I am glad to give it to someone who knows all about me — and yet loves me and because I do want to do your will, accepts me. (Not because I do your will or even repent adequately.)

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

Be not dismayed whate’er betide,
God will take care of you;
Beneath His wings of love abide,
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

⁹To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like all other men — robbers, evildoers, adulterers — or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

¹³“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

¹⁴“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” —Luke 18:9-14, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How wonderfully fresh and new is your word! Each

day I find it so! Can there be any among us today who are confident of their own righteousness and look down on everyone else? Do not even now look around to find a culprit — he is nearer than you think! There were some outstanding glaring examples in the day of our Lord — but the parable was taught to the disciples of Jesus. (Isn't that what we call ourselves?) Dear Lord I want to read these words in your sacred presence! Both men felt a need for prayer. I am here before you for the same reason. I want to learn — teach me!

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 prayer — my worship, is monologue? I.e., talking with and about myself? It might come as a gigantic shock to find out! I am glad you are omniscient and omnipresent and therefore are present to know everything even if it isn't a prayer. Dear Lord, purify my heart and mouth! Five times the religious man called a Pharisee used the personal pronoun. He even thanked you that he was scorning the publican. As Paul Butler says, " Rabbi Simeon ben Jochai said: 'If there are only two righteous men in the world, I and my son are these two; if there is only one, I am he.' " We are repulsed by such obvious stupid pride — dear Lord, have mercy on us lest we thank you we are not like this man.

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 taught me here not to be at all confident of my righteousness — but very confident of yours. (2) Thank you that I have been taught here to not look down on any man. (3) Thank you for placing acts of worship in the proper perspective. (4) Thank you my dear Lord bridges the distance I feel when I stand in your presence. (5) Thank you for the beauty of justification out of your mercy. (6) Thank you for the warning of "whoever exalts himself will be humbled." (7) Thank you for the ability to humble myself.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

" . . . everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." For every man, in every situation there *is* a choice. We can choose to be humble minded in any and every circumstance. Or we can choose to exalt ourselves. The choice is a subtle one for the Christian — i.e., to exalt himself. He wants to do it in a "humble way." But it is a choice, and he knows it, or he would not be capable or worthy of blame. There are times, particularly in the Christian community, when the humbling process happens in this life, but the important point made by our Lord is that one day *all* who exalt themselves will be humbled before Him. I want to

humble myself now!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

There is surely no parable that speaks more to the need of my heart: (1) For this day may I look up to you before I look on any man. (2) How glad I am for the habit of personal worship — protect me from any interruptions. (3) Show me my sin, but more importantly: show me how to repent of it. (4) Give me the courage to turn all judgment over to you. (4) Keep me aware that even holy habits can become dead. (5) Speak to the areas of *my* pride. (6) God, be merciful to me a sinner. (7) I claim your justification — out of your mercy.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me: (1) "I must repeat it for your hard heart, everyone who exalts himself *will be* humbled." (2) "I must also tell you, everyone who humbles himself — and you *can do it* — will be exalted." (3) "I am not necessarily promising you exaltation before your peers."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Belgium — Points for prayer: (1) *Belgium is one of the less evangelized lands of the world.* Only 60 km. from the coast of England is a land that is as much a mission field as India, for the proportion of Evangelicals to the population is about the same. The former colony, the Belgian Congo (now Zaire), has nearly 200 times as many evangelical believers as Belgium itself. (2) *The majority of the people are Roman Catholic*, though few are ardent. The Roman Catholic Church is losing much of its influence — dramatically illustrated when the *GEM* acquired one of the largest Jesuit colleges in Europe as a new and larger base for the Belgian Bible Institute. Vatican II and the theological turmoil within the RC Church have brought a new spirit of enquiry to the people, but all too often the sects gain attention with their offer of salvation by works.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

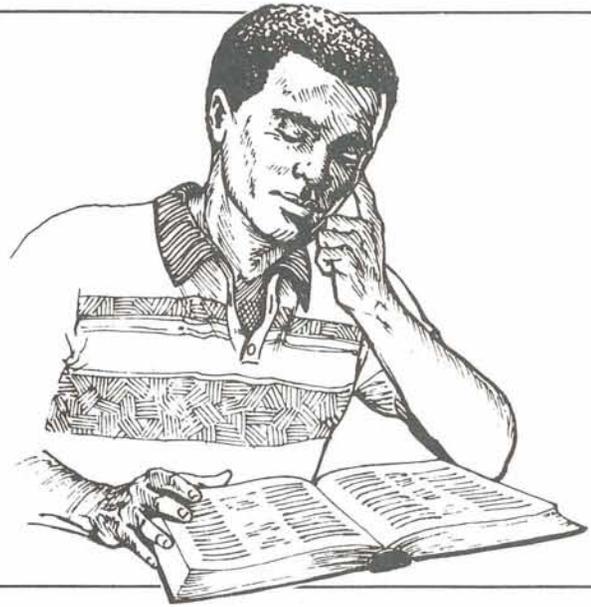
Ere you left your room this morning,
Did you think to pray?
In the name of Christ our Savior,
Did you sue for loving favor,
As a shield today?

When you met with great temptation,
Did you think to pray?
By His dying love and merit,
Did you claim the Holy Spirit
As your guide and stay?

WEEK FIVE

—Tuesday—

Open my imagination. I want to in a new way declare your deeds to the sons of men. (Angels already know of them.) In this time with you answer this need.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Since my youth, O God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds. Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come” (Psa. 71:17,18). I can relate so well to these verses — but it is more important that I relate this to all men and lift up praise to you apart from my own little petty personal experiences. This is not only the record of David, or myself — it is the record pattern for all men — potentially. This is what all men could say if you were their God. You can and do give grace and mercy adequate to the personal needs of all who love you. There are exceptions who prove this rule — but you have all eternity to balance the books.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I want to look behind these precious words to the one who through the Holy Spirit and his servant caused them to be written and preserved for my reading: (1) There have been no days or even one day in the long procession of days when you have not been present and totally aware of what happened. (2) You have been present to give me comfort and forgiveness — to direct me in the study of your word and to chasten me as was needed. (3) You have brought me to this late hour and have given me an abundant opportunity to declare your name to the next generation. How could I say anything but a loud exclamation of praise? (4) I am trying to express what you have taught me — yea I shall so continue as you give me breath.

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

I am so very slow in getting wisdom. There are so

many areas where I have learned obedience (to some extent) by the things that I suffered. My learning has all been perfectly commensurate to my humility. Far too often you have had to make me willing! My humility has been a result of my own embarrassment. Dear Lord, forgive me. I cannot repair the past, but I can improve the present. The “power” I would declare to the next generation is the good news that Christ died not only to forgive us but that we might die with him and be raised with him and live in him and because of him. May I be my own best student.

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

God sent His Son, they called Him Jesus;
He came to love heal, and forgive;
He lived and died to buy my pardon,
An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives.
Because He lives I can face tomorrow;
Because He lives all fear is gone;
Because I know He holds the future,
And life is worth the living just because He lives.

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

HIS WORD

19 When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went into the region of Judea to the other side of the Jordan. ²Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.

³Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?”

⁴“Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ ⁵and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? ⁶So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” —Matthew 19:1-6, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Read also Mark 10:1-6, Dear Lord, I am often at a

loss in my attempt to understand your word in your presence. I do the very best I can (you know how relative that statement is.) Here I lift my heart to you in praise and confession. My Lord is on his way to his death at Jerusalem. How many wonderful words he gave them on the way. I have tried to assimilate all his biographers have recorded. (Ah, how far short I have fallen!) Jesus paused, even when his face was set to go to Jerusalem, even when his mind was full of what would happen in the holy city. “. . . and he healed them there.” What an example for me as to the precedence of human need!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Was my Lord in the district of Herod Antipas and for that reason these Pharisees came to him with this question? (Herod Antipas beheaded John the Baptist over the divorce issue.) Only my Lord could have answered this question the way he did. The question was not just divorce, it was the reason for it. How loosely had these men interpreted Moses' words in Deuteronomy 24:1ff! How refreshing it is to be led by Jesus back to the cool of the garden of Eden and be reminded of just how you created us. Yea, and that you *did* create us! Out of your mind and heart we were created. Who said these words: “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and the two will become one flesh”? By reading Genesis 2:24 we know they are the words of Moses — in Matthew 19:5 Jesus attributes them to yourself. The wonderful obvious conclusion is that you spoke through Moses. Jesus said so! Praise your 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 that my Lord never ignored human need. (2) Thank you that the needs of the human heart and interpersonal relationships always superceded the physical needs. (3) Thank you that right now and right here I can learn from him. (4) Thank you for the eternal contemporary value of what I read here from Jesus. (5) Thank you for your part in my marriage.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . What God has joined together, let man not separate.” It is a wonderful blessing to know you have originated and participated in our marriage relationship. In the physical union of husband and wife you are very much present. The whole concept of male and female complementing and completing each other originated in your mind. The process of re-identifying ourselves as no longer two but one in each other is from yourself. Such a union of the two is like

our Lord and ourselves or as Paul said it, “like Christ and the church.” How much has Jesus given to be one with us? How much does he deserve that we might be one with him? These are the questions we must ask ourselves.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Read these verses and pause in the following requests: (1) May I never be too busy to meet a physical need. (2) The popularity of my Lord and his response to it is such an example for me. (3) In the tests I receive from my peers give me the wisdom come down from your presence. (4) Help me to look for reasons to keep the dear wife you have given me. (5) Lead me back to Eden to see again the ideal marriage. (6) How I do want your love to share with my wife. (7) May I find a new way of giving myself to my wife for this day.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in these verses: (1) “You lost one identity for a new and better identity when you were married.” (2) “You are living in a potential insoluble union — I have joined you together.” (3) “What I have joined together, let man not separate.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Belgium — Points for prayer: (1) The Protestant witness is very small. The largest Protestant body, a recent union of three denominations, is very much influenced by liberal theology and is not growing. The more evangelical wing is being blessed by increased growth over the last eight years. The UEELB (BEM) churches plan to increase their 60 churches by 50 during the '80s. The Brethren have planted seven assemblies over the past eight years. (2) Freedom for evangelism has never been greater, but it is hard to present the gospel to individuals and families. Pray for the literature and door-to-door evangelism of OM teams. Pray for the work by OM, IFES, CCC in the relatively more receptive student population. There are nine evangelical groups among the 80,000 university students. Pray for all involved in evangelism and church planting; they need special courage and perseverance in this hard land.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

O heart bowed down with sorrow!
O eyes that long for sight!
There's gladness in believing;
In Jesus there is light.

Earth's fleeting gain and pleasure
Can never satisfy:
'Tis love our joy doth measure,
For love can never die.

WEEK FIVE

—Wednesday—

How reassuring it is to have my righteousness decided in heaven. Surely, surely this should move me into the sanctuary of worship! Prepare me for the troubles of this day!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Your righteousness reaches to the skies, O God, you who have done great things. Who, O God, is like you? Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter, you will restore my life again; from the depths of the earth you will bring me up” (Psa. 71:19,20). Gladly, and yet thoughtfully do I approach your throne of grace. The means by which you have declared man righteous comes from heaven and lifts us to heaven. How wonderfully elevating is the thought that we can stand before you in the perfect righteousness of your Son. Words and emotions fail us as we say, “O God, you who have done great things!” There is a quality in your character we like to ignore or deny — “. . . You have made me see troubles.” Not all troubles come from you, but some of them do — all are under your control.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I do not want to blame you for my rebellious stupidity. Some of my bitter troubles were my fault — many of them were. Some of my trials have been brought to me by either friends or foes. Praise your wonderful name. You have been at work amid them all to bring me to life again — to restore me to a much more meaningful service and worship of yourself. Who is like unto you? No one! It is so good to praise you in these areas where we sometimes complain and rebel. The image of a powerful heavenly Father who only wants the best for his children is what I receive from these beautiful words.

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

I have asked myself if confessing my sins is not but a monotonous routine? I never ask this of praising you or asking something from you — or even thanking

you! Why think it of confession? It is because the evil one knows without this ingredient my prayers will be totally ineffective. (You lying spirit I rebuke you in the name of God’s Son Jesus!) I gladly open my heart in a confession of my sins! I have brought your righteousness down, i.e., in my own experience, to the dust of human effort. Forgive me — cleanse me — lift my heart up to the cross when “the just died for the unjust” (even myself) that he might bring me to yourself!

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

⁷“Why then,” they asked, “did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?”

⁸Jesus replied, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. ⁹I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.”

¹⁰The disciples said to him, “If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry.”

¹¹Jesus replied, “Not everyone can accept this teaching, but only those to whom it has been given.

¹²For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it. — *Matthew 19:7-12, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I do want to draw near my Lord and hear with my heart each word he speaks on this vital subject. Jesus had already answered the question these men now ask. They didn't go with Jesus back to the beginning. They had never left their own selfish lustful interests. Moses gave them an exception to prove God's rule. The hard, cruel inhuman treatment of women by men — of wives by husbands is an unavoidable part of this text. Like it or not the so-called male superiority raises its ugly head. If we did not have so many hard-hearted husbands we would not have so many divorces.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Since I have been a husband for the past forty years I do relate to these words of my Lord, yea I do need them — want them. The description of the ideal relationship of husband and wife can never be heard or read too often. "In creating woman, God had taken her out of man. In marrying her, man cooperates with God in making her part of himself again. Thus, a union in which the two lives are joined into one is more solid than that of blood ties. To break such a union should be as unthinkable as hacking off the members of one's own physical body. . . . This is what it means to believe in the insoluble and monogamous character of marriage" (*The Gospel of Matthew*, Vol. III, Fowler). Dear Lord, write your word upon my heart!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you that my Lord is committed to helping every marriage be just what marriage was in the beginning. (2) Thank you Jesus was definitely against autocratic demands on the part of either husband or wife. (3) Thank you that for the vast importance my Lord placed on the union — emotional — intellectual and physical of two people. (4) Thank you for the seriousness of the sin of adultery — i.e., by Jesus' estimate. (5) Thank you for the clear approval Jesus gave to celibacy. (6) Thank you for the plain statement that there are singles who have your special blessing. (7) Thank you we can teach the same principles for marriage and celibacy today our Lord taught.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

" . . . and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven." The commentary from the Holy Spirit on these words are those of Paul in I Cor-

inthians 7:2,5,8,36. "From these expressions it could be concluded that the possession of the gift of the single life is closely related to, if not strictly to be identified with, the power and demands of one's own sexuality. That is, if sexual self-control and the celibacy determination is relatively easy, one has the gift. But if not, one does not possess it. In no case is there any blame attached to not possessing it. Paul argues in I Corinthians 7 that sexual abstinence must be based on good theology and practical considerations, and that anything that ignored either must be corrected, and that a fully sexual marriage was recommended for anyone that had not received from God the charisma of celibacy" (The Gospel of Matthew Vol. III, Fowler).

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Surely we have no problem finding requests from these verses: (1) Impress upon me again, and again that divorce is wrong. (2) I want to accept my Lord's explanation for divorce — "the hardness of your heart." (3) Take me back to the beginning for the ideal. (4) I want to understand more fully the exception my Lord placed on marriage for life. (5) I am so unrelated to eunuchs — give me your wisdom in what I do know.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in this crucial area: (1) "You are responsible for the tenderness or the hardness of your heart." (2) "I am very much a part of marriage — to ignore me spells disaster." (3) "There is a gift from me of celibacy."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Belize — Points for prayer: (1) This tiny land has quite a strong evangelical witness through the Baptists, Brethren, Mennonites, Nazarenes and Pentecostals, as well as the GMU. There are growing churches with evangelistic vision that use both Spanish and English. (2) Most Belizeans are very nominal in their adherence to Christianity, with much underlying animism among the Mayas and black magic among the Black Caribs. Pray for a moving of God's Spirit among them. (3) Of the mission groups the largest are GMU (13), and Mennonites (12). Pray for their witness to the various peoples in a difficult climate. Pray for the many new churches that have been planted. Pray for the witness and growth in grace and maturity.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I've wandered far away from God;
Now I'm coming home;
The paths of sin too long I've trod;
Lord, I'm coming home.

WEEK FIVE

—Thursday—

Singing in personal worship is one of the most blessed of all experiences! There is such rich and deep comfort in singing. I eagerly enter the closet of prayer!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“You will increase my honor and comfort me once again. I will sing praise to you with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel. My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to you — I, whom you have redeemed” (Psa. 71:21-23). I must relate this to David first of all. I want them to relate these lovely words to all men. I believe you want to honor all men. You are not intent on bringing disgrace upon anyone who has not brought it upon themselves. Your heart-level desire is to lift men up not bring them down. Praise your name! If we will but stay as clay in your hands you will indeed increase our honor. How poignant is the little phrase *“comfort me once again.”* Dear Lord, how we all need this very thing.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. For my purchase price — even you dear Son I want to shout and sing and accompany my words with music! Nay, more than words! I want to shout for joy in my song. How often, very often, I need to stand beneath the cross of Jesus. It is easy to forget the price paid for our redemption. What I read here from David could easily be increased in my own experience — I have more reason for praise and joy and shouts of happiness. How I do want to pause long enough here in your presence to let these qualities of your person to sink into my subconsciousness. You want to lift me up — you are my source of comfort — you have bought me — rescued me — I belong to you! Praise and song and shouts of joy are so appropriate!

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 more than easy to accept a very poor self-image — it is a syndrome! It is satan’s lie and deception. I

even now resist and reject his lies and himself! It is not that I have not sinned in this area — it is because I have sinned that I confess my need and throw myself on your mercy. But not without hope. Not without expecting comfort. How shall I confess my deepest need for you? Only in my reaching out to your heart of love and personal interest can I find hope. But hope and honor and comfort I *do find!* Praise to your mercy! Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no 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;
I am poor, 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

¹³People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁵I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” ¹⁶And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them. — *Mark 10:13-16, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Compare Matthew 19:13-15 and Luke 18:15-17. What

a delight it is to take time, make time to read every word over and again in your presence. It was the mothers who brought the children. Were there grandmothers and grandfathers who also wanted the little ones brought to Jesus? There was something wonderfully magnetic about my Lord. If only he could look at them and put his hands upon them it would be enough. I can imagine the tension and mental effort being exerted over the subject of marriage and divorce when the disciples saw this crowd of women and children coming their way — or crowding into an already crowded house. I hear them say, “get away — not now — move out!”

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

My Lord did get upset — there were times when he was truly indignant. This was one of those times. Did Jesus move from where he was in the house to the doorway to stop the disciples? To also welcome the mothers and their children? How good to see my Lord’s face changing with the emotions that so often fill our own hearts. These were children, not babes in arms. Jesus wanted the children to run to him with arms outstretched and faces aglow. (Or at least this is how I see them coming.) The rule of yourself is already evident in their hearts. These “little children” are already citizens of heaven, i.e., in its physical earthly manifestation. They are also the models we should follow in our attempt to let you rule our hearts.

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 thoughtfulness of those who brought the children to Jesus. (2) Thank you for the courage of these people. (3) Thank you for the approachableness of my Lord. (4) Thank you for the total understanding of the needs of all men as seen in this beautiful example of tenderness. (5) Thank you for citizenship in the kingdom of heaven right here and right now! (6) Thank you for the plain words of Jesus that humbleness and open-heartedness are essential to your rule in my heart. (7) Thank you for the encouragement here that even today we can learn from our children.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.” It does seem appropriate that this incident occurred just after our Lord’s teaching on celibacy. There was a mixed multitude of children, some in arms and some who could walk to him. Why did the parents bring them to him? Had they seen the wonderful effect his hands had on the sick and demon possessed? Was there something in

the very face and attitude of Jesus that drew them to him? Did they believe that if Jesus prayed a prayer of blessing and direction over their child that it would most surely come to pass? All of this and more must have been present. Why must our Lord touch people? Can’t he just be with them without touching? Yes — but he didn’t. He wanted to establish communication — this was one way to do it.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

(1) May I bring as many little people to Jesus as I can. (2) Help me to reach out and touch people with the same compassion as my Lord. (3) Help me to know when I am helping or hindering in my service for others. (4) Help me to be angry over the same things that made my Lord indignant. (5) Rule my dear Lord from the throne of my heart. (6) I want the simple trusting faith of a child as related to yourself.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in these words: (1) “Give me the undivided attention a child gives to its parent.” (2) “You are not a child — sustain your attention.” (3) “The kingdom of heaven is here — enjoy it.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Benin — Points for prayer: (1) *This land has been tragically ignored by missions.* The entry of missionaries was almost stopped several years ago, but now some expansion of the work is possible. Pray for the calling and entry of missionaries — pioneer workers, church planters, doctors, agriculturalists, translators, youth workers, etc. (2) *Unreached peoples.* There is not one tribe in Benin with a thriving, witnessing church that is vitally evangelizing its own people. This is the least evangelized of all the non-Muslim countries of Africa. It is a race against time as both Islam and atheism spread their influence.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

“All things are ready,” come to the feast!
Come, for the table now is spread;
Ye famishing, ye weary, come,
And thou shalt be richly fed.

“All things are ready,” come to the feast!
Come, for the door is open wide;
A place of honor is reserved
For you at the Master’s side.

WEEK FIVE

—Friday—

How very often do we need to be reminded of the temporariness of this life and the eternally enduring quality of yourself. I gladly begin my worship here.



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). It would seem this psalm has obvious Messianic promise. When I relate these words not only to yourself but to your Son they glow with beauty and meaning. You speak to me of: (1) Your eternal nature — there never will be a time when you are not. (2) Your personal interest in every generation. Every generation looks up at the same sun and moon, just so does every man of all time look up to you — you are the same yesterday today and forever. (3) The field newly cut is wonderfully refreshed by a rain. Just so is your refreshment to the weary but soon cut down by the scythe of care and trouble.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. It is a joy to lift praise to you from these beautiful verses. Time and care and the depletion of energy has a way of casting depression over everything! How strong and true are these words! *“He will endure (even my blessed Lord) as long as the sun, as long as the moon, through all generations.”* I guess the quality of consistent endurance is what gives more comfort to our hearts than any other. We are so inconsistent and temporary. On a warm summer day how delightful it is to stretch out on a new cut field and let the rain fall on your face! So do your words fall on my weary heart! So does the vision of your Son refresh my spirit! Praise to you!

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

In the midst of the conflict it is easy to forget the purpose of the war. In building a wall it is easy to not remember the design of the whole building. When the

clouds cover the sky and the wind is strong and cold it is easy to forget that back of the clouds the sun is always shining. Please forgive me for my shortsightedness. Pull me back from the immediate and temporary and give me a new view of eternity — infinity — the whole scheme of your everlasting now. I must admit what is already known by yourself — I live far, far too much of my life tight up against today’s little problems — back me off! Forgive me — I want to relax and see the sun and moon and rain.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Blue skies and rainbows and sunbeams from heaven are what I can see when my Lord is living in me. Green grass and flowers all blooming in springtime are works of the Master. I live for Jesus each day.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁷As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. *“Good teacher,”* he asked, *“what must I do to inherit eternal life?”*

¹⁸*“Why do you call me good?”* Jesus answered. *“No one is good — except God alone. ¹⁹You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.’”*

²⁰*“Teacher,”* he declared, *“all these I have kept since I was a boy.”*

²¹Jesus looked at him and loved him. *“One thing you lack,”* he said. *“Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”*

²²At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

²³Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, *“How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!”*

—Mark 10:17-23, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How familiar are these words! How many times have we read them? Taught them? Preached them? And yet — how very unfamiliar are they? You have something to say to us we have never heard before. I want to see this man: (1) Luke tells us he was a ruler. (2) He is running — the matter is urgent and cannot wait. (3) He falls on his knees in front of our Lord. He cares nothing for the crowd — the place, i.e., rocks or dirt or inconvenience — or his clothes. (4) He must have looked up with a posture of prayer — perhaps with arms outstretched. What a perfect candidate for salvation — or was he?

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 hope I have adequately described this man. I am to a large extent describing myself! How easy it is to call you “Good teacher” — you are surely that to me — or are you? You do not receive the greeting without question. And what a question it is! “Why do you call me good?” Then these probing words, “No one is good — except God alone.” Jesus is either denying his deity or affirming it. We believe this is one of his strongest affirmations. He is reaching into my conscience and asking if I really believe he is God! If I do I will be ready like the young man to sell out and follow him. Dear Lord, I believe, help thou 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 example of courage and humility seen in this man. (2) Thank you for the willingness of this man to seek his answers from our Lord. (3) Thank you for the real meaning of “good” as related to Jesus. (4) Thank you for the evidences of deity found in Jesus. (5) Thank you for the evident admission of morality found in this man — this does not give the hope of eternal life. (6) Thank you for the insight of idolatry as found by our Lord. (7) Thank you for the courage of honest refusal found in this man — this is more than we are sometimes willing to admit.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, ‘How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God.’ ” I wonder what he saw as he looked around? Did he catch the eye of Judas? Was he reading the minds of the disciples as they thought: “He was really hard on that ruler! Was it necessary to tell him to sell *all* that he had? When once anyone has given their heart and life to riches and what they can do it is indeed hard to make a transfer from one good to another. In this case there was total commitment on the part of the young man. Therefore there must be a total sur-

render. It was the nature of the worshiper not the riches that called for selling all he had.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

(1) How I do admire the commitment of this young man — I do want to give that kind of commitment to you. (2) How easy it is to call you “good” — you are in *every* sense of the term, but there are implications to such a statement — dear Lord do I want them? (3) Look upon me dear Saviour, and love me — I need nothing more. (4) How can I give to the poor — i.e., in a way that reaches both our needs? (5) Is giving to the poor what gave this man treasure in heaven? Dear Lord, I do expect to find answers to this question.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me from this remarkable incident: (1) “I am good because I am God — treat me as such.” (2) “Some men do keep the commandments because they want to — even this does not make them right.” (3) “Following me as God and Lord is the path to joy and heaven.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Benin — Points for prayer: (1) *Young people are open to the gospel* but are under much pressure from atheistic propaganda. Outreach to youth has been limited by lack of committed workers. Several churches run youth centres. *SU* is still small but growing in size, and there are two *GBU (IFES)* groups in Cotonu. (2) *Bible translation* is a great need. There are 28 languages without a NT. *SIM* translation teams are working in seven others. The teams aim to complete these projects by 1990; pray them through. The people need the Scriptures, but time could be short. *GRI* has made recordings in 28 languages.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Does Jesus care when my heart is pained
Too deeply for mirth and song,
As the burdens press, and the cares distress,
And the way grows weary and long?

Does Jesus care when my way is dark
With a nameless dread and fear?
As the daylight fades into deep night shades,
Does He care enough to be near?

WEEK FIVE

—Saturday—

How much more clearly do I see the needs of the world from this time of worship. I enter expectantly — speak to my conscience!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. He will take pity on the weak and needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight” (Psa. 72:12-14). What a man does reveals much of what he is. How much more is this true of yourself? This is obviously a prophetic reference to your Son. The needs are much more than physical — although material needs are surely not forgotten. There are many today who cry out in the midst of tragic ignorance. We are your hands extended in help. We can give them both physical bread and the bread come down from the heavens.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I do want each of your qualities as seen in these actions to penetrate deep within! Break my hard heart — smash my stubborn selfishness! I am so glad you told me I have control over the condition of my heart — I *can* (and do) choose to have a tender or a hard heart. Just now toward the needs of the lost world in which I live I want these qualities I see in your heart: (1) No one can or will help them but me. (2) Pity for the weak and needy. (3) Save the needy from death — yea *two* deaths! (4) Rescue from oppression and violence. (5) They are precious — and their defense is very important. How can I read these words and be unmoved? I am not — I do repent!

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

I hesitate this side of expressing myself here lest I become maudlin — but maudlin by whose standard? Is it even now men and their opinion I fear? Dear God, forgive me of this greater sin. I do honestly

believe there are men and women — boys and girls who go to bed hungry in body and heart because I have not heard their cry — oh, can I say “forgive me” until I have repented of this sin? I have seen the weak and needy in many nations — their weakness and need is to a large extent the cultural fault of the place where they live. What a shocking, hard, stoney hearted attitude. No pity in that evaluation. Forgive, forgive me! When they die in their sins will their blood be required at *my hands*?

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;
Weep o’er the erring one, Lift up the fallen,
Tell them of Jesus the Mighty to save.

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

HIS WORD

²³Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!”

²⁴The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

²⁶The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “Who then can be saved?”

²⁷Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.” —Mark 10:23-27, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Compare Matthew 19:23-26; Luke 18:24-27. To us today we are somewhat taken aback at the amazement of the disciples. Why should they be so surprised at

these words of Jesus? Because they were infected with the same "prosperity syndrome" that plagues us today. The Hebrew tradition taught that riches were somehow a reward for righteousness. If you had money such was tantamount to God's blessing. Even when the rich oppressed them the Jews (some of them) felt the rich were blessed of God and they were not. Perhaps their oppression was deserved. So went their reasoning. The prophets set them straight on this concept — but they seldom heard the prophets.

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 am sorry to be carried away with a current concept. I do hope I have at least somewhat shared your mind on this vital subject. Just here I want to open *my heart* and hear your dear Son speak to me. I am that little child addressed by my Lord when he looked into their faces and said: "children." It is not easy to allow you to rule in our hearts. It is no simple task to give you the throne of our lives. Then Jesus used a most ludicrous illustration — an exaggeration for emphasis. An incredible exaggeration. A camel through the eye of a needle. We believe it was a real camel and a real needle! What a shock! It is a shock to me — but I want to receive it with meekness.

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 candid account of the amazement of the disciples — it helps me to accept the genuineness of this account. (2) Thank you for their amazement because it points out the tremendous power of material things over the human heart. (3) Thank you for your description of us as children — selfish — prideful — ignorant — but teachable. (4) Thank you for my Lord's humorous illustration — I relate — but I am still and silent as I see how futile are all my efforts. (5) Thank you for the second expression of amazement — they were amazed out of their mind. Their question is well taken. Oh, how I want to receive my Lord's answer! Help me.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God." Is this a hint from Jesus of the new birth? Yea, more than a hint — it is a description of it. Can a man be basically changed when he is old? Can the fundamental controlling factors of his life be drastically altered? Men would all say, "no," but not God. Entering the kingdom of God is simply accepting the rule of yourself in our inward man. When the love of money rules the heart it is most difficult even to get a man's attention. Jesus is talking about the overthrow of one king and the

crowning of another. He can do it when we are willing!

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

READ HIS WORD IN PETITIONS

I can surely find places for requests in these verses! (1) Deliver me from the deceitfulness of riches. (2) How very much I need to learn to trust in you. (3) Open my heart that I might see the depth of meaning of commitment to you. (4) May I be ready to accept my Lord's strange and impossible figure of speech — a camel through a needle's eye. (5) Give me the shocked amazement of the disciples. (6) At whom was Jesus looking? Dear Lord look at me! I want to hear with my inner ear your words.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me. (1) "Without the new birth my rule in your heart is impossible." (2) "Are you really listening or only reading?" (3) "I am the God who specializes in the impossible."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Bhutan — Points for prayer: (1) *Totally closed and all groups unreached until 1965*, but now there is a small Christian witness. Pray for the full opening of this land for the gospel. Pray for the salvation of government leaders. (2) *There are only about 10 known believers among the Drukpa majority* and none at all in many of the smaller people groups. (3) *The number of believers among the Bhutanese Nepali* has grown dramatically since 1970 through the fervent witness of believers inside Bhutan and on the Indian side of the border. Believers meet in about 20 places but mainly along the southern border. It is not easy for foreign Christians to fellowship with them. Pray for these believers who face considerable pressure from authorities.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

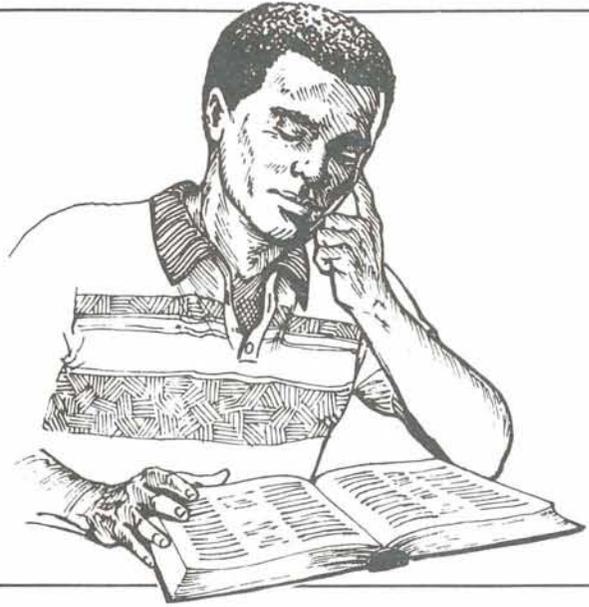
Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
 Forgive our foolish ways;
 Reclothe us in our rightful mind,
 In purer lives Thy service find,
 In deeper rev'rence, praise.

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.

WEEK SIX

—Sunday—

It is only before you that I can see the true value of money — and the lack of it. Show me the meaning of envy as related to me!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost slipped: I had nearly lost my foothold. For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. They are not plagued by human ills” (Psa. 73:2-5). The psalmist has defined his own problem: he is not pure — or whole in heart. He does not know the rich and arrogant of whom he speaks — i.e., many of them. Some live the way here described some of the time. Most of all — as he is to learn in your sanctuary — life is not over — here or hereafter.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. There is no need of denying it — you see our hearts and read our thoughts. We do envy the rich! At least we want what they have to use for a far different purpose. How glad I am to praise you for your involvement in human affairs. In the give and take of life you are always present. You see beneath the surface and know the perspective of the whole picture. Your omniscience and omnipresence is such a balance to the distortions of the rich and poor. I need not know *how* you will guide me — but I *know* you do. I need not have an explanation as to how you counselled me — that you did is enough.

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 easy it is to ask you to abdicate and let me take the throne of life and run it. It shocks me to think I would be so horribly presumptuous — but I know I am — forgive me! Forgive me! Calm me — quiet my heart! One day in heaven will alter all my present values and I will wonder about what I was so worried. The rich and arrogant have ruled the world for a long

time. The words of my Lord come to mind: “they have received their reward.” Many of them of whom we are familiar have been with you in eternity for the past 200 years — how is it with them now? When I see the whole picture I do 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

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim thro’ this barren land;
I am weak, but Thou art mighty,
Hold me with Thy pow’rful hand;
Bread of heaven, Feed me till I want no more:
Bread of heaven, Feed me till I want no more.

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

HIS WORD

²⁷Peter answered him, “We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?”

²⁸Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. ³⁰But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.” —Matthew 19:27-30, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Read also Mark 10:29-31; Luke 18:29-30. I always feel so very unprepared to read this text (or any text) in your presence. I know it is what happens with me — not yourself that makes the difference. It is a blessed growing experience — praise your name! Was it the word “*treasure*” from the lips of our Lord that

triggered Peter's response? How we all identify with Peter! He seems to be saying: "What the rich ruler was unwilling to do we have done." What are a few fishing boats compared with millions? But our Lord does not so evaluate Peter's commitment — how tender and loving is the attitude of Jesus!

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 a promise our Lord made to Peter and the other disciples! How this speaks to my heart! We are now living in "the renewal." The Son of man is seated on his glorious throne. The twelve apostles spoke from their positions of judgment and bound those who refused their glad tidings and loosed those who accepted it. The twelve apostles and others who traveled throughout the Roman world found brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers and children. Even houses and fields were theirs that would never otherwise be theirs. Peter, James, John, and Andrew all received a hundred-fold more than was ever expected. How we can agree with all those words — from personal experience!

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 clear revelation of the comparison of riches: true and temporary. (2) Thank you for impetuous Peter who says what so many more of us think. (3) Thank you for the beautiful designation: "the Son of man." (4) Thank you he is even now upon his glorious throne and I can fall before him in worship. (5) Thank you for the judgment of the twelve apostles in the preaching of the gospel to the "Jews first." (6) Thank you for the hundreds of brothers and sisters all of us have in your family. (7) Thank you for the wonderful promise of "eternal life."

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first." This warning to all the disciples is that the value system of the kingdom is nothing like that of this world. We think of several examples in the experience of those present to hear these words. The most obvious would be the young man who had just walked away from our Lord. By all Jewish standards he had so much to offer the kingdom — he would be last. Judas who listened as the Saviour spoke would lose all in his love for money. We also think of the widow with her two mites who became first in our Lord's evaluation. Or Mary of Bethany who understood Jesus better than those who were nearest to him.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In these verses there is much that I need: (1) Have I ever really left everything to follow you? (2) Am I infected with the material-success syndrome? (3) I do look to you for answers to these questions — help me, dear Lord. (4) If your throne is not my heart how can you rule in my life? (5) I accept the judgment of the twelve apostles — open my mind to understand their words. (6) Give me the love I need for your children — my brothers and sisters. (7) I want to enjoy the hundred-fold blessings I have received from you.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me as you did your disciples through these words: (1) "You must accept as brothers and sisters those I have accepted as children." (2) "You can enjoy the eternal life right now." (3) "If you think you are first you are in danger."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Bolivia — Points for prayer: (1) *The great responsiveness of Bolivians to the gospel is cause for praise to God.* There is widespread hunger in nearly all levels of society due to economic and political disasters in the '80s. The growth of Evangelicals is most noticeable among: a) *The Aymara.* A people movement since 1930 with 17% growth per year has resulted in nearly 20% of these animistic people becoming Evangelicals (Baptist, AoG, Friends, Methodist and AEM-related churches). b) *The mining communities and urban areas* with many conversions through evangelistic outreach and campaigns among the mestizos. c) *The 130,000 lowland Amerindian tribes.* Their evangelization is nearly complete. (2) *Protestant churches in Bolivia are growing at about 10% per year.* The Evangelism-in-Depth campaign together with wide use of home Bible studies, mass rallies and the media has reaped an abundant harvest.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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.

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.

WEEK SIX

—Monday—

In seeing yourself I see myself! You hold me because you love me. You guide me because only you know the way. You counsel me because you want me to know. How good it is to worship you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory. Whom have I in heaven but you? And being with you, I desire nothing on earth” (Psa. 73:23-25). What assurance and confidence there is in these words from your book! In spite of our senseless brutish actions and attitudes we yet sense your presence. You are holding on to us, not because we deserve it, but because you love us. You hold on to us with the hope that one day we will open our ears and hear your counsel. I shall never exhaust the meaning of your word, but I shall die while reading and meditating upon it.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. It would appear the psalmist had a confident hope in the life to come. There is so much in these blessed verses for which I can praise you: (1) You are *always* with me — if I know it — i.e., sense it, or not. (2) You take a real personal interest in my welfare — you hold me by the right hand. (3) You have words especially suited to my needs — I must read them and understand them — but they are there. (4) You have a whole new world and life prepared above and beyond this one. (5) You are the total attraction of heaven. (6) On this earth when I have you I need no one or nothing else!

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

The ideal is always above the reality — as it should be — but I do want to make progress in moving the two closer together. Just here I want to confess my sins in such a manner I will move my heart to unite with your will as found in your counsel. (1) If you seem far away (and you do at times) I *know* who has

moved — forgive me. (2) How I do want to take a firm grip on your hand — keep my attention, help me! (3) Forgive my unwillingness to meditate more on your word. (4) If you called me into glory today would I welcome the change? (5) Break my hold on the dearest of earthly interest — my interest is yourself!

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:
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

20 *“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard. ²He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard. ³“About the third hour he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. ⁴He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ ⁵So they went. ⁶“He went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did the same thing. ⁶About the eleventh hour he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?’ ⁷“ ‘Because no one has hired us,’ they answered. ⁸“He said to them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard.’*

8“**When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.’**” —*Matthew 20:1-8, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

The reference to the vineyard must surely have appealed to the Jewish disciples since this was so often the figure used to describe the Jewish nation. The land owner could be no one but yourself. Dear Lord, there are so many points of blessing in these verses I am at a loss as to which ones I should take up. At least I can relate to the fact you have hired me. I am your employee. It is surely good to know for whom I work. I know also the “pay” for such work — or do I? Is Jesus telling me the pay is really a gift? I.e., I have not earned it?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Are you saying that it is not the quantity, but the quality of the service that makes the difference? Back of this whole story is the urgency of the landowner to get the vintage gathered. It must be done *now* — no haggling over wages, the grapes must be picked! There are several observations that have helped me: (1) The master knew what each worker was worth to him. Maybe the latest hired were more fresh and didn’t have to endure the heat of the day and could get more done in a crucial part of the job. (2) Each man was true to the opportunity he had for work and was paid accordingly — not for time, but for quality. (3) The complaint was made before the ones who worked the longest could be paid. Perhaps the master was as gracious with them as he was with those of the eleventh hour.

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 privilege of worship — deliver me from making it an exegetical exercise. (2) Thank you for the reward you give me — all out of grace. (3) Thank you for a place in your vineyard — it is a joy to be a workman for you. (4) Thank you for the willingness of each of the men to work. (5) Thank you there was plenty of work for all. (6) Thank you for the words: “Because no one hired us.” Help me to reach them for you before satan employs them. (7) Thank you for the order of pay — what was its message?

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“*Call the workers and pay them their wages . . .*” Ah, what lessons there are in these words: (1) There will be “payday someday.” There will be a day of reward and punishment. Since we know the one who

will give the wages we do not fear. Perfect justice — mercy — grace — truth all will be present from the one whose name is love. (2) Only workers will be paid. This principle is reiterated over and over in the teachings of my Lord. The eleventh hour workers will demonstrate our reward will be one of grace — but it is given to those who worked. (3) Every worker is treated as one individual — it is his wages — given to him alone. It is from the sovereign master — but is for the individual effort.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In this parable I see myself — I do need to ask: (1) What a privilege to be called “in the early morning” to work in his vineyard. Give me such an attitude toward every child who accepts our Lord. (2) Keep me aware of the agreed upon reward for my service — even heaven. (3) Open my eyes to see men who stand in the market place of life “doing nothing.” Such is my Lord’s estimate of those who are not in his vineyard. (4) Thank you that the confidence we have for reward is based in your character not our work. I want to remember this. (5) I need your wisdom to hold the balance between your sovereign grace and my service as related to reward.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

The whole wide world is involved in these verses — speak to me through them: (1) “I yet have a vineyard that calls for workers.” (2) “I always pay what is right.” (3) “It could be the eleventh hour for work.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Bolivia — Points for prayer: (1) *There are basic weaknesses that warrant prayer.* Evangelicals have had relatively little impact on politics, the military, and the economic life of the country. Illiteracy, apathy, lack of Bible knowledge, denominational rivalries, and fear of witnessing are widespread. There is a widening generation gap with few young people being adequately helped in the churches. Cross-cultural missionary outreach is hardly ever preached. Pray for the effective implementation of the *NLFA* programme in mobilizing churches and congregations for witnessing in 1986 and beyond. (2) *The unreached.* About 65% of the population is unchurched; many of these live in areas with limited opportunity to hear the gospel. Churches need a vision for such areas and the initiative to send out church planting teams.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Each step I take my Saviour goes before me,
And with His loving hand He leads the way.
And with each breath I whisper “I adore Thee;”
Oh, what joy to walk with Him each day.

WEEK SIX

—Tuesday—

Only an infinitely wise and good God can account for the beautiful balance we see in the day and seasons. I bow before you to allow this meaning to become real to me!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The day is yours, and yours also the night; you established the sun and moon. It was you who set all the boundaries of the earth; you made both summer and winter” (Psa. 74:16,17). How eternally good it is to identify the day — and all the hours in it — with you. You set the planet upon which we live in just the right distance from the sun so we shall neither burn up nor freeze to death. Who began the rotation of our earth on its axis but yourself. In this creative sense the day and night belong to you. Infinite power and personal care are found in you — how often we should praise you! Dear Lord, I can see no sense at all in attributing all the beautiful check and balance factors to blind chance.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. To look up into the eastern sky at sunrise and know such is a result of your planning is a most awesome and comforting thought! It is even difficult to associate these two wonderful qualities, but I do! When I step outside and feel the sharp cold of the winter or the heat of the summer and know these boundaries were set by yourself it is a source of wonder — praise and thanksgiving. Dear Lord, it isn't that I am saying anything I have not said before — it is just that I enjoy praising you and worshiping before your majesty. This day is yours and the night that follows. This winter belongs to you and the promise of spring. 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

How often have I been caught up in the pressures of humanism. This is satan's option to yourself — for man to worship himself. Dear Lord, forgive me! We do have impressive capacities and have invented con-

veniences. But we have not changed the day — the night — the winter nor the summer. The sun and moon have not moved at our command and the stars have not fallen out of their orbits. How puny and insignificant is man as to size! i.e., when compared to your handiwork! Dear Lord, I do want to keep this physical world in perspective — it is the work of your hands — not ours.

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

This is my Father's world,
And to my list'ning ears,
All nature sings, and round me rings
The music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world,
I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas;
His hand the wonders wrought.

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

HIS WORD

⁹“The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each received a denarius. ¹⁰So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. ¹¹When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. ¹²“These men who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.’

¹³“But he answered one of them, ‘Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? ¹⁴Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you.

¹⁵Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’” —Matthew 20:9-15, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, instead of trying to find fault I want to

find reasons to justify your actions. I know I shall never be your counsellor or know your mind but I do see possibilities in these words: (1) The men hired at the eleventh hour did a job that required fresh minds and strong hands. The men who worked all day could not give this. It was for the importance of the job they were paid the full wage. (2) The men of the eleventh hour had a special need that could only be met with a full day's pay. They were paid according to their need. Of course it was your decision and need not be questioned — but this does not mean there are not altogether adequate reasons.

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 hope I have not encroached upon your territory — i.e., assumed a position for which I have no warrant. Forgive me! Dear Lord, you have never been unfair to me. I do not have all the facts for even the smallest of your decisions. It is enough to trust you! My confidence is in your character not my evaluation of your action. Jesus warned me about envy — once again. I do not know all that is involved in either what you gave another — or what you have given me. The shocking principle that those who should give much give little and those who have but little produce much runs through all of life. Dear Lord, keep me humble and reverent!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you that there will finally be no questions asked about our eternal payday. (2) Thank you that I can remember that I agreed to work because I was idle and empty and hungry and so sorely needed help. (3) Thank you that I can believe every man will be more than glad with his pay. (4) Thank you I can right now acknowledge your right to do whatever you want with your own possessions. (5) Thank you I can know long ahead of judgment what will happen if I trust in your grace and serve you. (6) Thank you for the promise of pleasant surprises in the world to come. (7) Thank you for the reflection of this parable in the life and service of his apostles.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Or are you envious because I am generous?” What a question! Of course our Lord could read the minds of these men and no doubt knew there were several there who were indeed envious of the rich. The *“riches syndrome”* was very prominent in the days of our Lord, i.e., if you had money it was because you were blessed of the Lord. If you did not have possessions there was something wrong in your heavenly relationship. Am I envious of those who have much of this world's goods? I need to examine my motives for

gaining material wealth. Does there seem to be an “out of balance” in the society in which we live? How I need to hear the words of Jesus: “Don't I have the right to do what I want . . . ?” “Yea Lord, I'll work and let you direct.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In these verses I want to lift up these petitions: (1) Each early morning I want to be hired by you for the work of that day. (2) What you pay for each day is much more than adequate. Keep this thought ever before me. (3) Open my eyes to see so many in the market place of life really “doing nothing” — what an opportunity! (4) Each man is being paid what is particularly *right* for him — keep me sensitive to this fact. (5) There is an excitement in my heart as I think of the close of the day and the distribution of pay. Keep me ready for the quitting whistle. (6) “The last will be first” — because he worked — keep me on the job!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me personally in these verses: (1) “Your service is known, appreciated and rewarded — but it has not earned heaven.” (2) “Take your pay and go into the joy of your Lord.” (3) “Evening is coming — it may be much later than you think.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Botswana — Points for prayer: (1) *The Tswana people* were the first Bantu people in southern Africa to respond to the gospel, and a great turning to God among several of the Tswana tribes occurred in the last century through the LMS from England. Modern theology among later missionaries stunted further development of the Church and little real spiritual life remains. (2) *The tragic decline continues in the older churches.* Only 11 aging pastors remain in the UCCSA. The Tswana are Christian in name, but actually given over to immorality and drunkenness that is accentuated by the breakdown of family life and poverty. Other missions followed late in the last century, but nominalism is also a problem with these churches because each became virtually the “state church” of the tribe that welcomed that particular group. Pray for revival and a reversal of the moral collapse.

SING PRAISES TO OUR GOD

Encamped along the hills of light,
Ye Christian soldiers rise,
And press the battle ere the night
Shall veil the glowing skies.
Against the foe in vales below
Let all our strength be hurled;
Faith is the victory, we know,
That overcomes the world.

WEEK SIX —Wednesday—

“Open my eyes that I may see glimpses of truth you have for me” — these words of the song writer are mine as I enter your sanctuary of worship!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“We give thanks to you, O God, we give thanks, for your name is near; men tell of your wonderful deeds” (Psa. 75:1). Gratitude is such an attractive quality! To you all thanks is due! I want to list some areas of thankful praise in which all men could join: (1) For the beauty of the earth you have created. There is so much to see and appreciate. Just here I can step out and look at the wide expanse of the prairie and wonder at the color in the sky as the sun begins to lighten the eastern sky. (2) For the freshness of the morning and the expanse of the immense canopy above me. It is there for all men — all men could inhale and look up and praise your creative goodness!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. “Your name” stands for yourself — you are near in what you have made — as a product sometimes carries the name of the one who made it so your name appears on so many things in my experience: (1) You have led me from the first day of my new birth until now. I could say I see your name in every footprint. How I praise you for the direction you have given to me. (2) You have enabled me to teach each lesson and preach each sermon. Whatever good that has been in them has been but the imprint of your name. (3) You have given me such wonderful loved ones — my dear wife and children — and a host of those who love me. It is out of your power and mercy that these have come.

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

We do not at all give thanks to you as we should. How can we so easily forget and ignore your mercies? How can we congratulate ourselves for what good things have happened? If we have said what produced

a good result it was because of your grace and wisdom such was said. How is it we are so ready to take the credit? Dear Lord, forgive! How many heard from me of your wonderful deeds? Not near as many as those who heard of the deeds of someone else. Forgive me! How is it you do not appear in my ordinary conversation? Dear Lord, I propose to think of you and your goodness so often that it will be inevitable that I will “tell of your wonderful deeds.” Be near to 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

Oh, how He loves you and me,
Oh, how He loves you and me.
He gave His life, what more could He give;
Oh, how He loves you,
Oh, how He loves me,
Oh, how He loves you and me.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁷Now as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside and said to them, ¹⁸“We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death ¹⁹and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!” —Matthew 20:17-19, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I wonder what look was on the faces of these twelve men when Jesus spoke to them so plainly about his coming suffering — death and resurrection? Of course each of them received this news in a little different manner. Our Lord could read their thoughts. The

specificness of his prediction really speaks to me. (Dear Lord, I am trying so poorly to identify these words in your presence — help me!) (1) His betrayal would be to “the chief priests and the teachers of the law.” Did the apostles wonder just who was involved? I believe they *knew* just who was meant. (2) The priests and teachers were blamed by Jesus for his death. (3) The part of Herod and Pilate are specified they will carry out the sentence of the Sanhedrin.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Did these men hear these words? So little was understood or remembered until *after* it happened. How much of the death, burial and resurrection do I understand or appreciate? Dear Lord, not enough! I live so many years this side of that visit to Jerusalem yet there is so much I want to relearn! What was Jesus thinking as he heard the words: “crucify him, crucify him!”? As he bared his back to the lashes what conflict of emotions must have warred in his heart — or did they? As the nails were driven into his hands what did he think? When he first stepped out of the tomb what did he think? How I do want to love you more and serve you better!

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 my Lord thought enough of the apostles to warn them clearly of his coming death and resurrection. (2) Thank you for my Lord’s beautiful designation of himself, “the Son of Man.” (3) Thank you that Judas was present to hear my Lord foretell his betrayal to the chief priests. (4) Thank you for the one who died for all that all might die. (5) Thank you that he healed me with his flogging. (6) Thank you he was mocked for me that we might rejoice in him. (7) Thank you that my Lord is alive right now!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“*On the third day he will be raised to life.*” What a remarkable prediction this is! Jesus knew the details of the event long before it happened. Did you reveal it to him in prayer? in meditation? Was this by direct intuitive input? This event is remarkable for its meaning to me and all men. There is one who has control over the last enemy, death. He has been raised to live forever more. He is alive now. I believe he sees me and knows my thoughts even as I write them. How eternally important it is that I read and understand every word he said while upon this earth! One day he will come again and time will be no more. In a few short years, if he does not come, I will see him.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

(1) As you took your disciples aside to confide in them your coming death and resurrection I want to open my heart to hear you speak to me of the meaning of Calvary and the open tomb! (2) How glad I am that we live on this side of your resurrection, because you live also! As I face the reality of death remind me that it is but a door you have opened into the wonderful life to come. (3) Since the mocking and flogging and death were all for me I want to receive what suffering I do for you with joy. (4) Forgive my poor words — loose my tongue — illumine my mind that I might praise you aright!

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me privately — personally in these blessed verses: (1) “I called myself ‘the Son of Man’ because I came to make every man my brother.” (2) “If I was so accurate in this prediction you can depend on all others.” (3) “I am alive to speak on your behalf to the Father.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Brazil — Points for prayer: *Praise God for the astonishing growth of Evangelicals (77% 1960-70 and 155% 1970-80).* Vigorous evangelism and church planting among an exceptionally responsive people continues. Pray for the Brazilian church that it may mature and become a blessing to the nation and to the world. (2) *Successful growth from a few thousand evangelical believers in 1900* to a churchgoing population of nearly 24 million today brings a new form of pressure. The Evangelicals have become a powerful influence in the land, which lays them open to the wooing of politicians. Pray for a spirit of humility, separation from worldliness, deliverance from power-seeking among Christian leaders, and, above all, for revival; present growth is not revival. Pray that Christian leaders may seek *first* the Kingdom of God.

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?

Only faintly now I see Him,
With the darkling veil between;
But a blessed day is coming,
When His glory shall be seen.

WEEK SIX

—Thursday—

Jesus drained the cup of your wrath for all men. Will this lead me to prayer? If not, nothing will! Oh, dear Lord, I gladly kneel before you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“In the hand of the Lord is a cup full of foaming wine mixed with spices; he pours it out, and the wicked of the earth drink it down to its very dregs” (Psa. 75:8). What an amazing verse! What an awesome promise! In this verse there are a number of your attributes I want to lift up before you in praise: (1) You are watching the affairs of the wicked as well as the righteous. *Nothing* escapes your notice. (2) You are ready to act against the wicked as readily as you are to act on behalf of your children. (3) There will be a time when “the wicked of the earth” shall receive their full final punishment.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. It is not possible to read this remarkable verse without thinking of Gethsemane and our Saviour’s prayer. “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.” What you had prepared for the wicked of the earth your Son was willing to drink. Indeed he drained that cup down to its very dregs! Doesn’t it seem totally incongruous that the cup of your wrath has been emptied and “the wicked of the earth” have never even heard? If there could be a more awful fact in all the divine record I do not know what it would be! How remarkable all this scene is! The wicked are actually drinking a toast to your sovereignty and judgment!

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 now more than forty years ago I committed myself to you in telling that “Christ (your dear Son) died to save sinners.” How is it there are yet so many multiplied millions who have never once heard he drained the cup? I have told a few — but there re-

main so many yet untold! Forgive me dear Lord! I hardly have the courage to ask forgiveness for this sin! If I am not presently involved in correcting my fault I had as well save my breath. I can say I am teaching others to win the lost — I am multiplying my effectiveness — it is no substitute for my own personal evangelism.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
Thou art the Potter; I am the clay.
Mold me and make me After Thy will,
While I am waiting, Yielded and still.

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

HIS WORD

²⁰Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him.

²¹“What is it you want?” he asked.

She said, “Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.”

²²“You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said to them. “Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?”

“We can,” they answered.

²³Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.” —*Matthew 20:20-23, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What incredible presumption! How could anyone have such a small distorted view of Jesus’ Kingdom?

It was not difficult. The mother of James and John was only repeating what every devout Jew knew about the coming kingdom of the Messiah. (Or thought they knew.) Perhaps this mother had not had opportunity to hear Jesus very often. Why didn't her sons tell her what he taught? It would appear from the text that James and John were cooperating with their mother. How willingly we do not know. Dear Lord, have I represented this scene as it happened? I do so want to.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. At least they came with the right attitude — they kneeled down before him in obeisance. How infinitely kind are the words of Jesus. He seems always to want to encourage what is right and good and ever so gently correct what is wrong. He says plainly; "You do not know what you are asking!" Did these men know to what Jesus referred when he made reference to "his cup"? How little did they know of the agony of Gethsemane and the separation of Calvary! Yet, these men would be persecuted for his name. They drank of the cup of suffering and rejoiced they were counted worthy (Acts 5:41). But to hold positions of authority — no! This was given to God to decide and not you the Son. I am so glad to be able to read these words with my heart for my life today.

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for this very human record — it gives me confidence that he would respond to my foolish requests in the same way. (2) Thank you for the cup of your wrath he drank for me! (3) Thank you for the patience and love of my Lord. (4) Thank you we can today yet drink of his cup — may we do it with joy. (5) Thank you for those who will reign at my Lord's right and left hand (I know not who they are). (6) Thank you for the courage and love seen in the lives of James and John. (7) Thank you for the tremendous change Jesus made in the lives of these two men.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my father." It would be easy to say, "and for those who have prepared themselves for them." The Father's choice will be made on the basis of the preparation of those persons for such a position. Favoritism will have no part in such a choice. Personal preference and friendship do not enter in the Father's evaluation. How secure we would all be in our places of service if we all would simply trust the heavenly Father's judgment. Our Lord is the very best example of this principle. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. Because of such an

attitude he was highly exalted and given a place of honor.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

There are requests I can find in the request of the mother of Zebedee's sons: (1) Will I even really learn that respect must be earned? (2) Keep me aware that you do have a kingdom and we *are* servants in it. (3) How I do want to follow the example of willingness to suffer for your sake — with joy. (4) I want to be in a constant search for the humility necessary for true submission. (5) Deliver me from the flattery and prejudice of friends. (6) Keep me blind to places of honor. (7) Deliver me from my own deceitful pride.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me as you did to this mother and her two sons! (1) "Kneeling before me does not necessarily mean true worship." (2) "Humble yourself — I'll take care of the rest." (3) "Service is the highest position I offer."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Brazil — Points for prayer: (1) *The Catholic Church is in serious trouble*, and faces a discouraging future. There is a dearth of priests, the majority being over the age of 50 and from abroad. Average Sunday attendances are lower than that for Evangelicals. The left wing of the church has espoused liberation theology, and has become a strong pressure group within the church through 80,000 "Base Communities" which initiate social actions that are often anti-government. (2) *Spiritism is a dynamic force for evil in Brazil*. It appeals to the emotions and offers physical healing; both traits make it an attractive alternative to traditional Christianity. In 1975 there were at least 14,000 spiritist centres guided by 420,000 mediums. Pray both for the deliverance of many from the power of the occult and for Christians willing and spiritually equipped to minister to those bound by Satan.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Tempted and tried we're oft made to wonder
Why it should be thus all the day long,
While there are others living about us,
Never molested tho in the wrong.

When death has come and taken our loved ones,
It leaves our home so lonely and drear;
Then do we wonder why others prosper,
Living so wicked year after year.

WEEK SIX

—Friday—

If there ever was a place of light and life it is the closet of prayer. Gladly do I enter into the bright illumination of your own person!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

You are resplendent with light, more majestic than mountains rich with game. . . . You alone are to be feared” (Psa. 76:4,7). Light is such a charming quality of character. Your dear Son used it often in reference to himself — his work and yourself. In the reference of the psalmist it is with the reflection of light as light illumines the depth and dimension of a man so the various aspects of your character are shown to us. In particular we observe your ability to overcome all opposition. As the light of the divine record falls on yourself we see multiplied facets of your power. Essentially I am saying the more I read of your word the more beautiful you appear to me! Praise your name!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I am delighted in the opening of this verse to a new view of yourself! You are also the source of light so the light not only illumines your person but it also proceeds from you. Your word is a light to show yourself to me and your word comes from yourself! The psalmists and other writers are often attracted to the majesty of the mountains as a comparison for qualities they see in you. The immensity of the bulk of mountain is sometimes overwhelming. In the early morning with the light and shadows it would be especially so. The writer adds a value to the mountain, it is rich with prey — or food. So with yourself — majestic and beautiful — but also very practical. Thank you for being all and all to me!

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

I know it will not be in the confession of one sin or a thousand sins I will be helped the most. It will be in developing by this practice an attitude of trust and

repentance. It is when I can say with a calm heart, “you alone are to be feared,” i.e., revered in holy awe and respect, that I will develop the results of forgiveness. I cannot and do not hide my sins — but I want to develop a motivation that will overcome sin. I believe it is in true reverence such motivation is found. Just now I want to yield my inmost being to you in submission and obedience. 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

O happy day that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Savior and my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad!

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

HIS WORD

²⁴When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. ²⁵Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ²⁶Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷and whoever wants to be first must be your slave — ²⁸just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” —Matthew 20:24-28, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How natural and true-to-life all of this reads. The ten were indignant because James and John had outmaneuvered them in their request. James and John only voiced what all of them felt. How easily we can identify with them. That being so we need also to hear with our hearts the words of your Son. As a father quiets his petulant children so Jesus gathered

his disciples about him. He could have told James he would lose his head to the political maneuvers of Herod. He could have described Patmos for John — but he didn't. Instead he laid out the path to true greatness.

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 shall I receive these words for my own heart? Surely we can do better than the ten disciples at this juncture in their lives. We should be, we do not! We appreciate these words, “. . . any church that is not the image of the state completely turned upside down does not correspond at all to the original plan of its founder. This is why the worst sin of the church is that of organizing itself along lines that reflect the image and likeness of the state, or of inserting itself into a structure to become an integral part of it” (Ruiz). What is here said of the corporate body can be said with equal force as related to the individual.

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 Jesus did not give up on these carnally minded followers. (2) Thank you for the comparison of the state hierarchy — it tells me what not to do. (3) Thank you we can become great — as servants. (4) Thank you the criteria is the more we serve the greater we are with you. (5) Thank you that total submission to the needs of others is the highest position. (6) Thank you my Lord set the pace for each of us and all of us. (7) Thank you for the ransom price he paid for me — and all men.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . and to give his life as a ransom for many.” We have been bought by and belonged to the devil. He has held us for ransom. The price has been paid! What a great price he paid — even his own life. The sacrifice of the cross is here given in the context of service. It becomes the ultimate example of giving. How “many” are involved? Just as “many” as there are people upon this earth. The tragic — pathetic fact is that millions of people have never heard of our Lord, to say nothing of his death for them. The many who have heard do not seem to appreciate it. Most of all we who have become his followers somehow fail to allow this example to move us into the same kind of sacrifice service. Forgive us Lord!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Dear Lord, I do want to ask that I might receive: (1)

Protect me from the selfish interests of loved ones. (2) May your kingdom come in my life. (3) I do want to know what I am asking — grant your grace. (4) Will I find your “cup” in the experiences of this day? I hesitate to ask — give me your strength. (5) In the mad scramble to be first keep me as a servant of all. (6) Show me how to be a slave today. (7) I want to know more fully the price paid for my redemption.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me: (1) “Are you deceived and blind when you consider your own service? — examine your heart.” (2) “You can be like my Son — I wouldn't ask what you can not do.” (3) “The cost is high — but it is much more than worth it!”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Brazil — Points for prayer: (1) *The challenge to reach the less evangelized people groups.* a) *The squalid favelas (slums) are a blight in every major city.* One-third of the urban population live in such places where poverty, hopelessness, crime and disease make these people hard to reach. b) *In the southern cities live 400,000 abandoned children.* c) *The secularized, wealthy middle and upper classes.* These have been generally less responsive. d) *Young people* are, on the whole, not well cared for in the churches. There is a need for more missionary and national youth workers — especially among the restive and often Marxist students. There are about 1,200,000 university students in over 44 universities. The CCC and Navigators are active, and the ABU (IFES) is having a significant impact with groups in most universities. They help students come to the Lord, build them up in the Word and encourage missionary vision. The ABU is also pioneering a ministry to Christian graduates.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I traveled down a lonely road
And no one seemed to care,
The burden on my weary back
Had bowed me to despair,
I oft complained to Jesus
How folks were treating me,
And then I heard Him say so tenderly,
“My feet were also weary,
Upon the Calv'ry road;
The cross became so heavy,
I fell beneath the load,
Be faithful pilgrim
The morning I can see,
Just lift your cross and follow close to me.

WEEK SIX

—Saturday—

As I bow in your presence I can best learn from history. Descend upon me in a sense of your power to deliver all who call upon your name!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. I will meditate on your works and consider all your mighty deeds” (Psa. 77:11,12). So said the psalmist in what is now a very long time ago. It is a marvel that we can even here share some of the same wonder as the psalmist over the same deeds! Was he thinking of the flood of Noah? We can open up the same record given us by Moses and wonder as “the very depths were convulsed.” We use our memory for the same purpose: to move ourselves out of the apathy of depression. To lift our hearts in praise!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. As I meditate on your works I can relate them so well to my own needs. I see place after place where I can praise you. I have been delivered from worse bondage than Egypt! The waters that opened for me were those of death and hell! My deliverance was to the way that leads to “the land that is fairer than day,” not just to an agriculturally rich Canaan. All along the way I came to stations of your love and care. *Marah* — where the bitter waters were made sweet by casting in the cross of my Lord! Indeed his cross will sweeten any bitter experience. Praise to you — the more I meditate upon your deeds of might and love the more I love you!

How do you personally relate to this quality of God? Speak it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

If all of the above is true why do I need to confess my sin? Indeed what sin do I have to confess? Such effrontery hardly deserves an answer. I have the same fundamental sin to confess as Israel — both of us *forgot!* How soon was it after Israel came through the red sea that they were complaining in the desert? How

could they want to return to Egypt? If I am honest I can easily relate to them. Forgive me! I am too near the wilderness of this world. Evidently personal worship was a sad lack in the camp of Israel. It is only alone with you that I can truly remember as I should — and want to. Forgive me for rushing into the journey without first worshipping and remembering.

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

King of my life, I crown Thee now,
Thine shall the glory be;
Lest I forget Thy thorn-crowned brow,
Lead me to Calvary.

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

HIS WORD

²⁹As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. ³⁰Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”

³¹The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”

³²Jesus stopped and called them. “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked.

³³“Lord,” they answered, “we want our sight.”

³⁴Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him. —Matthew 20:29-34, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Read also Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43. My dear Lord, I have followed you a long way since that first day we began in John 1:1 ff. We are now on our way to Jerusalem for the last time. We are in the caravan

crowd going to the passover. As we approach Jericho a blind man calls out from the road side. I hear him now: "What is going on? — What is meant by this crowd?" They told him Jesus of Nazareth was passing by (oh, dear Lord you are doing it still — even today I shall see you on the way) and he cried, saying, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on 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. I do agree with others who harmonize the records of Matthew, Mark and Luke by two encounters with the blind men. The crowd and Jesus moved on past the single blind man at the entrance of Jericho. (Did he hurry through the city so as to be at the roadside as they left the town?) In the meantime another blind man joined Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46). It is in the cry of the blind men and my Lord's healing mercy I find myself! I want to call out in a loud voice that I fully accept you as the Messiah — the son of David — king of the Jews and Lord of Lords. No one nor no thing can stop me — my need is too great and he is too near. I cannot, I will not miss him! I must have my sight and see him and the beauty of the earth.

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 many who followed him — some who had good reason and others who wanted to know. (2) Thank you for the right use of my eyes. (3) Thank you for your wonderful constant mercy to me. (4) Thank you my Lord was not bothered or disturbed by shouting or the clamor of need. (5) Thank you Jesus heard the call of the human heart behind the words. (6) Thank you for the tender compassion of my Lord — the same today as then. (7) Thank you I can follow you with the eyes of my heart open.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Immediately they received their sight and followed him." What a happy example of our Lord's whole relationship to man: (1) These men were blind and left along the roadside of life. There are multitudes who feel left-out; rejected by other people. Not with Jesus. He hears them and answers them. (2) Someone else who could see Jesus had to tell these men of our Lord's presence and work. How true to our life! If we do not tell people of our Lord they will never know. (3) They express from the depths of their heart in a most persistent manner their need. They will not be silenced or ignored. (4) Jesus reaches out and touches them. They are individuals in need and he wants to identify with them. It is just so with every blind man in all the world.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How shall I ask in prayer through these verses? (1) I want to see crowds thru the eyes of Jesus. (2) How shall I react to the blind? As the crowd or as my Lord? (3) Have mercy on me. (4) How I do want to enlarge my appreciation of his deity. (5) It would seem the life of my Lord is one interruption after another — such did not bother him — give me this grace. (6) Touch the well-springs of my compassion and move me to reach out. (7) How I need the joy and excitement and newness these men had.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me from this experience: (1) "Men are calling out for help today, i.e., if you have ears to hear them." (2) "There are yet those who would hinder the healing of the blind — ignore them." (3) "Everything looks so different and new when you have been blind for a long time."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Brazil — Point for prayer: *The limitations on missionary activity among the Amerindian tribes since 1978 was triggered by a combined assault of anti-Christian anthropologists, demands for Indian lands by developmental agencies and corrupt officials. Pray that this unholy alliance may be thwarted and that evangelism, Bible translation and church planting may continue. Pray that this situation may stimulate a deeper concern among Brazilian churches to send missionaries to work among them. Some Brazilians are serving in international missions in the area, and a Brazilian mission (ALEM) was formed in 1983 to carry on Bible translation programmes. Bible translation continues in 64 languages, but between eight and possibly 50 other languages may yet require translation teams.*

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.

Fair are the meadows,
Fairer still the woodlands,
Robed in the blooming garb of spring;
Jesus is fairer,
Jesus is purer,
Who makes the woeful heart to sing.

WEEK SEVEN

—Sunday—

As I begin this day — this week — I begin in an acknowledgement of your deep love and care. You have all the food we can eat — and more. Gladly do I worship you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Yet he gave command to the skies above and opened the doors of the heavens; he rained down manna for the people to eat, he gave them the grain of heaven. Men ate the bread of angels; he sent them all the food they could eat” (Psa. 78:23-25). Such a beautiful expression of your care and concern for man! Even when men did not believe in you or trust your deliverance you were miraculously merciful to these ungrateful people! We are told by our Lord that such bread was symbolic of himself. How closely I want to read the description you give of the bread come down from heaven, that I might better worship your Son.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. (1) The manna came as a result of the command of yourself. It was in the councils of eternity to make known your will that you would send the word to become flesh and live among us. (I do not want to be monotonously repetitious but each time I see one of these blessed expressions of your good news I want to shout “praise the Lord!”) (2) Jesus is indeed the door to heaven — he is both the door and the manna. This is not a mixed metaphor — this is my Lord! (3) The name “manna” means, “what is it?” Such indeed was the constant question — “who is he?” Praise your name — we *know* who he is! (4) The “grain of heaven” was sent down to us. Grain is of no value until it is ground in the mill and made into flour for bread. Such happened to our blessed Lord. Dear Lord forgive us.

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

There will be no problem in confessing how woefully short I am in truly appreciating your advent from heaven. I shall die still trying to understand and praise

you adequately. I do want to see your dear Son as the bread come down from heaven that I might eat and not die. I want to eat his flesh and drink his blood. I appear beneath his cross for the proper perspective of him. How tragically short I am in eating and drinking with a full discernment of his body and blood. Could it be that the next time I meet at his table I will remember heaven’s bread and angel’s food? Dear Lord, I want to!

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

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. **19** ²A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. ³He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. ⁴So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. ⁵When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” ⁶So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. ⁷All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a ‘sinner.’ ” ⁸But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.” ⁹Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.

¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost. — *Luke 19:1-10, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I have related many times to this short man of Jericho. Just now I want to try to see all of these verses from your perspective. Jesus must have known he would find this man before he arrived in the city. He knew his name and just what he wanted to do. Your omniscience is such a comfort to me! We cannot help but admire this man from several perspectives.

(1) His position was not going to prevent him from seeing Jesus. (2) He ignored the animosity of the crowd. (3) He was innovative and energetic. (4) All of his effort was directed toward *one* end — seeing your Son. How I want some of these qualities in my life and relationship with my Lord.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. There was something wonderfully urgent about my Lord's words to Zacchaeus — "come down immediately." Would we all be as willing as the tax collector? It is one thing to see Jesus — it is another thing for Jesus to see us! Are we all ready to "come down" from where we are? "I *must* stay at your house *today*." It is not a choice of place or time. Jesus saw someone who was ready to repent. The text says Jesus received a very glad welcome into the home of Zacchaeus. What are we missing in the exchange between Jesus and the tax collector? What was it that made such a total change in the conduct of this man? What did Jesus say or do that made this tremendous difference? We do not know with Zacchaeus, but we *do know in our own experience!*

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 most unlikely prospects in the world can yet become followers of our Lord. (2) Thank you that wealth of itself does not need to hinder a man from deep commitment to you. (3) Thank you for the courage and curiosity that led this man to you. (4) Thank you that the grumbling of the people bothered neither Jesus nor Zacchaeus. (5) Thank you for the wonderful change in this man — from the inside out! (6) Thank you for my Lord's definition of salvation as seen in this man. (7) Thank you for the clear statement of purpose given by Jesus — to seek and save the lost.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." How well he did it! Our Lord encountered thirty-four different people as recorded by his

biographers, i.e., thirty-four people with whom he did personal evangelism. In how many ways he sought them. How varied men their backgrounds. But in each case he communicated the same glad tidings. The same message of his deity and Lordship came across. Jesus was in the business of saving the whole person. There was a very real need for those he saved to follow him. In another sense his salvation was a process and it was completed by a daily intimacy with him. He must be seen and heard and obeyed each day.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the salvation of Zacchaeus are areas of prayer needs: (1) I am glad you are alive and well able to see us in our needs even as you saw Zacchaeus before you entered Jericho. (2) How I want to be as determined to overcome my limitations as this man was with his. (3) Help me to relate my limitations to Jesus. (4) May I feel the urgency of personal association with your Son. (5) I want to humble my heart until Jesus can save me in every area of my life. (6) Show me how to make restitution where it is needed. (7) You have found me and have saved me, are saving me, and will save me — praise your name!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As you spoke to this sinner in his home so speak to me: (1) "Every day is a day of salvation." (2) "You are by faith a son of Abraham." (3) "I shall never lose my saving power."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

British Antilles — Points for prayer: (1) *The missions outreach of the Caribbean churches.* In the last century Jamaican and other island missionaries made a decisive contribution to the evangelization of the Caribbean and West Africa, yet today this vision has dimmed. Poverty, lack of teaching and lack of vision are responsible. Pray for the Jamaican International Missionary Training and its missionaries sent out into cross-cultural work. Pray for the Caribbean churches to catch again a vision for world evangelization. (2) *Several million English-speaking islanders have emigrated to Britain and now to North America.* The Caribbean emigrant communities face economic and social pressures. Young people are frustrated and often unemployed. They are rejecting the religion of their parents.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Far and near the fields are teeming
With the waves of ripened grain;
Far and near their gold is gleaming
O'er the sunny slope and plain.

WEEK SEVEN

—Monday—

The nation of Israel was not much better in the practice of personal worship than the nation of America. Does this say anything to me? Speak to me!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“But before they turned from the food they craved, even while it was still in their mouths, God’s anger rose against them; he put to death the sturdiest among them, cutting down the young men of Israel. In spite of all this, they kept on sinning; in spite of his wonders, they did not believe” (Psa. 78:30-32). How well does this describe man’s insatiable appetite for sinning! Sin proceeds from the strong desires you have placed within us — i.e., the desire for food and sex; the desire for possessions, and the desire for acceptance. Such desires have the strength of yourself behind them and when misdirected they end up in everlasting futility!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I need to see again these qualities of yourself that we do not want to see. We want to forget that you have anger against the lust of the flesh — or gluttony — the same desire can be directed toward sex. You have your own blessed way of satisfying these desires — but if we refuse your way and *must* have our own, your anger will be the inevitable result. I praise you for such consistency. Your anger is but the other side of your love. If you love righteousness you *must* hate iniquity to be truth. The real problem with the nation of Israel was the lack of personal worship. Form and ceremony were there but no real personal worship. We have the same results for the same reason today.

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

Sinning creates its own appetite. The only fulfillment is in obedience to him. How easy it is to say such things. How well we know them to be true. How much more difficult it is to realize them in our own

life. It is however, a blessed fact that we *can* develop the habit of obedience and break this vicious cycle! Blessed Lord, I am committed to obedience and yielding to you. I do fail — I am not at all perfect in my understanding. Forgive me and enlighten me. I do believe in the terrible dangers there are in disobedience you say to me: “Lo he (i.e., yourself) ended their days (i.e., Israel — but it could be ourselves) in futility and their years in terror” (Psa. 78:33).

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Sinners Jesus will receive;
Sound this word of grace to all
Who the heav’nly pathway leave,
All who linger, all who fall.

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

HIS WORD

¹¹While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once. ¹²He said, “A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. ¹³So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. ‘Put this money to work,’ he said, ‘until I come back.’

¹⁴“But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, ‘We don’t want this man to be our king.’

¹⁵“He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it.

¹⁶“The first one came and said, ‘Sir, your mina has earned ten more.’

¹⁷“ ‘Well done, my good servant!’ his master replied.

'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.'

¹⁸"The second came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned five more.'

¹⁹"His master answered, 'You take charge of five cities.' — Luke 19:11-19, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It is that I might understand the true nature of your Son's kingdom that I give full attention to what he is saying in these verses. The people had a definite view of just what the kingdom would be like. In their minds was a very physical, political, military rule. Since there was such excitement at this Passover season — since they were near Jerusalem and since so many already accepted Jesus as the Messiah it was surely time to explain the nature of his kingdom. Give me ears to hear.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. "A man of noble birth" is surely my Lord himself! The distant country is even your house — to the glory Jesus had with you before he came to this world. He has been appointed king — crowned and seated at your right hand. He is coming back again — perhaps today! In the meantime he has left us all with about three months' wages for investment. While he is away we all have his possessions for use to his advantage. He *will* come and ask for an account! It would seem from the parable there were only three out of the ten that gave any attention to the money. Seven ignored it completely. They even sent a delegation to the place where he was going to get his kingdom and reported "we don't want this man to be our king." Such persons were cut in pieces or slain before the king himself! The message however is faithfulness on the part of those who accepted his rule.

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 glorious king of noble birth!
 (2) Thank you he is king now and I am a citizen in his kingdom.
 (3) Thank you for the talent you have given me — and all citizens.
 (4) Thank you that I can choose to obey or rebel.
 (5) Thank you for the many motivations I have for obedience.
 (6) Thank you for the variety of rewards promised those who are faithful.
 (7) Thank you for the multiplying power of the gifts you have given us.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities." Will there indeed be ten cities in the world to come over which we will

be given rule? Or is our Lord just using a figure of speech? If we are to find meaning in his words we must have a point of reference. At his second coming our Lord will give rewards and punishments. We are so glad the rewards are on the basis of faithfulness. But the rewards are also proportionate. There are some given *five* cities and others are given *ten* cities. It would seem that in the very act of being faithful the servant has developed the capacity for the enjoyment of his reward. So perhaps the reward is as much subjective as objective. If we do not appreciate or understand the reward would be meaningless.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In these verses there are many points for prayer. (1) Help me to live this day in such a manner that if he should come I would be glad. (2) I want to see just how noble is my Lord. (3) Since I belong to my Lord may I gladly serve him today in whatever area of life he gives me. (4) In whatever ability I find may I see the talent of my Lord. (5) In whatever benefit I gain by service today help me to have your advantage in mind. (6) Trustworthiness comes from a real trust in the employee — how I want to trust wholly in you. (7) Am I ready to rule five or ten cities? How can I prepare?

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me again in these words from your book: (1) "All service on earth when compared with service in the world to come is "a very small matter." (2) "You need not concern yourself about the 'ten cities' you will be prepared." (3) "Not for one moment forget that I am indeed your master."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Brunei — Points for prayer: (1) *No evangelism is permitted among the Muslims*, and there are no known believers who have come from this community. However there is a steady stream of conversions to Islam from among tribal and immigrant communities. Pray that through the pure lives of the Christians and the work of the Holy Spirit some may be saved. (2) *There is freedom for local Christians to evangelize non-Muslims*. The most significant response has been among the Chinese. About 15% of the Chinese are nominally Christian, but only about 600 attend Protestant churches regularly. Pray that material concerns may not keep the many unconverted Chinese from a full commitment to the Lord.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Down in the valley with my Savior I would go,
 Where the flow'rs are blooming
 and the sweet waters flow;
 Ev'rywhere He leads me I would follow, follow on,
 Walking in His footsteps till the crown be won.

WEEK SEVEN

—Tuesday—

We are “a passing breeze that does not return.” You are the eternal climate of life. I enter the closet to meditate on: your mercy — your forgiveness — your restraint.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Yet he was merciful: he atoned for their iniquities and did not destroy them. Time after time he restrained his anger and did not stir up his full wrath. He remembered that they were but flesh, a passing breeze that does not return” (Psa. 78:38,39). In the record of your action with Israel I find so many lessons — but all of them issue from the qualities of your nature. In these two poignant verses I see several: (1) *Merciful* — mercy is the expression of goodness and love where it is not deserved. Mercy is sometimes — many times a non-reciprocal action. How well does this describe your action with Israel. (2) *Atonement* — you accepted the sacrifices of your people of equal value with themselves. They should have been slain but you accepted the death of the animal in their place and you and your children were at-one-again.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me: (3) *Restraint* — in so many ways we have made ourselves of no use to you. We deserve to be removed — we have totally lost our meaning, but restraint instead of judgment is given. How often this has happened in just the past few days only you know. I do praise you for it. (4) *Wrath is checked* — how I need to remember *your wrath!* A perfect hatred for sin is an awesome thought! You have our good and our growth always in heart. There will come a time when a balance must be, will be present. (5) *A true perspective of our nature.* We are *but flesh*, i.e., a very perishable fragile substance. There is nothing on earth quite as temporary as man’s body. Our life on this earth (not the world to come) is “a passing breeze that does not return.”

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 can I live as if there would be no end to my life here? There is nothing so easily forgotten as man’s

life on earth. Ask about just one generation removed and no answer is forthcoming. Their memory is forgotten. There are a few exceptions — but they are exceptions. Oh, forgive me for my trust in this life and what it can bring. The oft quoted words “Only one life, will soon be past, only what is done for Christ will last,” is so very true! I want to make them mine!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

‘Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to take Him at His word,
Just to rest upon His promise,
Just to know, “Thus saith the Lord.”

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

HIS WORD

²⁰“Then another servant came and said, ‘Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. ²¹I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.’

²²“His master replied, ‘I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow? ²³Why then didn’t you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?’

²⁴“Then he said to those standing by, ‘Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.’

²⁵“ ‘Sir,’ they said, ‘he already has ten!’

²⁶“He replied, ‘I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away. ²⁷But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them — bring them here and kill them in front of me.’ ” — Luke 19:20-27, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

None of us like to look at the negative side of judgment. We all want to appear on your right hand — as the blessed — and indeed we can — but it shall not always be so! The man in the text must have been lying — he must have intended to deceive his master. He is saying in essence that he is sorry he misjudged his master's character and only wishes he had known how mercifully good he was — he would have done something different. This is a lie. The master shows it to be such by using the words of the man himself. He did not act according to his own estimate.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How I do want to do more than write a few words of comment on a text of scripture. Dear Lord, speak these words into my heart! How beyond belief has been your blessing in my life. Truly I have found over and over again the principle is true — “everyone who has, more will be given.” It is only in using what you have given that we can hope to have more. The negative side is just as invariably true: when we do not use what you have given — you will even remove what we once had. I do not want this to happen to me — it will not happen as long as I have breath and energy.

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 there will be a day when all the crooked ways will be straightened. (2) Thank you you are not a hard man with no personal feelings for the needs of your servants. (3) Thank you you always can read my motives and know what my true intentions are. (4) Thank you for the eternal principle of fruitfulness. (5) Thank you that no enemies of my Lord will ever stand against him. (6) Thank you for the eternal benefit this parable has been to millions of people. (7) Thank you that none of us ever need say you gave us nothing.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“I tell you that to every one who has, more will be given, . . .” The principle of production is found in this little phrase. The man who uses what he has is the one who receives more. Is our Lord saying every one of his servants is expected to be productive in a way that will benefit himself? This is the most obvious of meanings. What is the Lord's work today? It is meeting human need! The largest need of all men is the forgiveness of sin this happens through hearing the good news. It is a simple fact that our Lord expects his servants to spread his word to every person. He has given us the means of getting it done. What a

fearful thought it is to consider the return of our Lord when we know how woefully short we are in this service!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Surely he has requests in these words: (1) What will we say of all the time and energy he gave us as related to his benefit. (2) I know you are a loving and kind heavenly Father — your Son is the one I see in the gospels — open my heart to your love and service. (3) Lead me into areas of service that only you know. (4) While working in your field keep me aware of the many others who also serve that I might slave with them. (5) Thank you for the promise of increase when we use what you have given us — I want your grace to serve.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Before you come for an accounting speak to me through these verses: (1) “Everyone receives the means of multiplying for my benefit.” (2) “You are responsible for your talent not your neighbor's.” (3) “There will be an accounting of all — believe it or not.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Bulgaria — Points for prayer: Most Bulgarians have never had a chance to hear the true gospel; their land is one of the more needy of Eastern Europe. Pray that they may hear of the Saviour. (2) Minority groups are being forcibly integrated into the majority culture, causing much grief and suffering. a) The 800,000 Turkish Muslims have suffered particularly, but no specific outreach to them is known. b) The Gypsies are partly Muslim and partly Orthodox, but, unlike elsewhere in Europe, there has not been a Pentecostal revival among them. c) The Pomaks were forcibly converted to Islam by the Turks. There has been no known outreach specifically directed to them. (3) Propaganda against believers is extreme. Pray that this continual assault on believers and the Bible may cause the many disillusioned Communists to seek for the Truth.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

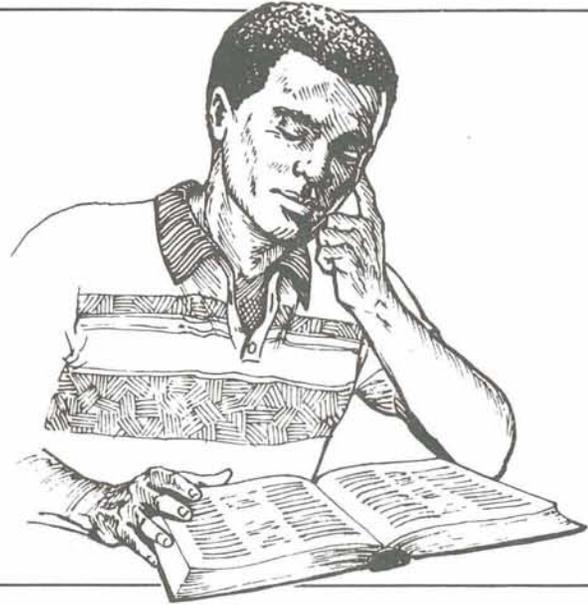
Sweetly, Lord, have we heard Thee calling,
Come, follow me!
And we see where Thy footprints falling,
Lead us to Thee.

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

WEEK SEVEN

—Wednesday—

Humility! Dependence! Gratitude! All these and more are only learned in worship — teach me dear Lord!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“They did not remember his power — the day he redeemed them from the oppressor, the day he displayed his miraculous signs in Egypt, his wonders in the region of Zoan” (Psa. 78:42,43). Dear Lord I remember! I am delighted to take up your record from Moses and read again and again of your power. As used here your *power* refers to your actions in the lives of men. I can see that same power in operation today in your direction through the body of your Son — his church. As you overcame the might of Pharaoh so you provide strength and your presence to destroy the works of Satan as we labor in the deliverance of your people. Praise your name! How often and in just what manner you redeem us from the oppressor only you can know — but I praise you for it.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. The characteristics of yourself in these verses are: (1) power; (2) redeemer; (3) miracle worker; (4) wonders. I believe I am where I am today because you have often redeemed me from the oppressor. I am so glad you paid the price I could never pay. I also believe you had a plan being perfected in the lives of your children at different periods in human history. In each of these periods there was a display of miraculous signs to confirm a credential what you were doing. I am living in the very last period just before the second coming of your Son. The confirmation of this period occurred in the first century and the wonderful detailed record of it is even now before me — 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

How sadly often we repeat history. Do I remember your power? Sometimes I do. Too often I am taken

up with the events of the day and the things immediately before me. I am so glad to be reminded from time to time — or even twice in a time, that there *is* something — someone to remember. How vague and unclear in my memory are some of the most wonderful things you have done for me! This is a sin — forgive me. Somehow I need your help in returning the clarity of such events. Most of all forgive me for not remembering the marvelous display of your power in the life of your Son. I want to review again every one of his miraculous signs. Thank you!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I will sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ who died for me,
How He left His home in glory
For the cross of Calvary.

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

HIS WORD

⁵⁵When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, many went up from the country to Jerusalem for their ceremonial cleansing before the Passover. ⁵⁶They kept looking for Jesus, and as they stood in the temple area they asked one another, “What do you think? Isn’t he coming to the Feast at all?” ⁵⁷But the chief priests and Pharisees had given orders that if anyone found out where Jesus was, he should report it so that they might arrest him.

12 Six days before the Passover, Jesus arrived at Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.

⁹Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the

dead. ¹⁰So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, ¹¹for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and putting their faith in him. — *John 11:55-12:1;9,10,11, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I hesitate in prayer even before I read these burning words in your presence! It is now time to begin the last visit to Jerusalem. I see the vast throng of people as they move over the hills of Judea on the roads that lead to Jerusalem. They are coming a few days early so they can wash themselves and visit the temple and pray and contemplate the meaning of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. But their minds were also on my Lord and his miraculous ministry. Even as they moved from place to place in the temple area they were hoping to catch a glimpse of the familiar figure of Jesus. There is a wonder and questioning on their faces and in their voices — “Isn’t he coming to the Feast at all?”

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How I do want to identify with the wonderful reality I see here! Did the persons assembled in the temple on that day know of the warrant of arrest the chief priests and Pharisees had issued for Jesus? We doubt it. Jesus did arrive early. How typical this is in my own experience. My Lord has always been there ahead of me. Jesus went where he was welcome. To the now familiar home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus. I have been shown what was purported to be that home in Israel. I have another home where I *know* Jesus lives. My own heart! How sad that there were so many who were only curiosity seekers. They came to see the miracle worker who was public enemy number one on the list at Jerusalem.

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 new meaning to the passover we have today. Our passover has been sacrificed. (2) Thank you we can remember his death at his table on the resurrection morning. (3) Thank you that I need not ask “Isn’t he coming at all?” because I *know* he is! (4) Thank you for the eternal priceless privilege of inviting Jesus into my house. (5) Thank you he has raised me from death in trespasses and sins. (6) Thank you for every plan of satan defeated by my Lord. (7) Thank you I can and do put my faith in him.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“ . . . for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and putting their faith in him.” Lazarus became a real help to our Lord! Isn’t it strange that some of these chief priests were not per-

sueded by the same evidence that convinced these Jews? It would be if we did not know of the deep hypocrisy of these chief priests. The unswerving code of ethics our Lord adopted was as much a part of his Messiahship as his miracles. Not that Jesus asked these men to live according to anything but what they had believed all their lives; but the love of money and sex has a strangle hold on some people. The chief priests were some of those people.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

It is a simple matter to find requests for prayer in these verses: (1) How glad I am for the cleansing of the blood of your dear Son — I claim such cleansing now in prayer. (2) I want to look up and see him suffering for my sins on the tree — triumphant at your right hand making intercession for me. (3) My Lord did not worry about the question of men — why should I? i.e., when they need no answer. (4) The plans to arrest him failed because it was not yet his time — thank you for your time-table that *shall be* fulfilled! (5) I want to see Lazarus all over again — to wonder at your power over death.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In the midst of the crowd may I hear your voice: (1) “I have passed over your sins because of my lamb sacrificed for you.” (2) “Behold the lamb that takes away the sin of the world!” (3) “You are as secure as my love and constant care.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Bulgaria — Points for prayer: (1) *The persecution of believers* has been very severe. Many Christian leaders suffered long terms of imprisonment and death in the early years of Communist rule. Since 1972 the level of persecution has again been stepped up, and many Christians are afraid to testify openly. Christian families and young people are subjected to much intimidation and discrimination. Some Pentecostal and Baptist churches were demolished in 1984. (2) *Pray for the leaders of the churches* who face constant harassment from the authorities and betrayal at the hands of informers who have infiltrated both official and underground groups. There are now about 40 Pentecostal and 23 Baptist pastors in the official churches, and others who live a hunted life ministering to the unofficial groups. It is impossible for those who desire to enter the ministry to obtain an adequate Bible training.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Give me the Bible, star of gladness gleaming,
To cheer the wand’rer lone and tempest-tossed;
No storm can hide that radiance peaceful beaming,
Since Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

WEEK SEVEN

—Thursday—

The powerful figures of speech found in the Psalms have always moved me deeply. I am a sheep — you are my shepherd — I am in a desert but you are my way.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“ . . . he brought his people out like a flock; he led them like sheep through the desert. He guided them safely, so they were unafraid; but the sea engulfed their enemies” (Psa. 78:52,53). What beautiful qualities of yourself are seen in these two verses from the history of your people. You were the shepherd of these sheep. This is an oft repeated description of yourself — the one who feeds — protects and leads his flock. How glad I am to acknowledge you as such today. Protection in the midst of a desert or wilderness. You know the conditions facing your sheep and take precautions and make provisions for them. How very comforting are these words!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I am the fearful wild-eyed sheep! How many strange, meaningless, impulsive moves we make based on fear! Dear Lord, forgive me! Sheep are proverbially nearsighted and many times do not see the direction of the shepherd. The movement of the whole flock becomes the guidance of the single sheep. Dear Lord, I do not want to be nearsighted, but if sometimes I am — let me trust in your individual care in the midst of the movement of the whole circumstance of life. My safety depends on you — my direction is in your hands. Praise your name how confident I can be! It is a strange but true fact that the same sea through which we were delivered engulfed others.

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

Whereas we are *like* sheep — we are not sheep — we are not unthinking animals. We *can not* excuse our straying on poor dumb instinct! Justifying our sin on the basis of weakness is a cop-out that even we do not

accept. When personal responsibility enters there is only person responsible — me! Dear Lord, gentle shepherd — forgive me! I decided to leave your pasture for the greener grass. I walked away from your still waters to explore something more exciting. I found the grass poisoned and the waters a swamp — but it *was* my idea. But the *idea* came from somewhere — from someone — even from the one here present — I now reject him to his face and turn to you!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Savior, like a shepherd lead us:
 Much we need Thy tend’rest care;
 In Thy pleasant pastures feed us,
 For our use Thy folds prepare:
 Blessed Jesus, Blessed Jesus,
 Thou hast bought us, Thine we are;
 Blessed Jesus, Blessed Jesus,
 Thou has bought us, Thine we are.

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

HIS WORD

21 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ²saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”

⁴This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

⁵“Say to the Daughter of Zion,
 ‘See, your king comes to you,
 gentle and riding on a donkey,
 on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’ ”

⁶The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. ⁷They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them. —*Matthew 21:1-7, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Read also Mark 11:1-7; Luke 19:29-35. How good it is to now enter the final week of my Lord's life and follow him once again from the triumphal entry into Jerusalem to his triumphant entrance into heaven! His biographers are all careful to tell us that this all began in that little long lost village called Bethphage, "the city of unripe figs." What an unlikely place to begin the announcement to all the world that he is king! At the very beginning Jesus wants his disciples to see his Lordship. He is king of all creation. He has foreknowledge that should indeed impress them. Jesus could see the donkey and her colt standing outside the door of the home of one of his disciples. We do wonder what these disciples said as they led the two animals back to our Lord.

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 not ready yet for this triumphal entry, i.e., I wish I were better able to enter fully into its meaning — I want to meditate longer! But enter I must — he is ready! How I wish I could have been the owner of those two animals. How gladly — how wholeheartedly would I have given them. Indeed, I would have followed to run before him and spread my best garment on the ground for his coming. Hail King Jesus! Hosanna in the highest! In these brief moments there are no limitations — all waiting and hiding is over — let the whole world know who Jesus is! Here is the gentle king riding on a donkey. Such an act was rich in tradition and fulfillment of prophecy. Did Jesus smile? Was he sad? How did he look? *Triumphant!* I welcome him — you are my king!

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for all the precious associations I have with the Mount of Olives. (2) Thank you for the well orchestrated plan of my Lord — he knew where he was and what he wanted all the time! (3) Thank you that my Lord always has need of our help — how glad we are to give it! (4) Thank you for the humility that permeates this scene. (5) Thank you for the precious price of Friday night — all day Saturday and Saturday night my Lord had at the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. (6) Thank you this occurred on Sunday morning — it adds so much to the day. (7) Thank you I can welcome him as king every day.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them." This must have been an exciting time for the disciples. What were the thoughts in the minds of the apostles? Did they remember the promises he had made of his suffering and death? Did anyone recall the clear statement that he would rise on the third day? Did some of them hold the thought that

somehow he would yet overthrow the Romans and return the Jews to rule over their land? All these thoughts and many others in doubt was a part of the mental environment of that day.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What requests were in the hearts of the two disciples as they followed our Lord's instructions? (1) May I see as Matthew did the appreciation of your word to life. (2) It is a king who rides on a donkey, "Hosanna to the Son of David." (3) Jesus sees ahead of all events — we can trust him implicitly. (4) What an honor for such a humble animal! What an honor for all of us that he wants to be our king. (5) How privileged is the man who has anything that can meet a need of our Lord. (6) Jesus wants immediate action on his requests — I want to so act. (7) What can we do to participate in this festive occasion? We can at least give him what we have — our cloaks.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What a thoughtful time is all of this — speak to me through it. (1) "The Lord yet has need of willing hearts and hands." (2) "My entry into every heart as king is every bit as triumphant as this record." (3) "Praise me from thoughtful understanding — not hasty enthusiasm."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Burkina Faso — Points for prayer: (1) *Unreached peoples are numerous*, but there are few of them unoccupied by missions. The unreached: a) The Muslim Soninke, Maninka, Tuareg, Songhai, Komono. b) The many small pagan tribes in the south and west in the *CMA* and *WEC* areas. c) The Lyele west of the capital. d) Of the 7,000 rural villages, 5,000 have no Christian witness. (2) *Other peoples have been entered, but the response has generally been small* with only the Gurma and Bobo being more than 5% evangelical. The following missionary thrusts are worthy of prayer: a) *CMA* to the Muslim Marka in the northwest. b) The Mennonites to the Senufo groups and Syemou in the southwest. c) *WEC* to the Birifor, Dagari, Gan, Dogosie, Puguli and Muslim Dioula. d) *SIM* to Fulani in the north, Bisa in the northwest. e) *AoG* to Fulse in the north and Gurunsi groups in the south.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Give of your best to the Master;
Give of the strength of your youth;
Throw your soul's fresh, glowing ardor
Into the battle for truth.
Jesus has set the example;
Dauntless was He, young and brave;
Give Him your loyal devotion,
Give Him the best that you have.

WEEK SEVEN

—Friday—

Atonement or at-one-ment with you is not just a New Testament truth — such is a part of your essential being. Gladly do I worship you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Do not hold against us the sins of the fathers; may your mercy come quickly to meet us, for we are in desperate need. Help us, O God our Savior, for the glory of your name; deliver us and atone for our sins for your name’s sake” (Psa. 79:8,9). The cry for help of your children in the long ago is our cry today. The help they saw in your very nature is what moves us to approach your throne of grace. The accumulation of sin could be a terrible burden. The psalmist is saying he wants a fresh beginning to his relationship with you. As the father in the story of the prodigal we want to see you running to throw your arms of mercy about us! *Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.*

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Each day I find myself ready to call out for your mercy — to lift up my heart in wonder for your goodness. I want to be ready to repent. How I do hope all my desires to love you and serve you will finally result in honoring you and not me. To you belongs all the honor. It is the glory of your name — your essential being that must be before me at all times. Deliver us from our sins — atone for every transgression. In our repentance and your forgiveness we can bring recognition of your very nature. How glad I am to share in this fulfillment of your purpose. “Atonement” is such a beautiful word — at-one-ment with you through the blood of your Son! 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

These verses are a confession, yea, they are *my* confession as well as the psalmist. How easy it is to hold grudges — long ago sins that have accumulated dirty details over the passing of time. What would happen if you did that for me? You would not need an im-

agination for the details — you *know* them. Dear Lord, I am so glad I can ask and receive only an accounting for the sins of one day at a time. If you were not full of mercy and loving kindness I would never have the courage to even approach you. How beyond expression is the joy of total forgiveness! As I read your word in the sections of history it is good to know your reputation is your character, mercy and salvation!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

There is a place of quiet rest,
Near to the heart of God,
A place where sin cannot molest,
Near to the heart of God.
O Jesus, blest Redeemer,
Sent from the heart of God,
Hold us who wait before Thee
Near to the heart of God.

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

HIS WORD

⁸A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

“Hosanna to the Son of David!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Hosanna in the highest!”

¹⁰When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?”

¹¹The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.” —*Matthew 21:8-11, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Read also Mark 11 and Luke 19. The city of Jerusalem was swollen in population to upwards of

three million Jews. As on Pentecost — even more than on Pentecost there were “men from every nation under heaven” here to celebrate their deliverance from Gentile bondage. It was easy to see why the Romans increased their troops in guarding the city at passover time. What an immense crowd must have gathered around our Lord as he began his descent from the Mount of Olives down into the city gate. How I do want to see it all and participate in it! The palm leaves were symbols of victory. The Romans began to wonder, “victory over whom?”

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Who really understood what was happening that day? Only the gentle king riding on a colt, the foal of a donkey. But we understand, or do we? We try to. My Lord *wanted* everyone to know he was a king — but he knew he was riding to a throne on a cross. My saviour rules the word from several thrones. (1) *The throne of forgiveness* erected on Golgotha. Without the acceptance of this rule and this ruler all men will die in their sins and be lost. (2) *The throne of grace*. He is man’s only mediator with God — without intercession forgiveness has no lasting meaning. (3) *The throne of glory*. One day when time is no more he shall reign eternally in the new heaven and the new earth — we will gladly fall down before him in praise and thanksgiving. Hail to the King of Kings!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for every one in that large crowd — where are they today? What do they now know about the one on the donkey? (2) Thank you for this one who always leads us in triumph! (3) Thank you for the only one who can save — even our Lord! (4) Thank you for the one who came to exemplify all the character and essential nature of yourself. (5) Thank you that we know the answer to the question of the crowd, “Who is this?” (6) Thank you for your prophet from whom I can learn. (7) Thank you for this one who was much more than a prophet.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“*This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.*” Indeed he was — but *so much more!* How many of the crowd even knew just who he really was? Did anyone even know the depth of concealment or the real meaning of his person? The words of the epistle to the Hebrews is so full of purpose here, “. . . whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty in heaven”

(Heb. 1:2,3). Did anyone that day really know who he was? We shall only fully know when we one day awake in his likeness.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the midst of the excitement and confusion of the crowd there is much for me to ask of you: (1) How I do want to honor you and in every way welcome you into my heart. (2) It is in praise and adoration I find strength and freedom to worship you — move me often to such praise. (3) Our Lord was not impressed with this crowd — there was a much larger one in heaven watching all that was happening — fulfilling your will is the most important — help me to follow him. (4) In the many situations of need — save me today! (5) How delighted I am to see yourself perfectly reflected in the life of your Son — keep my heart open.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In spite of the shouting and fervor in the quiet penetration of your own voice speak to me from these verses: (1) “The road to heaven is always down the dusty way of men’s misunderstanding.” (2) “I always know who he is and understand his purpose.” (3) “It shall always be a rare privilege to follow him.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Burkina Faso — Points for prayer: (1) *The power of the occult has yet to be decisively challenged and broken in many peoples of Burkina Faso.* Few countries in West Africa are more dominated by idolatry, fetishism and secret societies. Pray that the power of the risen Christ might be demonstrated for the saving of many. (2) *Missionaries working in Burkina Faso* have a vital role in a land of so much physical and spiritual need. The work has been hard, and victories long in coming. Pray for their protection and encouragement. They need great sensitivity in these days of strident nationalism and suspicion of their motives. They need to know the Lord’s priorities. Missionary reinforcements are needed in a wide range of ministries.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Have thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
Thou art the Potter; I am the clay.
Mold me and make me After Thy will,
While I am waiting, Yielded and still.

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
Search me and try me, Master, today!
Whiter than snow, Lord, Wash me just now,
As in Thy presence Humbly I bow.

WEEK SEVEN

—Saturday—

By right of creation and redemption we belong to you. I want to use this blessed time to praise you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“. . . we your people, the sheep of your pasture, will praise you forever: from generation to generation we will recount your praise” (Psa. 79:13). Are not all the peoples of the earth “your people?” By right of creation they surely are. But by right of redemption only Israel could be so described. Now we are thrice over “your people.” You have created us. You have delivered us through the history of Israel — and most of all you have bought us with the blood of your own Son! How wonderful it is to lift my heart to such a one this day! It is not difficult for me to take my place in your pasture with all your other sheep — I have not lost my identity inasmuch as you know every sheep by name!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. What a joy it is today to praise you! Some days it requires more effort than others — today it is a delight! You have not changed and tomorrow you will be just the same wonderful shepherd you are today. One day I shall be ushered into your eternal presence and can with no fluctuation “praise you forever.” While here on this temporary dwelling place I want to develop in my generation the capacity of praise. Dear Lord, I do not have a deeper desire or a more worthy purpose — help me to teach by example and my poor words — the beautiful habit of praise, of adoration, of worship, of your name, your person, your Son. Help me! Oh that it might be true — from generation to generation we will recount your praise.

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 we want to be like the people of this world and not *your* people? What a simplistic question! No — it is not! We spend much more time and thought

in this world than we do with you. No wonder we become like the generation in which we live. You called us to become the *regenerated*. The *new* generation. *The people of yourself!* When we pasture outside your fold it is no wonder we can’t hear your voice or want your food. You are always looking for some tender-hearted, clear thinking young man or woman to become your sheep — your generation — and to start a chain reaction that shall sweep the whole world in its wake. Ah, dear Lord — break my heart! Forgive my 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

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

¹²The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. ¹³Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. ¹⁴Then he said to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard him say it. —Mark 11:12-14, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Read also Matthew 21:18,19. How shall I ever plumb the depths of these two verses? I know I shall not — but also know I shall never give up trying! What a poignant fact it is that my Lord endured all the

limitation of the human body to which I am subject. He was hungry. He looked ahead on the road they were travelling and saw a fig tree full of leaves, when it was not even the season for such growth. He could have expected to find figs on it since the figs formed before the leaves. This was indeed a rare fig tree — producing out of season — ahead of all other trees! Or was it? It was a hypocrite — of the worst kind. A special pretense deserving special judgment.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Jesus knew before he reached the tree what he would do and what he would find. He reached among the leaves for the benefit of his disciples. This tree became a wonderful visual aid in teaching his followers. It was the barren nation of Israel! They were among all nations someone special — indeed they were — and could have been food for the nations — and an example to all other nations. Why advertise if you do not have a product? Such was the message of this fig tree. Dear Lord, how sharply does this speak to me! Profession is *not* possession! It was directed to the tree but it was meant for the fruitless nation of Israel, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” Give me ears to hear.

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 humanness of my Lord seen in these verses. (2) Thank you for the innovative approach to life seen in Jesus. (3) Thank you for the actions Jesus used to teach others — and *only* to teach others — how thoughtful! (4) Thank you for the symbolism in the fig tree incident. (5) Thank you he alone can know when we should or should not have fruit. (6) Thank you for the finality of both his judgment and reward. (7) Thank you I need not be fruitless.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs.” If it was not the season for figs how is it Jesus expected to find figs? The city of Jericho was the city of fig trees. Its subtropical climate makes this possible. Doubtless our Lord had eaten figs before in this city. This was early April and figs are not ripe till June. But here is a premature tree advertising its unusual fruitfulness. The figs form first and then the leaves. This is indeed an unusual tree. And so it was with Israel — they were God’s unusual tree. They proclaimed loudly their piety. The leaves of form were there but the fruit of righteousness was not. This tree became a parable of their condemnation.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

As I face the reality of fruitfulness I want to pray: (1) How bright and beautiful was that early April morning — I want to fall in step with him as he walks to Jerusalem. (2) My Lord’s hunger was for more than figs — I want to share his desires. (3) The destruction of a wayside fig tree is incidental to the lesson of barrenness — dear Lord, have I learned it? (4) As my Lord saw the fig tree so he sees me — and all men and knows our hearts — awesome thought! May my possession match my profession. (5) “Nothing but leaves” has been a haunting thought for years — how much fruit for how many leaves? *Fruit first and then the leaves.* Burn this upon my conscience.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You are speaking to me in these verses: (1) “I am yet hungry for fruitfulness in the lives of my people.” (2) “I am even now reaching among your profession for fruit.” (3) “There will be a day of fruit inspection.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Burma — Points for prayer: (1) *Burma is a divided and troubled land* with private armies fighting for ethnic independence, Communism and protection of the lucrative opium trade. Pray that these trials may purify the church. (2) *Over the last few years the central government has given Christian workers and missionaries greater freedom to witness* — as a bulwark against Communism. Pray that opportunities may be used to the full. (3) *Missions* have done a good work, especially the American Baptist work pioneered by Adoniram Judson from 1813 onwards. So, when the government expelled all Protestant and most RC missionaries in 1966 (375 left the land), the Church was able to make the many painful adjustments speedily and carry on the ministry. Since that time, the believers have been almost completely isolated from contacts with Christians outside the country. Pray for the removal of restrictions.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Down at the cross where my Savior died,
Down where for cleansing from sin I cried,
There to my heart was the blood applied;
Glory to His name.

I am so wondrously saved from sin,
Jesus so sweetly abides within,
There at the cross where He took me in;
Glory to His name.

WEEK EIGHT

—Sunday—

Awaken within me the holy high honor it is to appear before your throne of grace. Make your face to shine upon us!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Hear us, O shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock; you who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh. Awaken your might; come and save us. Restore us, O God; make your face shine upon us, that we might be saved” (Psa. 80:1-3). If the psalmist of centuries past could so sing of your greatness who are we to do less? We have so much more reason to sing. The Good Shepherd has come and we are the sheep of his pasture! My blessed Lord is the Shepherd of the new Israel — even the “called out ones.” Your exalted and wonderful position calls for the praise and wonder. There are several powerful qualities of yourself now before me.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I do not know just what is meant by the expression, “enthroned between cherubim” but it does create an image of exaltation and rule. I am sure when I am called out of this body and find myself in the spirit-world I shall know much more about the order of angels than I presently do. It is enough now to praise you and call upon your power and love to give direction and deliverance to your flock today. The requests of these verses are just what we need and a real source of praise, lead us, manifest your presence, express your power, save us, restore us.

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

Do I really want the above requests answered or are they just so many words? If I want your leadership how is it that I am so unwilling to be led by anyone except myself? If I do not have a meek and quiet spirit I cannot be led — dear Lord, help me! If you

did manifest your presence would I recognize it? You have indeed been at work in my life. I have seen but faint indications of your presence — (enough for me to praise you) but I have been so terribly blind. I have grounded your power in my life. It is not in buildings or projects you express your power but in the revelation of yourself in the person of your Son. How sadly I have been in your way here — 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

Take the name of Jesus with you,
Child of sorrow and of woe;
It will joy and comfort give you;
Take it then where'er you go.

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

HIS WORD

¹²Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. ¹³“It is written,” he said to them, “‘My house will be called a house of prayer,’ but you are making it a ‘den of robbers.’” —Matthew 21:12,13, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Jesus had been to Jerusalem often. He had even been there just the day before. He saw the crowded “bazaar of Annas.” He could smell the livestock. He knew the terrible price-hike for the animals sold by the priests. He knew also how difficult it was for anyone to be honest or reverent in this atmosphere. *Something must be done!* He would do it! A cyclone suddenly hit the Gentile quarters. It was Jesus of Nazareth full of the zeal for his Father’s house. He used physical force in cleaning out this place of cor-

ruption. Over went the money tables! The benches of those who sold doves rolled down the steps. All activity stopped for a brief moment to watch the one who dared!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Why didn't somebody stop him? Because they all knew he was right! Up to this time no one had the courage to do anything about it. With but little persuasion Jesus could have enlisted a multitude of worshippers to help him in his cleansing. Dear Lord you have my total support in cleansing my temple — even my own body. Enter my mind and cast out all that defiles — take every thought captive. Make me what you intended — a place of worship — of prayer. How easy it is to allow — little by little the secular humanistic emphasis to dominate. Dear Lord cleanse and forgive.

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 priority my Lord gave to worship. (2) Thank you Jesus was concerned about the influence of good and evil upon everyone. (3) Thank you Jesus was not at all insensitive to prices fair and unfair. (4) Thank you Jesus acted instead of arguing! (5) Thank you that my Lord was willing to do something some men would call radical. (6) Thank you for the zeal that burned in his soul — may it burn in ours. (7) Thank you this example has been preserved over all these years.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"My house will be called a house of prayer; but you have made it a den of robbers." For one brief moment the temple fulfilled its purpose; it was a place where men could come for help in the deep needs of the soul. It was built for this purpose but had fallen to the greed and lust of men. It had been forty-six years in building and would last for only six years after completion. Herod began his work in 20 B.C. He employed ten thousand workers in his remodeling of what became a magnificent structure. When Crassus plundered the temple he took 30 million dollars of bounty for himself. It is estimated the family of the high priest cleared one million dollars a year. It had indeed become a den of robbers — and they were rich!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How can I pray over these verses? (1) Dear Lord, enter the door of this temple and cast out all love of

money. (2) I welcome you to fill this temple with your zeal. (3) Gladly do I ask you to teach me to pray. (4) Gladly do I accept the help of the Holy Spirit in my pursuit of this ability. (5) Examine my motives in buying and selling. (6) Give me the zeal for worship I see in my Lord.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Reach my heart through these words: (1) "My temple, individual and collective has not improved." (2) "How is my money spent today that brings worship to the hearts of men?" (3) "Since you know these things what will you do to change it?"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Burma — Points for prayer: (1) *The churches have continued to grow steadily* at nearly 4% per year. The leadership in the churches gained in maturity and standing in the community after the expulsion of the missionaries. Christianity did not collapse, for it was rooted in the hearts of the people. Many Christians are well educated and are in positions of responsibility all over the country. Many young people have converted in the churches and through various evangelical para-church groups. The Assemblies of God churches have shown marked growth. (2) *The most remarkable growth has taken place among the tribal people* and now the majority of the Kachin, Rawang, Lisu, Lahu, Lushai, 60% of the Chin, and 26% of the Karen are Christian. Pray that they may continue to evangelize every sub-group in their respective tribes and reach out to other unreached tribes and to the Bhama themselves.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

God be with you till we meet again;
By His counsels guide, uphold you,
With His sheep securely fold you;
God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again;
'Neath His wings protecting hide you,
Daily manna still provide you;
God be with you till we meet again.

WEEK EIGHT

—Monday—

The opening verses of our worship time do speak so clearly and beautifully of your personal interest in us. I want to take a very real personal interest in you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. You cleared the ground for it, and it took root and filled the land. . . . Watch over this vine, the root your right hand has planted, the Son (or branch) you have raised up for yourself” (Psa. 80:8,9,14b,15). In your care for the nation of Israel I see qualities that relate to your interest in all men today. You removed your children from a hostile environment. This is not always true. You also gave strength to the same people to live in such an environment for 400 years! The vine was the object of your constant concern. I know you want to relate to all men in this same manner. Praise your name for such personal concern in the dailiness of our lives.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. What I have seen as relating to the large nation I now see related to every individual. You do indeed aid us in the battle against our enemies. It would seem we have victory over this habit or that problem — it was your victory not ours. How glad I am for the preparation of the circumstances when you want to plant your vine. I am glad to believe you are at work even now in preparing a way for the “little things” and the “big things” of our life. When you plant a vine it will really grow — every one you do not plant shall be rooted up. In all these ways I relate you to myself and praise you for being so interested.

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

The sad plight of the vine you planted is most fully and graphically described in this 80th psalm. What happened? We have the historical record — we can read it. The simple fact is: Israel forgot and became involved! Isn't this what happens to me? Indeed it is!

As often as I review the wonders of your redeeming grace in my life it is so easy to forget — I am so glad you have moved me to this daily time with you that I might daily remember — but even then I forgot — forgive me. Perhaps my larger sin is becoming so involved in the affairs of this life that I forget the one who has enrolled me as a soldier. There is something frightfully deceitful about riches — or any handling of money — goad me and 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

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not:
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁴The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. ¹⁵But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple area, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they were indignant. ¹⁶“Do you hear what these children are saying?” they asked him. “Yes,” replied Jesus, “have you never read, “‘From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise?’” ¹⁷And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night. —Matthew 21:14-17, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

As I read these words I am so well instructed in the reasons for men's attitudes. The rulers were indignant and sought ways to kill him. *How could they do it?*

Why? Why? Most of the rulers looked to their superiors for their salary and orders. If the High Priest and those with him did not accept Jesus as the Christ then they did not. Word was out from the High Priest that one must die for the nation. Jesus was therefore an imposter and must be stopped. Is it possible to adopt such an attitude today? Ah, to ask it is to answer it. Even while the sick were healed — the blind given their sight and the lame walked they hated 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. How charming is the description of the children in the temple, they cried “Hosanna (God save us) to the Son of David.” No wonder the rulers were indignant. Of all people who needed to be saved it was not the children. Our Lord came to turn the hearts of the Fathers to the children — but these were not those fathers. We wonder how long the words of Jesus remained with them when he answered their request that the children be quieted: “have you never read, ‘From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise?’” Perhaps they passed such words off and straightway forgot them. I do not. They turn my heart to you. How I want the heart of these children in adoration to the Son of David. “Hosanna.”

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 open door to the temple your Son made for the blind and lame — how I need your healing. (2) Thank you once again for the signs of his deity seen in healing. (3) Thank you for the sharp opposition; the sharper it was the more clearly were the lines of truth and error drawn. (4) Thank you the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did — not that they accepted it, but they *did* see it. (5) Thank you for the beautiful innocent voices of the children and what they said. (6) Thank you for the fulfilled prophecy here given by Matthew. (7) Thank you for these momentous days of my Lord’s life and that I can follow him through them.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night.” Jesus found a real warm welcome in the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. What was the topic around the dinner table that night? Were his three friends at Jerusalem for the cleansing of the Temple? Did he speak to them of his coming death? It was in this home he would spend three nights. When he got up from his bed Thursday morning he knew the next place he would lie down

would be upon a cross. It is most difficult to associate God in human form, eating and sleeping in the home of common folk. Ah, but this is what is happening with me each day. How did the events of the house relate to Jesus? Wasn’t he the center around whom everything moved?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I want to go into the cleansed temple and pray: (1) What a busy, noisy, colorful place it is — but your holy presence is here and it is enough. (2) As I look around I see the many lame, blind, and maimed moving toward my Lord — he touches them — speaks to them — smiles at them — they are made well! Somehow I want to help the hurting to see him today. (3) Look at the many, many children — I can hear their joyful shouts — the mothers and fathers share in the praise — yea as I do! “Save me dear Lord,” in every way such a word has meaning. (4) Then there are the “stuffed-shirts” — but do you see them that way? Give me *your compassion!*

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Dear Lord, I do want to open my ears to your voice — speak to me through these verses: (1) “My temple can be such a joyous place — make it so.” (2) “Have you learned to praise me from the lips of children and infants? Listen next time.” (3) “There is a close to every day — even the most important ones.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Burundi — Points for prayer: (1) *The political situation is difficult* for Christians. Home meetings and mid-week gatherings may no longer be held. The work of some churches and missions has been banned and the entry of new missionaries is very difficult. Christians must live lives that commend the gospel to unbelieving leaders. Praise God that the gospel can still be preached. Pray that Christians may do so without fear or compromise. (2) *Ethnic divisions are still deep*, and the scars of the events of 1972 still not fully healed. Underlying tensions remain. Pray that believers may be channels of reconciliation and love.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Take the world, but give me Jesus,
All its joys are but a name;
But His love abideth ever,
Through eternal years the same.

Take the world, but give me Jesus,
Sweetest comfort of my soul;
With my Savior watching o’er me,
I can sing though billows roll.

WEEK EIGHT

—Tuesday—

I say with the inspired writer: “the joy of the Lord is my strength.” I want in this time and place to increase my joy — and thus my strength!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Sing for joy to God our strength; shout aloud to the God of Jacob! Begin the music, strike the tambourine, play the melodious harp and lyre” (Psa. 81:1,2). Can it be that there is in your nature that which moves us to sing for joy? Yea, indeed there is! True, lasting joy comes from our hearts when we praise you! In this one verse is enough to keep us singing for a long time — you are our *strength*! In a thousand situations each week — each month we need inward reinforcement. There are so many places when we want to be strong. You are indeed the answer — teach me to pause and lift up a prayer and praise for your presence and help. Amen!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. What tune shall we play to express our joy and wonder? How good it is to do this! Let us strike the tambourine and play the harp and lyre as we sing: “Whosoever heareth, shout, shout the sound! Spread the blessed tidings all the world around; Tell the joyful news wherever man is found, whosoever will may come. Whosoever will, whosoever will! Send the proclamation over vale and hill. Tis a loving Father calls the wanderer home. Whosoever will may come.” Ah, that we would open our hearts to truly believe it! “Whosoever cometh need not delay, Now the door is open, enter while you may; Jesus is the true, the only living way: Whosoever will may come!” Praise your name I am so full of joy!

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

Why are we so hesitant to break over and begin a song to your name? It is because we live too long in the dismal world where there is little or nothing to sing about — i.e., that lasts with meaning. Let’s

break out! Dear Lord, forgive my hesitancy — my procrastination. Forgive my hypocrisy — that I should sing your songs from my teeth and not my heart. To sing them to impress others — to join the group. When no one else is there — here in the quietness of your presence I want to crash the atmosphere with your praise! If I will but pause long enough (when I am rested) I can see cause for praise all about me. Forgive me — deliver me from the sadness of this world.

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

²⁰Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Feast. ²¹They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. “Sir,” they said, “we would like to see Jesus.”

²²Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.

²³Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. ²⁵The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me. —John 12:20-26, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What an attractive interesting incident this is! I do want to be able to see it somewhat as you do. What were these Greeks doing at the Jewish feast of the Passover? They had come out of darkness to whatever light they could find. It was not to be found in the philosophies of Plato or Aristotle. Why did they come to Philip? John tells us he was from the Gentile oriented city of Bethsaida in Galilee so he could better appreciate their request. Why did Philip want to tell Andrew? We do not know. We can only guess he wanted reassurance that it would be all right to carry this request to Jesus. The answer of my Lord will surely require thought and prayer — help 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. The dark hour of his soul has come — at the same time it is the hour when he shall be glorified. Was it the need of the Greeks that moved him to consider what was about to happen when he gave his life on Calvary? Did the Greeks hear this answer or did Philip and Andrew tell them? In verse 24 our Lord taught the real meaning of his death. He was the “kernel of wheat that falls into the ground and dies” and produced many seeds. The appropriation of his death carries the same principle — *death before life!* Oh, my soul! Are you listening? Or are you just reading? *You must die!* You must hold ever so lightly the things of this life! The wonder of the promise, “My Father will honor the one who serves me.” How I want that promise fulfilled in my life!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the hunger of the human heart — only fulfilled in Jesus. (2) Thank you for Philip who wanted help in bringing the Greeks to Jesus — we all need such help. (3) Thank you for the glory or character of my Lord — he died that I might live. Break my heart — open my mind! Deepen my awareness! (4) Thank you that I have found nothing in this life really worth loving that you have not given. (5) Thank you for the plain promise of gain and loss. (6) Thank you for the wonderful promise of eternal life. (7) Thank you that Jesus made imperative my following him; I can not choose to disobey if I want to be with him here and hereafter.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“My Father will honor (take care of) the one who serves me.” This is a little hidden promise in the answer our Lord gave to the Greeks. We wonder if they heard it. A larger concern is if we have heard it! The word “honor” is used in reference to the child who “honors” his parents — or the elder who is to be supported by the church. What a revelation into the nature of God this was for the Greeks who were

educated in a culture where the gods were as cold and impersonal as was their philosophy. Does this mean that if we place ourselves in a culturally hostile environment that in spite of the physically impossible circumstances you will feed us? It could happen — it has happened — but this would be the blessed sovereign exception. What this means is if we serve him where we are he will take care of us in areas of need far more important than food, clothes or shelter.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I lift up my heart to you through these verses: (1) Keep me aware of the deep need of all men to worship you. (2) May I be as wise and open to help as Philip. (3) Give me a new view of my Lord just for today. (4) I look again at the cross to see the real character of my Lord. (5) Impress upon me more deeply than ever before the price he paid that I might live. (6) Develop my hatred for this life. (7) May I be ready this day to enter the eternal life you have for me.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As Jesus spoke to the Greeks — speak to me: (1) “Self-giving is best seen from the foot of the cross.” (2) “In Jesus you can see how to hate your life.” (3) “It is possible to lose your life here and hereafter.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Cameroon — Points for prayer: (1) *Praise God for the steady growth of the Church* and present open doors for ministry. However, the land is only partially evangelized. Praise God for the touch of revival in the cities in 1978. (2) *Christians are most numerous in the south.* The Baptist, Presbyterian and Lutheran Churches are the largest groups. Inadequate pastoral care and clear teaching on biblical sanctification, together with liberalism in theological schools, have sapped the vitality and outreach of many churches in some denominations. To most, the Bible is a little-known book. Compromise with paganism, drunkenness, personality clashes, and divisions have been the bitter fruit. Pray for revival. Pray for the leaders of the denominations.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

In the calm of the noontide, in sorrow's lone hour,
In times when temptation casts o'er me its power,
In the tempests of life, on its wide, heaving sea,
Thou blest Rock of Ages, I'm hiding in Thee.

WEEK EIGHT

—Wednesday—

What glorious promises are made to each one of us: (1) fed with the finest bread; (2) honey from the rock of ages; (3) totally satisfied! I enter into worship to accept these promises.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“If my people would but listen to me, if Israel would follow my ways, how quickly would I subdue their enemies and turn my hand against their foes! . . . you would be fed with the finest of wheat; with honey from the rock I would satisfy you” (Psa. 81:13,14; 16). To follow is to listen — to listen is to follow. This Israel did not do. In this little expression is so much of your *whole self*! You are an intelligent being who communicates in thought through words. You are a loving heavenly father who wants to lead his children around the rocks and traps in the path of life. In your way is peace and purpose dear Lord, I want to walk in your way.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

The record of physical conquest is used time and again in the new covenant as an example for spiritual victory. I am delighted to claim the promises in the principles found here in your words to Israel. What enemies do I have to be subdued? To name but a few: (1) The lust of the flesh in whatever form — what is the answer? “If my people would but listen to me, . . . would follow my ways.” You say much about this subject. (2) The lust of the eyes in many “things” I want. Your answer is just as clear here — particularly in the example of your Son. (3) The pride of life, i.e., the constant status seeking of this life. How multiple and subtle is this temptation — and yet how clear is the “life by the Spirit” seen in Jesus. Praise you for opening my eyes!

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

In the nature of the praise I have found confession. My ears are open this morning — but they have been dull or closed so many times before. How shall I ever

repair such a large lack? I cannot — it must be forgiven — you have forgotten it — it is much more difficult for me to forget. How incredibly sad it is to have been so deaf for so long! And yet there were times when I listened — it was a spasmodic deafness. Is this an excuse? Forgive me if it is. It would seem we are determined to be defeated and to starve ourselves to death. No longer! I gladly open your word and absorb what you say and put my will into doing it. I want the “honey from the rock” even your blessed Son!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

²⁷“Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name!”

Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.” ²⁹The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

³⁰Jesus said, “This voice was for your benefit, not mine. ³¹Now is the time for judgment on this world;

now the prince of this world will be driven out. ³²But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." ³³He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. — *John 12:27-33, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

We shall never plumb the depths of his troubled heart. He is now approaching the greatest most important hour in human history! Is our Lord praying here the same prayer he is to pray in Gethsemane? If it is not the same request it contains the same commitment, i.e., "not my will but your will be done." Dear Lord, I hesitate long before I attempt here any expression lest I misrepresent anything your Son has said. Give me the wisdom of your promise. The total revelation of your character was the constant sole purpose of your Son. How can I ever thank you enough for this mirror of your love?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. In the above expression what I have said for myself I have said for all — John the fisherman — apostle understood the voice: "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." I take this to mean that you were revealed in the whole life your Son had lived until this moment and you would most clearly and finally manifest your true character on Calvary and the open tomb. The crowd around Jesus heard something — and it was enough to accomplish the purpose you had in mind, i.e., to identify your Son as divine. The climactic decision as to who would rule the world was about to be reached! Wow! What an awesome thought! The condemnation of satan — his defeat — he is to be "cast out" — in the same act all men will be drawn to you. Oh, wonder of all wonders!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

I hasten to the throne of grace as I read these words: (1) Thank you for the self-consciousness of Jesus — he knew where he was and where he was going at all times. (2) Thank you for this wonderful self-giving prayer of my Lord — it was for me. (3) Thank you for the determined obedience to death decision of my Lord. (4) Thank you that in Calvary and the resurrection I can see the fullness of your character. (5) Thank you for the three climactic times you spoke from heaven concerning your Son. (6) Thank you for the eyewitness testimony of John — he tells us of the crowd's reaction with no judgment. (7) Thank you for the condemnation and expulsion of satan on Calvary.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die." When he was "lifted up from the earth" was it at the time of his crucifixion or his resurrection?

Since Jesus related to his death we think of this first. But it is surely true he was lifted up from the earth again on the resurrection morning. What a powerful magnet is the cross and resurrection! All men long for the hope of life after death. It seems particularly appropriate to remember this answer is given to "certain Greeks" who come with empty hearts to be filled at the fountain of living water. They did not go away disappointed.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Read these verses for requests: (1) My heart is often troubled — in these verses I find peace. (2) I do want to hear every word and its meaning for my life. (3) May your person be revealed to me yet more and more. (4) I want to accept your defeat of the world and your rule in my life. (5) Open the eyes of my understanding as related to the driving out of satan. (6) Just now I yield to the drawing power of your cross. (7) The crowd knew Jesus predicted his death on the cross — how is it the disciples were so slow to believe? How like ourselves — help me.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me from these verses: (1) "Let me direct all the hours of your days too." (2) "I am a constant participant in all that is said and done." (3) "Yield to my drawing power."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Cameroon — Points for prayer: *The Christians in the centre and north are fewer in number; 30% of the population is Muslim. Muslims were the traditional rulers of the area. Before 1982 there was some localized harassment and persecution of believers; but since the more strict application of the secular state constitution, this has waned. The Lutheran Brethren, Union of Ev. Churches (SUM) and Baptists are the more significant bodies. Pray for a vigorous outreach by these believers to the pagan and Muslim peoples of the north. (2) The theological colleges are predominantly liberal in their theology. Pray for a decisive change in this sad state of affairs. Pray for born-again national and expatriate staff to be raised up for each school. Pray for more people to be called into full-time Christian work. The labourers are few.*

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

God is calling the prodigal: come without delay;
Hear, O hear Him calling, calling now for thee;
Tho' you've wandered so far
from His presence, come today;
Hear His loving voice calling still,
Calling now for thee.

WEEK EIGHT

—Thursday—

Your interest in the weak is of real interest to me because I am weak. I often feel like “a motherless child.” Where shall I find strength and a Father who really cares? I know — I open the door just now!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked” (Psa. 82:3,4). Man should stand back in amazement as he reads these words! Can I dare to praise you as the defender of the weak and fatherless? Indeed I can — and do! You are the one who maintains the rights of the poor and oppressed. Considering the condition of millions of weak — fatherless — poor and oppressed you must not be doing a very good job. Dear Lord, forgive me — forgive us. Your principles are always operative. Your concern is always for the ones here described. We have violated their rights — we have defeated their cause. We are the wicked from whom you must deliver them.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I can not defend the cause of a million — but I can feed ten or twelve. I can not lift up a hundred thousand who are weak — but I can lift up a few. You defend the weak and the fatherless through me. A few dollars in the hands of the missionaries will feed the hungry and clothe the naked while they are given the bread that came down from heaven. The rescue squad from heaven is already here. We have the means of delivering millions from the hand of starvation and damnation. Dear Lord, these are not words spoken in the air or merely written on paper. It is true — you are speaking to me about the hungry — the naked and the fatherless. I hear you. I will give.

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

If there ever was a time and place where we stand guilty before you it is here. “Jesus has no hands but our hands to do his work today. No feet but our feet

to walk in his way. No help but our help to bring men to his side. No mouth but our mouth to tell men that he died.” Your heart reaches out through us. What a reproach it is to read these pious words and go our way and forget what manner of men we are! Dear Lord, I propose to do far more than talk about rescuing the weak and needy. How could I be so callous for so long? Open the means and I will use it — open the door and I will go through it. The fact is I already have the means and the door is already open. Dear Lord, 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

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 shall I 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

³⁴The crowd spoke up, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ will remain forever, so how can you say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this ‘Son of Man’?”

³⁵Then Jesus told them, “You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going. ³⁶Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light.” When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them. —John 12:34-36

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It does seem incongruous that the crowd could understand what your disciples missed. But then, we usually understand just what we really want to. The crowd knew he predicted his death — they also accepted him as the Messiah. However they could not put these two thoughts together, (the great stumbling block of all Jews). They knew of the eternal nature of the Messiah but the cross stood in their way. How is it the resurrection was not in their understanding? Jesus did not answer their questions — or did he? If they would only “walk in the light,” i.e., listen to his teaching they would soon have all the answers.

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 sad thoughts were in the mind of our Lord when he spoke these words, “You are going to have the light just a little while longer?” This is a favorite figure used to describe the teaching he came to bring to man. How much longer will I have the light? How soon will the night of death o’er take me? I plan on awakening in the pure light of his presence — but my little day here will be over. Dear Lord, I hear you! I do want to put my whole trust in your light while I have it. You have at least one son of light — yea, I know there are many more. How patient and confident was my Lord — he would not use his miraculous powers to save himself — nor would he be put to death before his time.

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 those who speak up for our Lord — even if their understanding is limited. (2) Thank you for the Messiah who is indeed “the ancient of days” and abides forever at your right hand. (3) Thank you his work since his ascension is to make intercession for us. (4) Thank you for the wonderful identification I find in the name “Son of Man.” (5) Thank you for the strong warning of the deadly danger of darkness. (6) Thank you for the wonder of the “light of life” even my Lord. (7) Thank you that while we have the day and the light we can walk with him!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light.” Our Lord’s words to the Greeks are as contemporary today as then. Indeed, indeed, how we can put our trust in your light! Two thousand years have not put it out. Ten million other lights have been forgotten and are just as if they never were. In another sense we shall only have your light for ourselves during our brief lifetime. The light that shines from the pages of your word must become a living light within us. Until there is a transfer of letter to life there is *no light*. It is a matter of so

saturating our whole being with the wonderful record of your life that such a transfer is made — your word becomes light and life to us. We are transformed by the renewing of our minds.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Such a meditation leads me to prayer: (1) My intercessor is alive forever more! Teach me the full meaning of that one thought. (2) Lift up the cross of your Son in every relationship of life. (3) “Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes” — and wake me up! (4) “Who is this Son of Man?” Will I ever know all about him? Increase my knowledge of him. (5) Impress upon me again and again that I will not always have your light with me. (6) In very practical ways may I today — “walk in your light.” (7) Deliver me from satan’s darkness.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I am like the Greeks — a Gentile — speak these words all over again to me: (1) “The darkness of death overtakes everyone — walk in my life while it is day.” (2) “You do not know where you are going if you do not have my light — even if you think you do.” (3) “Is there a better designation than ‘sons of light?’ Then live it!”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Canada — Points for prayer: (1) *Canada needs revival.* A localized revival in the Prairie provinces in 1972 brought blessing to many churches, but a wider and deeper work of God is needed. Praise God for evident blessing among French, native Canadians and some ethnic minorities since 1980. (2) *There is a drift away from the traditional churches* where nominalism, non-biblical theology and neglect of evangelism is common. Only about half of all Canadians have any real affiliation with a church. Pray that the Evangelicals within these denominations may be as salt and light. (3) *The missionary vision has been great*, but the number of missionaries has fallen of late. Pray for increased involvement by churches and individuals in the evangelization of the unreached in Canada and around the world. Pray for the stimulation of missionary concern in the many growing evangelical churches among the ethnic minorities; such a vision could be strategic for the evangelization of their lands of origin.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

God’s tomorrow is a day of gladness,
And its joys shall never fade;
No more weeping, no more sadness,
No more foes to make afraid.

WEEK EIGHT

—Friday—

It is in the closet of prayer I can — and do — renew my confidence in your omniscience and omnipotence. This I do just here and now!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Rise up, O God, judge the earth, for all the nations are your inheritance. O God, do not keep silent; be not quiet, O God, be not still. See how your enemies are astir, how your foes rear their heads” (Psa. 82:8; 83:1,2). Such qualities are not usually associated — or mentioned as a source of praise. But I am told over and again “vengeance belongs to you.” Vengeance is a quality in your nature. I do indeed praise you that I can leave such a task in your hands. As we review the brief history of the body of your Son we can follow a check and balance in the record. But there are many areas where there does not seem to be any balance. I am delighted to call upon you to “rise up and judge the earth” — I acknowledge the nations as your inheritance — it is good to leave all this in your hands.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. It is very easy to “fret myself because of evil doers.” It is a simple matter to look at the terrible iniquities of life and lose all perspective. In the psalmist’s day he became so concerned he told God what he already knew — how often do we do this? He names all the nations who oppose Israel — and once again an assumption is made — that God had no interest but condemnation for these other nations. Isn’t it enough to call upon you for vengeance and leave it there? Dear Lord, it is the only attitude I can take that will free me from depression. In back of all of these words there is a deep joy that such an immense problem is answered in this one quality of your self! 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

Dear Lord, how unlike all the above has been my handling of the situation. I have lashed out at the

seeming silence of yourself. I have indeed tried through my prayers to wake you up. What an effrontery! Yes, I have itemized the opposition just as if you knew little or nothing about it. I have also decided what your answer would be and have held it up in prayer for your “rubber stamp” of approval. Dear Lord, what stupidity — what a sin. Forgive me! In the psalmist’s words we see what could be done — what you could do. In some expressions through the gift of prophesy what would be done. In my day it is more than enough to ask you to let me bow out of this area where I do not belong.

What personal sins do you want to confess?

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

He leadeth me: O blessed thought!
O words with heav’nly comfort fraught!
Whate’er I do, where’er I be,
Still ’tis God’s hand that leadeth me.

HIS WORD

³⁷Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him.

³⁸This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet:
“Lord, who has believed our message
and to whom has the arm of the Lord
been revealed?”

³⁹For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere:

⁴⁰“He has blinded their eyes and
deadened their hearts,
so they can neither see with their eyes,
nor understand with their hearts,
nor turn — and I would heal them.”

⁴¹Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus’ glory and spoke about him.

⁴²Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³for they loved praise from men more than praise from God. —John 12:37-43, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, as you know my heart you know I do want to read every word of these verses as if I were sharing in your speaking it to my heart — and the heart of all men. It would be interesting to know just how many miracles Jesus did — and kept doing in the presence of these men. But then, it was not the quantity but the quality (or source) of His miracles that became a stumbling block to these men. It was not unbelief but *disbelief*. They refused to accept the obvious. What a sobering lesson there is in this for us. The more one exercises the capacity to believe or disbelieve the easier it becomes to do it.

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 prophecy of Isaiah was cited as fulfilled three times. Once when the people of the prophet's day fulfilled it — here in the experience of our Lord, and when Paul spoke to the Jews in Rome (Acts 28:26,27). It has been fulfilled in principle ten thousand times since. It will be fulfilled in me if I *do not want to believe*. Dear Lord, I do want to believe. Of course I find the evidence adequate — but the same evidence was available to the Jews of Isaiah's day — of Jesus' day — of Paul's day and in our day. It is and it is not a matter of evidence. It is *always* a matter of if we want to. The option in disbelief offers no attraction for me. I do not want blind eyes or a dead 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 Isaiah did indeed write the 53rd chapter of his book — John said he did! (2) Thank you he also wrote the 6th chapter — John said he did! (3) Thank you John identified the one of whom Isaiah wrote — it was my blessed Lord! (4) Thank you that there were those men of intelligence and influence who believed in him. (5) Thank you that John had the courage to expose the hypocrisy of some! They were intimidated by the Pharisees. (6) Thank you that we can indeed love your praise more than the praise of men. (7) Thank you for the plain fact that when we act out of the fear of men we do not please you.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“ . . . for they loved praise from men more than praise from God.” There never has been a verse I needed more in my own Christian experience than this one. Dear Lord, how can I avoid this terrible sin? I have been greatly helped by a study on the discipline of solitude and simplicity. It is only when I find my total sufficiency in you that I do not need the praise of men. So far I am understanding the answer — but

appropriating it into my subconsciousness is another matter. How do I get my praise from you? It is found in my own conscience. This is your heavenly umpire to give me approval or disapproval. Thank you!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Surely I am prepared to call out upon your name: (1) It is easy to become calloused to the beauties and wonders of your Son — protect me. (2) I believe the message — I see and accept your mighty power — increase my awareness. (3) Willful rejection has such a deadening effect — I want to be tender and open to all you say. (4) Thank you for John's words about Isaiah's speaking of the glory of Jesus — I want to share his estimate. (5) Keep me aware that confessing my faith is a necessity. (6) Why should the estimate of men be so important? We are too often and too long with them — I need more time with you. (7) Thank you for the more than adequate approval I find in your Son and yourself.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to my heart in these verses: (1) “Men today are again fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy but you need not be one of them.” (2) “Some men have so rejected me that they cannot believe.” (3) “The love of my praise is a cultivated capacity.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Canada — Points for prayer: (1) *The evangelical witness is growing*, especially in Western Canada. Pray that it may become a mighty voice for God and righteousness in this materialistic society. The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada is one of the fastest growing denominations. Among smaller evangelical denominations which are growing are the *CMA*, Association of Gospel Churches, Fellowship Baptists, *Nazarenes*, etc. Yet deviousness among Evangelicals is often a sad reality. Pray for a greater concern for the evangelization of the many immigrant groups of Canada. The West Indian and Chinese evangelical churches are strong, and the latter growing fast. (2) *The large number of Bible institutes, colleges and theological seminaries* committed to the orthodox view of Scripture are fulfilling a major role in the growth of the evangelical witness. Most are concentrated in the western Prairie provinces. Pray for those in training and those teaching them, that world evangelization may have priority.

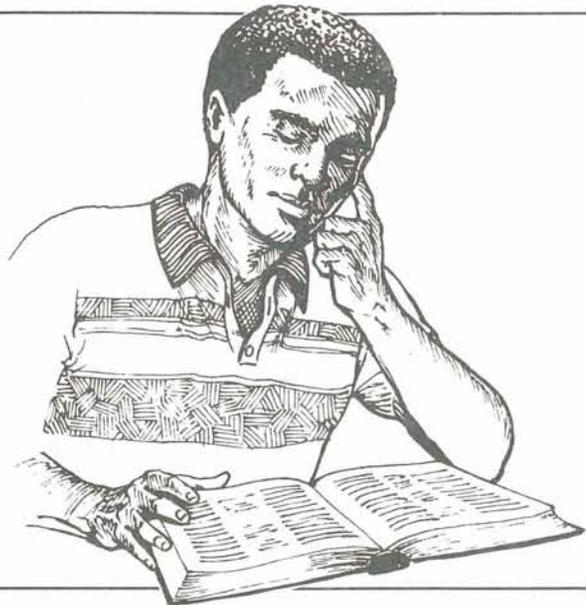
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt,
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured,
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.

WEEK EIGHT

—Saturday—

Energize me dear Lord with your personal presence in the person of the Holy Spirit. I await in worship for your answer.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Hear my prayer, O Lord God Almighty; listen to me, O God of Jacob. . . . Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God than dwell in the tents of the wicked” (Psa. 84:8; 10). I delight in the fact that you *hear* me when I pray. I have watched men who look at you and never see you, listen to you but never hear you. Oh that all men might appreciate this quality of yourself! You see and hear in the most personal of interest; in the most helpful manner possible. If men in the long ago could find such fulfillment in your house of worship how wholly delighted we should be with your presence in us by the Holy Spirit!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. There is no joy like the joy of worship! If we believe we are living in the fulfillment of all the prophets longed for how much more excited and happy should be our expression of praise and worship? We have “the lamb of God” instead of an animal of the field. We have a once-for-all eternal sacrifice instead of an endless procession of animals to an altar. We can stand ourselves in your presence as your priests and talk with you. As indeed we are now doing — praise your name! The only intercessor we need we have at your right hand. We lift the cup of your blood and eat the bread of your body. Oh, indeed how good it is to be in your presence and have your presence in us!

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

I am always asking you to do what I am unwilling to do. I want you to listen to me — to hear me. How ready am I to listen to you and hear your word for my heart? How can I better attune my mind and emo-

tions to hear your words? If being in your presence is so great how is it I do not practice your presence much more often? Forgive me. Dwelling in the tents of the wicked is an easy practice. The capacity of our imagination is endless — for good or evil. How invigorating it is to contemplate what could happen if I turned my imagination loose “in your courts” — instead of “the tents of the wicked.” Dear Lord, I am glad for this powerful capacity I propose to use for you!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

A wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord,
A wonderful Savior to me;
He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock,
Where rivers of pleasure I see.
He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock
That shadows a dry, thirsty land;
He hideth my life in the depths of His love,
And covers me there with His hand,
And covers me there with His hand.

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

HIS WORD

⁴⁴Then Jesus cried out, “When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. ⁴⁵When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me. ⁴⁶I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.

⁴⁷“As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. ⁴⁸There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day. ⁴⁹For I did not speak of my own

accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. ⁵⁰I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.” —*John 12:44-50, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

These are the last words of my Lord in his public ministry. In them is a summary of all he taught and preached to the world. How much clearer could the words of my Lord be in this statement of his equality with you. To believe and accept him is to believe and accept you. This was an incredibly bold assertion — but I accept it fully! How I do want to look and look again at your Son — as I see him, I see you. Oh, what a wonder to contemplate such an experience. I shall never see him enough! How I hope you give me enough days to read and meditate on every verse of the four gospels!

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 John said of you — you are indeed “the light of life.” You are the only light I have in my life, i.e., from heaven. To believe in you is to hear your words — to understand them and assimilate them. Praise your name — I need not at anytime stay in darkness! How glad I am to have this time with you to concentrate on every word you have spoken. How much I do want to “keep” your words. I already have the basis of judgment — even your words! There is a vast assumption in this momentous promise: that given your word we could understand it in the way you intended them to understand it. I am fully prepared to affirm this is true!

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 was so urgent about what he says here that he cried it out in a loud voice. (2) Thank you for the wonder of equality with the Father as spoken by my Lord. (3) Thank you for the full view of yourself in the person of your Son. (4) Thank you for the one light of our world even the Son. (5) Thank you for the wonderful salvation my Lord brought to the world. (6) Thank you for the confident, sure promise of judgment for all men. (7) Thank you for the “commandment” that we should believe on him who came into the world.”

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“I know that his commandment leads to eternal life.” What a wondrous assertion is this from our Lord. If any one was positive about anything it was Jesus — who was positive or confident in all he spoke. He was constantly receiving messages from yourself — you

not only told him what to say, but *how* to say it. How important are both aspects of communication — content and delivery. We have what Jesus said — and there is much description helping us to know how he said it. The real point is that what he said leads to “eternal life.” A life that is beyond this one — and that never ends. The evidence to support the credibility of the New Testament is so overwhelming that we are glad to place our whole life upon what is here recorded.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I bow before you in praise and request: (1) What my Lord spoke so earnestly I want to receive in like attitude. (2) It is an amazement of all amazements to consider what it means to accept one who is both God and man. Dear Lord, deepen my worship before you. (3) Every day, this day — lead me out of the darkness. (4) How eternally important it is that I know every word your Son spoke — deepen my commitment to learn them. (5) On that last day of all things how I want to find my refuge in you! (6) I know what you want me to say — it is in your book — but how shall I say it? Give me heaven’s wisdom. (7) I accept totally the claim that Jesus never said one thing that was not commanded by yourself.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to my heart: (1) “Faith is an act of the will.” (2) “Faith is belief of adequate testimony.” (3) “Faith is acting on what you accept.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Cape Verde Islands — Points for prayer: (1) *The steady growth of the Evangelicals* has been primarily through the ministry of Nazarene missionaries. There are now churches on most islands with Caboverdian pastors, but the extreme poverty of the islands retards the maturing and growth of the churches. (2) *Caboverdians* live in large migrant communities in New England, USA; Senegal; Brazil; Guinea-Bissau and Angola. These are significant minorities which require specific evangelistic strategies.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

In the resurrection morning,
When the trump of God shall sound,
We shall rise, Hallelujah! We shall rise!
Then the saints will come rejoicing,
And no tears will e’er be found,
We shall rise, we shall rise.

WEEK NINE

—Sunday—

We can answer the psalmist's prayer: you can and will revive us! We even now rejoice in you. We expect to increase this relationship in this time of worship.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“You forgave the iniquity of your people and covered all their sins. . . . Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you? Show us your unfailing love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation” (Psa. 85:2; 6,7). Here are such foundational qualities of yourself that we take great confidence in praising you in these areas: (1) You forgive the *iniquity* of your people. This presupposes we come to you in sincere repentance — as indeed we do. My particular transgression of your law is before me — I am sorry — not only for what it has done for me but what it has done to you. Yet you *cover* all our sins. (2) You can lift up our spirits in peace and hope — you can brighten our eyes and give vigor to our outlook on life.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. It is my sin — it is my iniquity — it is my spirit involved in the request — but most of all involved in praise and adoration before your throne of grace. I rejoice in you, i.e., in all the aspects of your very self. I am full of praise for your unfailing love! How often I have failed you — but you have never, never failed me. Let me look again most closely and personally at these qualities of yourself: (1) Forgiveness of personal sin and human weakness. (2) Atonement or covering for all my sins — even the blood of your Son is my mercy seat. (3) An ability to lift up our spirits again and again. (4) Unfailing love. (5) Salvation. Indeed, indeed — we do rejoice in you, in all these attributes and many more. 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

Is there pleasure in sin? Is there a degree of enjoy-

ment in iniquity? Is there a propensity — a strong desire to enter this pleasure to seek this enjoyment? As you know my nature and the nature of the evil one you know the answers are all “yes.” Is there any joy beyond the moment in this pleasure? Beyond the acquisition of sin’s goal? Is there any fulfillment in this enjoyment? Is the inward response solid or sick? Can these strong desires be diverted and directed toward your joy and fulfillment? To all these questions we know the answers are also “yes!” Oh, my soul, which way will you go? Dear Lord, I *want* to work in your way!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Savior, Thy dying love
Thou gavest me;
Nor should I aught withhold,
Dear Lord, from Thee:
In love my soul would bow,
My heart fulfill its vow,
Some off’ring bring Thee now,
Something for Thee.

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

HIS WORD

24 Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. ²⁴“Do you see all these things?” he asked. “I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”

³As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

⁴Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. ⁶You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷Nation will rise against nation, and

kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸All these are the beginning of birth pains. — *Matthew 24:1-8, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, you know how hesitantly I enter this arena of study. I say "arena" because there has been so much controversy over these verses — and yet there is disagreement. The whole issue is precipitated by the question of the apostles. They were three in number (Matt. 24:1-3): (1) "When will all this happen? (2) What will be the sign of your coming? (3) What will be the sign of the end of the age?" These questions were all prompted by the shocking words of our Lord concerning the temple Herod built for the Jews, ". . . not one stone will be left on another (some of the temple stones were 38 ft. long, 12 ft. high and 18 ft. wide) every one of them will be thrown down." Dear Lord, I, like the disciples, want to learn all I can from 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. In Luke's account the disciples link the destruction of the beautiful temple with the end of the age — at least the Jewish age. Ah, to be able to enter fully into the incredible scene of the assault of Titus from 66 A.D. to his sacking and burning the city in 70 A.D. There is nothing I want more than a careful understanding of all you said and its fulfillment. Before the temple is destroyed there would be those who would claim to be the Messiah and draw some after them. Can we see this claim fulfilled in Acts 5:36,37? Galmaliel uses two examples of men with Messianic aspirations to illustrate his point that these men who are preaching a Messiah should be left alone. If the two men: *Theudas and Judas* were not making Messianic claims why compare them with one who was? Was the claim of *Simon the sorcerer* in Acts 8:9-11 Messianic? It was, if not explicit it was at least implicit — no doubt many followed him because they thought he was the Messiah.

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you that I can see in your own word the fulfillment of the promises of your Son. (2) Thank you for the time element specified by Jesus. When false Christs appear the time for the destruction of the city is *near*. (3) Thank you that Rome's problems of rebellion by those they have conquered is also cited by Jesus as an indication that Jerusalem's end is near. (4) Thank you that regardless of what was happening no disciple need be afraid. (5) Thank you for the wonderful foreknowledge of my Lord.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"These things must happen first, but the end will not

come right away." Such words could be used to describe so many things that happen in our life. There is an urgency about the strangest things — *but there will be an end!* Our Lord was so kind. He prepared his disciples so that what took place in the terrible destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem was expected. The record shows that not one Christian lost his life in this holocaust. We need to mark carefully that Jesus is discussing the end of the temple — the holy city — the Jewish nation — as a nation. How closely do we want to look at these promises of our Lord.

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

READ HIS WORD IN PETITIONS

Read again every word for an opening of your prayer needs: (1) *It was* a beautiful building — but not in the eyes of yourself. Keep me balanced in my estimate of value and beauty. (2) Gifts that are dedicated to God and decorate buildings mean *nothing* without the heart of the giver — how I want to remember this. (3) How were these stones, that weighed tons, moved? They were moved to be put in place for the building — they were moved to bring your judgment. May I look on some of the immovable objects and people of my day and remember this. (4) What a joy to know that Jesus knew who he was — "the Messiah" — the saviour of the world! I want to worship him as such.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

There is so much you can say to me in these words: (1) "Worship has always been from the heart." (2) "Places of worship have all disappeared — the place is you." (3) "The temple and form was destroyed because it was not used for my purpose."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Central Africa Republic — Point for Prayer: Few countries have been better evangelized! Praise God for the massive response to evangelism in the '60s and '70s that brought about great church growth. In the early '70s *New Life For All* was a vital ingredient in this ingathering. There are now evangelical churches in nearly every tribe and district.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Hallelujah, praise Jehovah!
From the heavens praise His name;
Praise Jehovah in the highest;
All His angels proclaim.
All His hosts together praise Him,
Sun and moon and stars on high;
Praise Him, O ye heav'n of heavens,
And ye floods above the sky.

WEEK NINE

—Monday—

The deep settled peace that defies human explanation is what I want and seek and find each day in this time of personal worship.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I will listen to what God the Lord will say; he promises peace to his people, his saints — but let them not return to folly. Surely his salvation is near those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land” (Psa. 85:8,9). If the sons of Korah could sing this song with spirit and understanding it ill behooves me to do less; yea, I can do far more! I can listen to what you are saying to me anytime I want to open up your word and listen with my heart. The basic message I receive from you is *peace*. The name *“saints”* means *“holy ones”* — or *“separate ones.”* Our holiness is in our being separated, not in being different in kind from anyone else.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. How well does that one little word describe what happens when we leave our separation — *“folly.”* It turns out all froth and illusion. Somehow I want to spend so much time separated unto your self and your word, that I will develop a deep constant fear or awe that will deliver me from the froth of this world. I have truly found in what little I have practiced your presence. There is a joy and peace and love I have never found anywhere else. Praise and adoration belong to yourself! I cannot speak for the rest of the land, but in the little plot I occupy I want your total character to live!

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 sad to come to this portion of my worship — but it is no doubt at the same time the best part of it. I have quite a struggle with the control of fatigue. When I am tired I act in irrational ways. Dear Lord, how shall I manage this? I make no excuses. It is my sin, and I confess it and want to change. Several sins

are rest related, i.e., when I have rest they are not there and when I am excessively tired they are. I am struggling with this — help me dear Lord! Delaying any and all decisions during a time of fatigue is no doubt the answer — since I am so tired it would be easy to put off *any* decision, to speak harshly — act rashly. Thank you for this thought! Forgive me, I do 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

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.

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

HIS WORD

“When you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away.”

10Then he said to them: “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. 11There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.” —Luke 21:9-11, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I have read these words many times, you my Lord know just how many. I have also said the words of a good number of teachers concerning them. I am glad for everyone (like myself) who is trying their best to understand your meaning. I am lifting up each word before you and asking your help! I must project these words back to the first century between the years 30 A.D. and 70 A.D. Our Lord knew there would be much that could distract his followers. (Ah, isn't it

always so?) He was to establish his kingdom or call out those who would be built upon his deity in 30 (34?) A.D. If these men were full of fear and left Jerusalem it would be disastrous.

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 well these words relate to my day and my generation, i.e., in principle. How often we run from the scene of conflict. What do we find when we arrive in our new place? Conflict! The record of what happened to the apostles for the first years of this period is recorded in the book of Acts. Luke tells us they filled Jerusalem with their teaching. Josephus gives us much additional material to confirm all my Lord promised. Many, many examples of earthquakes, famines, pestilences and fearful events and great signs from heaven. Dear Lord — no matter what I want to be on the front lines teaching and preaching word — but most of all — worshipping yourself.

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 wars have happened hundreds of times — but have not stopped your word. (2) Thank you that present revolutions have in many instances only increased the devotion of your people. (3) Thank you that only in the king of kings is there peace. (4) Thank you for the clear record of fulfillment of the promise of these first century earthquakes. (5) Thank you for the purifying power of persecution — help me not to be afraid. (6) Ground me in your word that I might interpret present day events by it — and all previous events.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . and fearful events and great signs from heaven.” Josephus records the following “signs” which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem: (a) A star resembling a sword stood over the city. (b) A comet that lasted a whole year. (c) At the feast of unleavened bread, during the night, a bright light shone around the altar and the temple, so that it seemed to be broad daylight. (d) The eastern gate of the temple, of solid brass, fastened with strong bolts and bars, which required 20 men to shut, opened in the night of its own accord. (e) Chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding certain cities. (f) A great noise of a multitude, was heard in the temple, saying, “Let us remove hence” (*Wars VI, V, 3*). Such information from one who lived just before and during the event should give us cause to think!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

At whatever juncture I do have much reason for prayer: (1) How can I ever express adequately our thanks for our nation which has never suffered foreign invasion? (2) There is so much to learn from the example of these early Christians. Teach me of their courage in the face of physical harm. (3) The reality of your living Son was very much with them. (4) The urgency of the message they had to bring is such an example! (5) Separating truth from error must have been a real problem with them — how I need to meditate upon your word! (6) The loss of personal property and the uncertainty of where they would live.

Right here add you personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You have indeed been speaking to me through these verses — emphasize again your truth upon my heart: (1) “I am yet in control of history.” (2) “Men have a tremendous capacity for good or evil — share with me in turning their hearts to me.” (3) “The end is not yet for this world — but it is not far away either.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Chad — Points for prayer: (1) *The wars and fighting since independence fragmented the country along religious and then ethnic lines. The memory of atrocities and suffering needs to be erased. Pray for reconciliation and peace, so that the message of the gospel may cross ethnic divisions to the many unreached peoples. Pray for a spirit of forgiveness and burden for the lost among the Christians.* (2) *The church in the south grew fast in the '60s and '70s. The work of Brethren, TEAM, Baptist and Lutheran missionaries was blessed of God. A period of refinement came in 1973. During the following two years the government persecuted the believers who refused to revert to heathen customs. Hundreds were martyred. Since 1977 marauding soldiers have made travel dangerous and brought suffering and destruction to various areas in the country. Pray for the believers in these testing years that their faith may not fail.*

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.

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

WEEK NINE

—Tuesday—

How pointed and disturbing are the pictures in Psa. 85:10,11! How beautifully do they find fulfillment in our Lord! It is in worship we can renew our commitment to Him.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other. Faithfulness springs forth from the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven” (Psa. 85:10,11). What a lovely poetic expression of your character! If love were a person and faithfulness were also a person and they were to meet it would happen in yourself and in your Son. There is a perfect blend of love with conduct. It is easy for us to assent to the qualities of love — we cannot, and do not, live them out in conduct. What a comfort it is to find our love and faithfulness in Jesus! He is our example and our hiding place or refuge.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. “Righteousness and peace kiss each other.” There is no peace for the wicked — failure in living destroys peace. These qualities are surely mutually exclusive in our life and conduct. How shall we ever produce genuine affection for these two opposites? As soon as we demand righteousness we alienate peace. In yourself and particularly in your Son do we see a beautiful wedding of righteousness and peace! My Lord was perfectly righteous therefore had perfect peace! The joy I share is being “in him.” Because I am “in him.” He is my righteousness and my peace! I have no righteousness or peace apart from him — but in him these two antithetical qualities embrace each other.

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

What charming words of the ideal! “Faithfulness springs forth from the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven.” It would seem that the growth of faithfulness is a result of the rain or watering of righteousness. Faithfulness is a plant watered and

warmed by righteousness. Such is the figure. But what an impossible picture this is! The more laws we have to obey the more laws we break! The more demands given for righteousness the less we do. At least this is my confession of need! May the infinite mercy I see in yourself and your Son lead me to present my body as a living sacrifice. I shall never be saved by anything but grace — but I want to respond to such love — this is all that makes sense. Forgive me and renew me!

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

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

¹²“But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. ¹³This will result in your being witnesses to them. ¹⁴But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. ¹⁵For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. ¹⁶You will be betrayed by parents, brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. ¹⁷All men will hate you because of me.” —Luke 21:12-19, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What wonderful strength I receive from this sure word of prophecy coming from the lips of your Son!

We are discussing a period of forty years. The same years described by Dr. Luke in Acts, also chronicled by secular historians. The same wording used here to describe the prediction is used in the fulfillment: "they will lay hands upon you" (Acts 4:3). "They laid hands upon Peter and John" or "they seized Peter and John" cf. 5:18. The apostles were persecuted in synagogues and cast into prisons. Paul was brought before governors and kings. Such probably happened to some of the other apostles. What a marvelous testimony they gave: "When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord."

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 tenderly concerned my Lord was about the safety and commitment of the apostles. There were some shocking events ahead in human history. Jesus prepared them for such events. My faith and appreciation is so greatly increased by this record. "Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John they marvelled — and seeing the lame man standing with them they could say nothing against it." How perfectly, fully were the words of my Lord fulfilled. We are so glad the apostles believed him and stayed to give a witness that is yet with us today! The sad commentary of betrayal by parents, brothers, relatives and friends has yet to be written, i.e., we have not seen it. How these words cut across our lax affluent living!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for every single man or woman who died for their faith that I might live for him. (2) Thank you for the hatred some were willing to endure that I might enjoy love and peace. (3) Thank you for the promise after promise here made and fulfilled. (4) Thank you for these strong words "by standing firm you will save yourselves." Not only from the persecution that preceded the destruction of Jerusalem — but from all subsequent trials. (5) Thank you for the imperishable record we have of the promises and fulfillments — even your word.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"*But not a hair of your head will perish.*" This is the wonderful promise of Jesus to his disciples, in the midst of a holocaust the world has never seen not a hair of your head will perish. The records show that during the siege and fall of Jerusalem that not one Christian lost his life. When more than a million Jews died — while blood and fire and a vapor of smoke was all around, the followers of our Lord fled to the mountains and escaped. How wonderful are all your ways. It would seem the safety of his children is a

recurring theme of the one who loves us all. His children are the special concern of his heart. In him we find both our deliverer and refuge.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

There is much here for prayer: (1) I want to remember that being arrested and jailed does not mean you have forsaken us. (2) Since we carry the same message it does seem we would suffer some of the same opposition — what is lacking? (3) I claim your promise of wisdom — I need this wisdom in overcoming my own apathy. (4) Thank you for the promise of victory over impossible odds — I want to claim such today. (5) What would it be like to be the object of the hatred of the majority of those with whom you lived? Dear Lord, it doesn't seem fair to those who suffered for us to have so much.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In speaking to the disciples you are also speaking to me: (1) "Opposition is an obvious indication the message is being heard." (2) "I am just as interested in you now as I was then." (3) "I have a deliverance coming for all my children."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Chile — Points for prayer: (1) *Evangelical church growth has been dramatic*; a great ingathering of souls has been seen over the last 25 years. There are over 500 evangelical organizations in the country. Almost one-fifth of the population is now linked with a Pentecostal/evangelical Church. Praise God for this! The growth rate is tailing off because the gospel is having less impact on the younger generation, but opportunities for its proclamation have never been greater. (2) *The size of the evangelical community brings new responsibilities and dangers to the believers:* a) It is increasingly "respectable" to be an Evangelical. Pray for revival. b) Political influence can be decisive, but also can be misused. Pray for a prophetic role in society for Christian leaders at this time of social unrest.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Hark the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"

Joyful, all ye nations, rise;
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th'angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem!
With th'angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem!

WEEK NINE

—Wednesday—

In excited expectation I lift up my heart to you in this time of renewal!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Hear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. Guard my life, for I am devoted to you. You are my God; save your servant who trusts in you. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I call to you all day long. Bring joy to your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul” (Psa. 86:1-4). In David’s prayer there are several attributes of yourself to lift up our heart in praise: (1) You are listening and attentive to our needs. (2) David fully expected an answer. (3) You are one who sets a guard around your children. (4) Our devotion to you does not go unnoticed. (5) Salvation in both the generic and specific sense is your constant interest. (6) You are full of mercy — which means meeting our needs even when we do not deserve it.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I do wonder just how David called upon you all day long? I would like to develop such a capacity. David had one busy schedule — and yet this is testimony. You had become such a part of his inward being that in all things you were preeminent. No wonder David expected your joy to fill his heart! It is good to rejoice with you and in you while in the company of others. But it is better to lift up praise to you for no other reason than we are full of wonder and joy at the beauty and benefits in being with you. David lifted up his whole self to you as an offering — so do I!

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

In all the areas of praise there is the potential for awful sin: (1) When you are listening and attentive and we do not even care enough to talk with you we sin. (2) When we do pray with proviso — i.e., we do not expect an answer — we sin. (3) When we wilfully ignore your warnings of danger and leave the safety

of your presence and ask Satan to satisfy us we are stupid — but sinners. (4) Our devotion is known — but so is our utter hypocrisy. (5) If we ever need salvation of a very personal kind — it is *not!* Forgive and cleanse and set aside your people for your own possession. It is wonderfully good to know you *want* us. You accept us. On pure grace and mercy I accept your acceptance of me!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Sing them over again to me,
Wonderful words of life;
Let me more of their beauty see,
Wonderful words of life.
Words of life and beauty,
Teach me faith and duty:
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

²⁰“When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. ²¹Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. ²²For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. ²³How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. ²⁴They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” —Luke 21:20-24, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How clear and plain are your words concerning the time to flee. When the armies of Romans have encircled the city it is time to leave. There were occasions when the Roman armies withdrew. Gallus the

first general to attack withdrew because the army he brought was not large enough to do the job. The Jews thought this was God's providence. The Christians knew it was a signal to get out of the city. They did and fled to a place called Pella. Nero sent another general to attack the city — no less than Vespasian. He came with 60,000 men to Judea in the spring of 67 A.D. Once again the armies were withdrawn because of news of the suicide of Nero.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. If ever there was any escape from utter destruction it was when the armies of Rome left and left the door open to flee. Instead some Jews fled from the country into the city where they thought they would be safe. What consummate folly! How graphic and detailed are the words of Jesus concerning the destruction. In our Lord's estimation this was to be the greatest destruction since the beginning of time. He is not discussing statistics for many more died in Noah's flood. He is talking about the importance he places upon this incident. He added that there never will be one to compare with it. Once again, statistically we could point to a number of worse cases. But not in quantity of slain, but in the character and result of this destruction our Lord was surely right!

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 repeated plain warnings of our Lord. (2) Thank you that many Christians in this case, yea, *all* Christians heeded his words. (3) Thank you for the place of safety to which they could go. (4) Thank you for the evidence here that your vengeance is taken at last. (5) Thank you for the warning to mothers — no doubt they remembered and escaped. (6) Thank you for the estimate you placed on this destruction — it teaches us that there was something more than physical destruction involved.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” “By the word ‘until’ Jesus is indicating that the desolation of Jerusalem would continue as long as God sees fit. That is the question — how long will that be? There is a passage in Romans 11:25,26 which should provide a clue. That passage says, ‘. . . a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in, and so all Israel will be saved. . . .’ This passage makes it clear that at the time all Israel has been saved, the full number of the Gentiles (‘the times of the Gentiles . . . fulfilled’) will have come in. So the question really focuses on *all Israel's salvation.*

It is plain from the New Testament that ‘Israel’ is the church of Jesus Christ. . . . The ‘until’ then points to a time when God will have ‘grafted’ into the true *spiritual Israel*, all that through faith in Christ and obedience of that faith shall be saved. That is the end of time” (Luke, P.T. Butler).

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

READ HIS WORD IN PETITIONS

How I need to pause long before these verses that my prayers be all you want them to be: (1) Jesus gave signals of impending danger — open my eyes to danger today. (2) It is not wrong to leave a doomed city — how I do need your wisdom in knowing when a city or project is doomed. (3) Give me your estimate of what is dreadful. (4) Keep me reverent and humble before this expression of your wrath. (5) How I do fear the captivity satan wishes to place us in — keep me vigilant. (6) I am glad to be your nation of Israel today — help me to act as one of your chosen ones. (7) Thank you I can read and study and die learning.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these somber verses speak to my heart: (1) “The Jews did not believe Jesus — but his words were fulfilled — disbelief proves nothing.” (2) “I do not want to punish people, but I will.” (3) “You can be my prisoner or the prisoner of satan — there is no other choice.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

China — Points for prayer: (1) *God is being glorified in Communist China today!* Praise Him for: a) *The manifest bankruptcy of human ideologies in China.* Colossal blunders and changes in Party policy over 35 years have disillusioned the people. The fall of personality-cult leaders and the failure of promises for a better future have created a vacuum which only the gospel can fill. There may now be more Christians than Communist Party members. b) *The terrible persecutions* which have purified and indigenized the Chinese Church in a way which could never have otherwise have been achieved. c) *The remarkable fruitfulness of Christian radio,* and the remarkable faith of those who broadcast into China with little visible evidence of a response. Some reckon that 50% of all conversions have been at least partly through radio ministry.

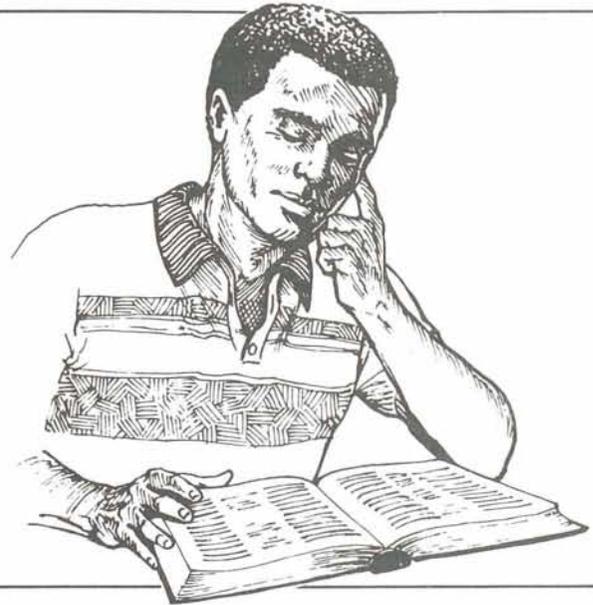
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

My precious Savior
Suffered pain and agony,
He bore it all that I might live;
He broke the bonds of sin
And set the captive free,
All that I might in His presence live.

WEEK NINE

—Thursday—

Kindness and forgiveness is what you offer to me and what I so sorely need!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“You are kind and forgiving, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you. Hear my prayer, O Lord; listen to my cry for mercy. In the day of my trouble I will call to you, for you will answer me” (Psa. 86:5-7). What beautiful qualities of yourself are seen in these verses — in this heart prayer of David. (1) *You are kind.* This means you are tenderly concerned with all that happens in my life. When I hurt you are there to sympathize and help. I could give example after example of such an expression of kindness — praise your name! (2) *Forgiving.* As often as I have praised you for this attribute I never tire of doing so. I need forgiveness so often. You forgive out of kindness — praise to such a wonderful Lord!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. There is an obvious personalness to this prayer, therefore the praise becomes personal — but it has application to all men. (3) You are “abounding in love to all who call to you.” How I do want to testify that such is wonderfully true for me. Your love is not passive but very active — very full and open. Such words speak of vigor and energy — this is your love! (4) You both hear and listen. All who hear do not listen — you do! It is indeed for mercy I cry! (5) There is no trouble in which you do not have a deep personal interest! I have never called upon you out of my trouble and failed to receive an answer — it was not my answer — but *yours* and it was good!

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

Satan is always ready with the antithesis, i.e., the very opposite of what you offer. (1) You are not kind — but indifferent and even vindictive! How easy it is to interpret the same events in the very opposite manner.

Satan has demonstrated a million times to be a liar — he has never told the truth in a moral choice. (2) God will not forgive you forever — you have sinned too often or too many times. When I want forgiveness because I want to follow in your way I can confidently claim it — which I do. I am forgiven out of mercy and abounding love. All you have from me is my desire to do your will in my life. (3) How easy it is to misinterpret your love — I need to very often look to Jesus as your expression of love for me. I reject satan and turn to him!

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 sovereign die?
Would He devote that sacred Head,
For sinners such as I?

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

HIS WORD

²¹For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now — and never to be equaled again. ²²If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. —Matthew 24:21,22, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

The distress of these days can be better understood by the remarkable fact that we can read the words of an eyewitness — his name is Josephus — dear Lord, I know you know all these things — but I am trying to see this carnage as you did — even as it was experienced by those in it. In *Wars*, books V and VI I read that, “(1) Three different political parties of the Jews were within the city fighting one another for the

three years of the siege. (2) They fought one another with such malice and abandon that thousands of innocent Jews were slain in their 'crossfire.' Even priests and worshippers in the temple courts were slain in the very act of offering sacrifices" (Luke, P.T. Butler). How terrible!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Since you have placed such a high estimate on the importance of what happened I want to quote again from Paul Butler's paraphrase of Josephus: "(3) These factions burned storehouses filled with food, polluted water reservoirs to keep others from having them, and thus caused the starvation of thousands of their countrymen. (4) Anyone who sought to escape the city, if caught by the Jews, was slain by having his throat cut. (5) Burial of dead bodies within the city was impossible so they simply let the cadavers rot, trampled over them, or threw them over the walls. (6) Some Jews tried to swallow their gold and escape the city, hoping to pass it after escape. Both their own countrymen, and later the Romans, caught on to their ruse. When such people were captured trying to escape, they were thrown to the ground and disemboweled alive and their gold taken from their intestines while they writhed in death throes" (Luke, P.T. Butler).

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the shocking information I have just considered, it helps me to be very grateful for peace in America. (2) Thank you for marking one event with such an ultimate estimate of importance — it causes me to look into it even more to find the importance you indicated. (3) The collapse of an empire is nothing compared to the fall of two thousand years of worship to yourself — I thank you I am able to appreciate just a little of its importance. (4) Thank you for the sudden unexpected brevity of the capture of the city. Some lives were spared. (5) Thank you for some potential believers in the city — it was because of them the whole population was not lost.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... but for the elects' sake those days will be shortened." The historical facts that become the fulfillment of these words do indeed serve to establish our faith: "Titus first thought to build a siege wall and starve all the Jews to death or let them all die of disease. But then, with pressing business back in Rome beckoning, he stormed the city, killed, burned and took thousands of Jews captive. Thus many thousands of Jews were saved alive who would have otherwise perished." (Luke, P.T. Butler) We could well ask, who were "the elect"? There is little

question that this phrase refers to Christians in other places. Is our Lord saying he saved the several thousand because of the little salt upon the earth? I believe he is.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In these ominous words I can surely find cause for prayer: (1) Shall we ever know of all the suffering that took place in the siege of this city? It is but representative of the terrible cruelty of Satan through man. I want to never underestimate my adversary. (2) Do I appreciate as I should the comfort and peace of my home? Help me to do so. (3) I want to fulfill the meaning of the word "elect" — separate me for yourself. (4) How interesting that the length of the siege was a concern of yourself — you know how much we can bear and need. Do I really believe this? Help my unbelief. (5) I do reaffirm my confidence in I Corinthians 10:12,13.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

From these words of judgment speak to me: (1) "Distress is not without my knowledge — but not necessarily controlled by me." (2) "What men pass off as *one more battle* I see as eternally important." (3) "You are my 'elect' today — it is for your sake I do not even now destroy the world."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

China — Points for prayer: (1) God is being glorified in Communist China today! Praise Him for: a) The growth of the Church through the radiant witness of Christians, miracles of Holy Spirit and mighty revivals. Never in history have so many been converted over such a short time. Between 1977 and 1984 many millions have come to faith in Christ. There were about three million Catholics and one million Protestants in 1949. b) The thousand of believers who travailed in prayer for a breakthrough over the last 150 years. The breakthrough has come in answer to prayer. Pray on! c) For the 140 years of sacrificial missionary work by thousands of missionaries. Their labour was not in vain, though many sowed without seeing the harvest. At one stage there were 8,500 Protestant missionaries, 1,000 of these being with CIM (OMF).

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Walking in sunlight, all of my journey;
Over the mountains, thro, the deep vale;
Jesus has said, "I'll never forsake thee,"
Promise divine that never can fail.

WEEK NINE

—Friday—

That exclusiveness of yourself is very impressive to me. No one can do what you do! All nations will one day worship you. I am glad to worship you now.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Among the gods there is none like you, O Lord; no deeds can compare with yours. All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, O Lord; they will bring glory to your name. For you are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God” (Psa. 86:8-10). How many gods there are today! All competing for man’s time, talents and money. These are very real gods. Such as money, love and devotion are given to this god. Pleasure — in food and sex. What astounding devotion is lavished upon this god. Status and position among men calls out a million devotees. But among all these gods and others there is none like you! Ah, to look into the face of Jesus is to declare such a word over and again.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. When we consider what money of itself — apart from yourself can do we are not impressed at all. If we were to subtract all love and service from the accomplishments of money we would have monuments to stupidity! What are the deeds of the god of sex or food? There is a trail of broken hearts and lives. Show me the deeds of your gods and I will point you to the works of love, mercy, transformation found in the lives of the followers of Jesus of Nazareth. There is no comparison — only a contrast of light with darkness.

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 easy it is to forget the promise that “all nations you have made will come and worship before you.” There are men from many, many nations even now bowing before you. As we listen to the news of the day the only time we hear your name is in profanity. It is easy to believe the devil’s lie and forget that you

alone are God! Forgive me. Back me away from the gods of this world, (who are all managed by *the god* of this world). Lead me back to Bethlehem — to Galilee — to Jerusalem — to Gethsemane — to Calvary and the empty tomb. “For you are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are 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

Savior, Thy dying love
Thou gavest me,
Nothing should I withhold,
Dear Lord, from Thee;
In love my soul would bow,
My heart fulfill its vow,
Some offering bring Thee now,
Something for Thee.

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

HIS WORD

²⁵“There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. ²⁶Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. ²⁷At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” — Luke 21:25-28, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I am struggling with the meaning of these verses. Dear Lord, help me! I appreciate all the teachers over the centuries who have struggled with me over these words. In recent days the words of Paul Butler have helped me. “Luke says, ‘And there will be signs in

sun and moon and stars. . . etc.’ Matthew says, ‘Immediately after the tribulation of those days . . .’ (Mt. 24:29) and Mark says, ‘But in those days, after that tribulation . . .’ (Mk. 13:24). The very strong indication that this text (Lk. 21:25-28 parallels Mt. 24:29-31; Mk 13:24-27) is a continuation of the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem and Judaism may be seen from: (a) ‘Immediately’ does not usually make room for much of a time gap — certainly not a gap of over 2,000 years’ (Luke, P.T. Butler).

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 am doing my best to understand what your Son meant. It does help to record these words of another teacher: (b)“ ‘When these things begin to take place . . .’ (Lk. 21:28) surely is not referring to the Second Coming for there will be no signs pointing to its nearness — it will be instantaneous; (c) and the further statement, ‘. . . this generation will not pass away till all these things take place’ (Lk. 21:32; Mt. 24:34; Mk. 13:30) undoubtedly includes the sun and moon being darkened, stars falling from heaven, perplexity and desires of nations and the powers of the heavens shaken” (Luke, P.T. Butler). Paul Butler does do a convincing job in his writing for considering all these words as apocalyptic. The sun, moon and stars then represent kings, religious potentates and kingdoms who fell at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem.

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

I am so glad to come to this text and look into it for sources of gratitude; (1) Thank you for your interest in the sun, moon and stars of the physical and political world. (2) Thank you that you know long before now the momentous changes coming upon the earth. (3) Thank you for the apostles who understood at least much more of the meaning of our Lord’s words than we do. (4) Thank you for the promise of my Lord’s coming — in power and great glory. (5) Thank you for the promise of redemption — the redemption of the human race on Calvary — and the Christians from Jerusalem’s destruction.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“ . . . stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” If this is in reference to the escape from the devastation of the siege of Titus then Jesus is telling his followers that he has prepared them for deliverance. What a terrible price has been paid by the nation of Israel for such a redemption. There was at the same time a deliverance from the yoke of the law. The possibility of sacrifice and ceremony were gone. The full reality of freedom in

the worship of yourself through your Son is about to happen. Our Lord wants his disciples to face this prospect unafraid. They are to stand up in expectation. They are to lift up their heads in praise and worship.

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

READ HIS WORD IN PETITIONS

What requests can I find in these verses? (1) I do want to be able to read your signs and heed their message. (2) What plan and program do you have for our nation? Use me in whatever way you wish. (3) I am so glad Jesus kept his promise and established his kingdom during the lifetime of some present that day — may I exercise my full citizenship. (4) I do want to be alert and ready if Jesus should come today. (5) Keep me aware of my redemption from a destruction far worse than that of the temple.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in these words about end times: (1) “Redemption from the bondage of corruption of this earth is also promised.” (2) “Lift up your head — you are redeemed.” (3) “Men will react even more violently when I destroy this earth with fire.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

China — Points for prayer: (1) *The agonies suffered by the Chinese people during this century have removed many barriers to the gospel.* The hold of the old religions and culture, and the “foreignness” of Christianity, are no longer a major hindrance. Pray for the complete evangelization of China; possibly 500 million have yet to hear the gospel for the first time. 70% of the population have lived only under Communism. (2) *In order to cope with the problems of population growth, the integrity of the family has been imperiled by disregard for human rights* by the authorities, as well as enforced separations and harsh birth-control measures. The tragic social consequences have been divorce and abortion on a massive scale, female infanticide, violence and suicide. Pray for China’s leaders — that they may rule with justice. Pray for Christian families to be a light and example to all around. Pray especially that the children of believers will follow in their parents’ footsteps, despite mockery, discrimination and a constant barrage of atheistic propaganda.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Earth holds no treasures but perish with using,
 However precious they be; . . .
 Yet there’s a country to which I am going:
 Heaven holds all to me.

WEEK NINE

—Saturday—

*I do not have a “soul”, I am one!
“Soul” means “life” — you are life
and the source of life. I shall live
forever with you. I renew my praise to
you.*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I will praise you, O Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever. For great is your love toward me; you have delivered my soul from the depths of the grave (or Sheol)” (Psa. 86:12,13). Such an appropriate scripture! David wanted to lift up his total being to you in praise and adoration. This is an example for all men! May the first thought — the first decision — the first emotion be one of praise. The psalmist saw no end to the possibilities of expressions of praise for your essential being! In the world to come we shall discover one quality after another for which we can praise you. The greatest of these attributes is that you have delivered us from that great enemy called death.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. All the fear of Sheol, i.e., the unseen world, is gone! Praise your name. Just yesterday I watched a man die. He was in the last days of the battle with our last enemy. It would seem he lost — but such is not the result of that battle. You have delivered my “soul” or my whole being from the dissolution of the body. I confidently expect to be as conscious in the world to come as I am here, yea, I shall become aware of much more than I have here. The capacity of sight has never been in my eyes — but in my spirit through my eyes — I do not think and speak with my brain and mouth — they are but the instruments of my spirit. I am anxious to receive my deliverance!

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 only when I put my whole heart in your praise that I find deliverance — either in this life or in the promise of the life to come. Somehow I must — I will

rearrange my schedule so I can meditate upon your word — I can then memorize what you have said. It is wrong for me to get so busy with “other things” that I neglect thinking your thoughts. In heaven I shall never run out of qualities of yourself for which to praise you. How is it I am so short here? Forgive me! Once again may I even now review the love you have expressed for me. I want to stop and look again into the cemetery and remember my deliverance. Open 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

O sacred Head, now wounded,
With grief and shame weighed down,
Now scornfully surrounded
With thorns, Thy only crown,
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

²⁹He told them this parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees. ³⁰When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. ³¹Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near.

³²“I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.

³³Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.” —Luke 21:29-33, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, you know how varied are the conclusions of some men on these verses. I struggle for a consis-

tent position. When I apply everything your Son said from verse 8 through 33 to the destruction of Jerusalem I find less trouble in interpretation than I do when I must fluctuate back and forth from the destruction of the temple to my Lord's second coming. Jesus says the things that happen before this momentous event will be as plain and evident as the flowers of spring on a fig tree. This is another reason for relating this to Jerusalem's fall — if it refers to his second coming we have surely had a problem with being able to see the obvious. Men have been missing the time of spring and summer for at least 2000 years.

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 kingdom of heaven" will refer in this interpretation to your rule in the affairs of men as related to Jerusalem's destruction and the removal of Judaism. "This generation" must indeed refer to some of those standing there that day. Jesus is saying that some of them listening to him would live to see what he promised fulfilled. I do not accept the term "race" as a possible translation of the word "generation" — it is used too often and too consistently for such to be true. It is surely too bad (from my viewpoint) that some of the apostles — or disciples did not write and describe the fulfillment of "these things" as they found them fulfilled when Jerusalem was destroyed. Two things are eternally true: (1) Heaven and earth will pass away. (2) My Lord's words will never pass away.

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for every parable of my Lord — so full of food for the soul. (2) I do want to look on the "fig tree" my Lord had in mind — thank you for the privilege of trying to do so. (3) Thank you for the summer time of your love — and of your judgment. (4) Thank you for citizenship in your present kingdom. (5) Thank you I shall one day transfer my citizenship to the kingdom to come. (6) Thank you for the generation that saw all my Lord promised — I do want to talk with some of them. (7) Thank you for your eternal words.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." What a comforting thought is this! While this earth continues there will never be a time when your word, in some form, will not be here. It might be possible in sometime of purging persecution that all copies of our Bibles would be destroyed. Should we not take some measures in our time of peace to preserve your word? We could hide printed copies — or put it on microfilm. But the best means

of hiding your word would be in our hearts. Not only in our mind so we could repeat it — but in our wills and emotions so we could live it. On second thought, perhaps you will not need our help at all in preserving your word. Since you promised we know you are well able to deliver!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In these verses so difficult of understanding I can surely find areas for requests: (1) In the parable of the fig tree I see a principle I can apply to several circumstances in my life — give me wisdom and courage to do so. (2) How glad I am my redemption from sin has already come — deepen my joy! (3) I believe the generation of which my Lord spoke was the one in which he lived — how I do need wisdom in applying this test to the historical circumstance. (4) Heaven and earth will one day be on fire! Am I ready for that today? Give me what I need to make it so.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

How I long to hear your voice in these verses; (1) "It is always later than you think." (2) "Time is running out for several people in your own community." (3) "Life can end in so many ways — be ready."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

China — Points for prayer: (1) *Revival has burst out in various provinces over the past 40 years.* The most recent outpourings of the Spirit have affected Henan, where there may be 10 million believers (if so, then over 20% Christian); Zhejiang, Anhui, Zhejiang and Fujian also have large Christian minorities. Shanghai may have one million believers. Some towns and villages and communes have a Christian majority. May the fire spread! (2) *The TSPM is government-controlled and manipulated.* It was resurrected from 13 years of oblivion as a means to regain the initiative from the home churches and control them. Some pastors and leaders are strongly political in their teaching and are more concerned about carrying out the government's religious policy than preaching the gospel. Pray for the thwarting of these plans, and for wisdom for Christian leaders outside the TSPM in handling the threats and offers of compromise proffered them.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I go to my Saviour,
With my sorrow and care,
And He answers my every plea,
He's guiding my footsteps
Till I reach that bright shore,
He's a wonderful friend to me.

WEEK TEN

—Sunday—

*My anger is so selfish and ignorant!
Your anger is totally just mixed with
mercy — abounding in love — receive
my adoration.*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness. Turn to me and have mercy on me; grant your strength to your servant and save the son of your maidservant” (Psa. 86:15,16). Here is a whole treasure chest full of the attributes of yourself! I want to hold each one up in the light of your presence and rejoice in it: (1) *Compassionate*. You have taught me to look into the life of your Son to see a perfect reflection of yourself. I see him as he approaches the city of Nain and knows that in the casket is all the heart and life of the mother. He stopped the funeral and turned it into a time of wonder and joy!

Express your self in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. (2) *Gracious*: How easy it would have been for Jesus to take offense at the sinful woman (the prostitute) who acted in such an effusive emotional manner — kissing his feet and pouring perfume upon him. Those that watched such actions no doubt thought of other uses she had earlier for such perfume. Jesus read her heart and forgave her. Praise your name for such love! (3) *Slow to anger*: Ah, dear Lord, without this quality there would be no hope for me. I do not want to abuse such a quality — but I rejoice in its application to my stumbling efforts. Accept my praise for your mercy. (4) *Abounding in love*: I see the father of the prodigal running toward me with his arms outstretched in love and welcome. I look even now at the best robe and the beautiful ring.

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

I want to open the very depths of my self to receive your cleansing. (5) If we are faithless, he (even yourself) remains faithful — for you cannot deny

yourself. What a rock of comfort and refuge! I have failed so often — but I praise you that just as often I want to return and repent. (6) “Turn to me and have mercy upon me.” Even now — just now I eagerly reach out for your mercy — I turn my heart to hear the voice of my Shepherd. I know you see me and hear me. Lead me in the way of peace. (7) “Grant your strength to your servant . . .” How can I obtain what I need so very much? It is in believing prayer — even now as I confess my sins to you that my weakness is replaced with your strength!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

*I have ceased from my wandering
And going astray,
Since Jesus came into my heart!
And my sins, which were many,
Were all washed away,
Since Jesus came into my heart!
Since Jesus came into my heart,
Since Jesus came into my heart,
Floods of joy o’er my soul
Like the sea billows roll,
Since Jesus came into my heart*

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

HIS WORD

³⁴“Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. ³⁵For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.” —Luke 21:34-36, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

We do believe the words of your dear Son, “Heaven

and earth will pass away, . . .” need to be associated with the verses before us. *Because* the end of the cosmos will happen — and we know not when we need to be ready! Here are the beautiful words of preparation: (1) “*Be careful.*” We should look at all of life in the light of your coming again. Every decision should be made *after* we answer the question, “will this help or hinder my preparation for his coming?” (2) “Your hearts will be *weighed down* with dissipation. . . .” Self indulgence does depress us — depression is our number one personality problem today.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. We need not go out into the world, i.e., a different social strata or lifestyle to find dissipation. There are multitudes of church members who are *weighed down* through overwork. This is dissipation! The TV diet of sex, food and money will weigh anyone down and throw them into depression. Be careful! Ask yourself, if my Lord should come today — if today I should be called into his presence will I be ready? There are not many who have a problem with drunkenness, i.e., of my personal acquaintance, but there are many who are terribly troubled with “the anxieties of life.” Jesus said the trap is set — it will be tripped! The coming of our Lord will be as sudden as the snap — the instant closing of the jaws. Are we ready?

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 you are interested in the condition of my heart. (2) Thank you for the clear diagnosis of the causes of depression. (3) Thank you you realize *all* the causes of depression — anxiety being a large one. (4) Thank you I can be free and ready and cry “Maranatha” — dear Lord may it be so! (5) Thank you for the promise of the universal recognition of your coming. (6) Thank you that I can even now *watch* — I do — I do. (7) Thank you for the preparedness I find in prayer.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.” *How shall we ever stand if we appear before you in judgment? It will not be because of our sinless conduct but out of your grace and mercy. The preparation is important — is essential.* Let us mark it well. (1) “*Be careful,*” look at life through his eyes. Consider all events and relationships as he would. (2) Avail, reject, refuse the following, dissipation, drunkenness, and anxieties of life. (3) Be alert and ready for his coming at all times — let his coming take precedence over all other events of every day. (4)

Pray for deliverance (in the case of the disciples it was from the destruction of the city of Jerusalem).

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I do want to pray according to your will as seen in your word. (1) Give me a careful thoughtful heart. (2) Release me from the weight and weariness of this life. (3) Release me from the anxieties of life. (4) Should “that day” close upon me today may I welcome him with joy. (5) Open my eyes to see in this text the suddenness of his coming. (6) I do want to escape all that is even now coming on the earth. (7) As the people came early in the morning to hear my Lord — so I am before you — speak my Lord!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Indeed he does speak to me in these verses: (1) “When once a trap has sprung there is no change but death.” (2) “My coming will affect all those who live on the face of the whole earth.” (3) “You must stand in my righteousness or you cannot stand at all.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

China — Points for prayer: (1) *Within the TSPM there are also many godly pastors, as well as large numbers of committed believers* in 4,000 reopened churches and 30,000 meeting points. Pray that they may fear God more than man and stand firm for the Truth. The young people are increasingly cut off from the official churches because of enforced compromises. Many home meetings have been coerced into links with the TSPM; pray that they may retain their zeal for God and His Kingdom. (2) *There are tens of thousands of home meetings* which are not directly linked with the TSPM. This is the heart of the true Church in China. Yet their rapid growth between 1978 and 1983 has been somewhat limited by pressures from the TSPM and persecution by the authorities since then. They desire to be free to preach Christ and His sacrificial death whatever the cost and without restriction so that all China may be evangelized. Pray that the evangelistic zeal of individuals and teams may continue unabated, and that outreach teams may penetrate to the far corners of the land.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

We read of a place that’s called heaven,
It’s made for the pure and the free;
These truths in God’s word He has given,
How beautiful heaven must be.

In heaven, no drooping, nor pining,
No wishing for elsewhere to be,
God’s light is forever there shining,
How beautiful heaven must be.

WEEK TEN

—Monday—

We are “born from above” — we are your beloved children — what encouragement this is to entering into your presence with confidence.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Indeed, of Zion it will be said, ‘this one and that one were born in her, and the most high himself will establish her.’ The Lord will write in the register of the peoples: ‘This one was born in Zion.’ As they make music they will sing, ‘all my fountains are in you’ ” (Psa. 87:5-7). Since the “Zion” of the psalmist becomes the church of our Lord in Hebrews 12:22-24, I take great courage in relating these words to your children today. What a rare privilege it was for someone to be born in Jerusalem. We have a higher honor! We are born as residents of the eternal Zion that shall never be destroyed.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I do want to appropriate every word of this beautiful song to my heart. *The most high himself* has promised me that this city shall be removed from this earth to a new heaven and new earth. Daniel established Jerusalem and it has been *removed* many times. My Lord himself has established this city that shall never be shaken. I can hardly believe what my eyes read! “The Lord will write in the register of the peoples. . . .” My Lord himself is writing my name and all who are the born-again residents of Zion in the registry of heaven. No wonder we will sing! It would seem we would never stop our song. Since we will never lose energy we will never cease singing.

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 sad it is to live so far below the level of joy and hope as seen in these verses! Instead of being full of joy and open happiness that we were born as a citizen of heaven we are as intimidated about it as a Jew born in Jerusalem. The Jew is proud of it — but he is afraid or even ashamed to say so (at least this is true

of some Jews today). It is much more true of the present day Israel of yourself dear Lord, deliver us from this timidity — give us back the spirit of love and power and a sound mind. It is in you we find all the well springs of life and hope and peace and purpose. All the fountains of life are in you. Forgive me for failure to open my heart 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

Come, Thou Fount of every 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

³⁶“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; ³⁹and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.” —Matthew 24:36-39, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It is *now* my Lord speaks to me — and to all men of the coming of which even he himself does not know the day or the hour. It seems totally incongruous to me that when the angels of heaven do not know that

poor fallible man now boasts he has discovered the time of the coming of the Son of Man. Dear Lord, only your Father and mine knows the time. This is much more reassuring to me than all the confident speculation of men. I do want to read again every word said about this fascinating subject. That day will be like the day Noah went into the ark. The one quality here emphasized is unexpectedness. Sudden — total — irrevocable — am I looking for 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? “The flood came and took them all away.” The flood took Noah and his family away on the crest of the waves in the safety of the ark. The point here is the flood was sudden and terminal. Once again, *I want to be ready*. The very point of my Lord’s words is that we are living now after the ark has been built — after the 120 years have lapsed. We are in those few days before it began to rain. In that brief interval before the fountains of the deep were broken up. Mankind has been in this period ere’ since my Lord spoke these words. The flood that will come upon the earth will be one of fire. How glad I am that we will escape in the ark of safety! 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 I can even now believe that “no one knows the day or how” — or anything else except he is coming suddenly. (2) Thank you such information was hidden even from the angels of heaven. (3) Thank you that I can know the kind of preparations you expect me to make. (4) Thank you for the ordinary pursuits used to describe the conduct of those in the days of Noah — (there were other pursuits also happening in those days) this teaching me of the condition of things in the day of his coming. (5) Thank you that it says of all who were involved — including Noah — “they knew nothing about what would happen” — even Noah was surprised — not at the flood — but at the suddenness of it. Just for today and every hour in it — I want to be ready.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. . . . The flood came and took them all away.” We might add, and took all away from them. When your dear Son comes again it will be to take me out of this “vale of tears,” and I praise you for the prospect. But there will be so many who will be no more prepared than those of Noah’s day. How interesting is the name Jesus chose for himself! “Son of man.” He uses such a designation repeatedly — it must be significant. We should use it more when we speak of him. My Lord wanted to say that he is and was

related to every son and daughter of Adam. He is my brother, yea the brother of all humanity. I will one day stand before him!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Prayer is surely a part of my preparation for his coming: (1) Keep me as confident of your coming as are the angels. (2) How glad I am to address the one — the only one who knows the time of his coming — I have no fear and can leave such matters in your authority. (3) As I look today upon the ordinary pursuits of men may I remember his words — “that is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.” (4) The *a priori* assumption that you know and care what all men do upon the face of the earth is both comforting and disturbing — I bow in humility before you and ask for mercy. (5) Deliver me from the mundane routine that dulls my heart!

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me personally in these words: (1) “Since no one knows the hour it will be any hour.” (2) “To be ready you must be ready always.” (3) “You will indeed stand before me — but I will plead your case.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

China — Points for Prayer: (1) *Persecution was very severe during the Cultural Revolution.* Most Bibles were destroyed, believers’ homes looted, and believers humiliated. During that time many believers were imprisoned and even executed. In late 1983 a new wave of persecution began under the umbrella of the “anti-crime” and “spiritual pollution” campaigns. It has led to the arrest of hundreds of Christian leaders (especially in Henan), and the closure of “illegal” home meetings. Many have now been released, but pray for those in prison, scattered believers and for fugitive itinerant preachers who serve home meetings over wide areas. (2) *Leadership in the TSPM* will eventually pass into the hands of younger men and women trained in the Nanjing Seminary and six regional seminaries. In 1985 there were 231 students. Much of their course is Marxist-oriented and liberal in theology. Pray that students may retain a biblical faith and go out to faithfully serve God without compromise.

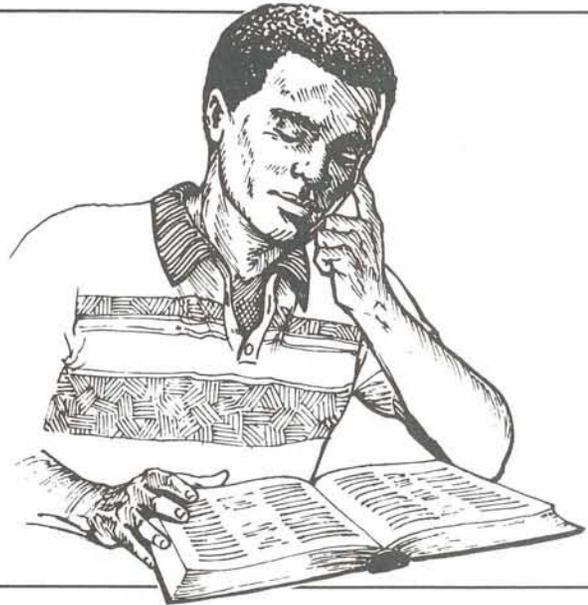
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

’Tis the grandest theme thro’ the ages rung;
 ’Tis the grandest theme for a mortal tongue;
 ’Tis the grandest theme that the world e’er sung,
 “Our God is able to deliver thee.”

WEEK TEN

—Tuesday—

Each day is a fresh opportunity to praise you — to discover anew your goodness and greatness. This I do just now!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“O Lord, the God who saves me, day and night I cry out before you. May my prayer come before you; from your ear to my cry . . . I will sing of the love of the Lord forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations” (Psa. 88:1; 89:1). I do appear before you this day to plead the same petition as the psalmist. On the basis of your ability to save hear me. There was a deep need in the heart of the man who penned these words. You heard him and his response is heard in the next psalm. This one quality of hearing and answering is a real bulwark of strength for my heart.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. The whole 88th Psalm is the sad cry of a man in trouble. Indeed this man is “full of trouble.” He comes to the only one who knows all about his problems — the only one who really cares what happens to him. Even when it would seem you do not care, he knows you do. *The answer has come! The burden has been lifted!* The song has started. How very much like all our experience is this record. We will indeed “sing of your love forever,” i.e., in heaven. But while here it is with my mouth I want to lift my testimony of your faithfulness. It is not that I have not prospered or been treated well, you need not so treat me to convince me you are faithful. This is a quality of your eternal nature. 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

The words of Psalm 88 have been mine: (1) “I am like a man without strength.” Indeed as to overcoming some of my weaknesses I am without strength and need your help. (2) “Whom you remember no more, who are cut off from your care.” I know I am not,

even as the psalmist, but I do feel this way at times. Please save me! (3) “I am confined and cannot escape.” I do often feel hemmed in and pressed with responsibilities. In all this I know you are my escape — in yourself I find my freedom. (4) “. . . the darkness is my closest friend.” It is easier to hide than to face into the questions I cannot answer. It is walking in your light I find the answers. Forgive me and deliver me!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Have Thine own way, Lord!
Have Thine own way!
Thou art the potter,
I am the clay!
Mold me and make me
After Thy will,
While I am waiting,
Yielded and still.

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

HIS WORD

⁴⁰Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. ⁴²“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. ⁴³But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.” —Matthew 24:40-44, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It is not an easy task but I am trying as much as at all

possible to approach these words as if I had never read them before. I do want to see them from your own perspective, i.e., I want to share them with you in meditation and praise. When your Son comes there will be an instantaneous separation of the saved and lost. Who will be taken and who will be left? We immediately think of I Thessalonians 4:13-18, but as I read it again I see *all* are taken up. It is in Matthew 13:36-43 and 13:47-50 I find the weeds and the bad fish are removed first. The ones left are the righteous. But then there is also an instantaneous judgment so being left only emphasizes separation, not time.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Two men in the field — what are they doing? Perhaps working. What will I be doing when Jesus comes? Will I be on this earth? Perhaps I shall have been several years (by man's estimate) in your eternal presence. How can I properly keep watch? Suppose I am watching for a loved one who has been on a trip and is now after a long while returning home. How do I watch for him? If he is returning by plane I go out to the airport and look up and expect the landing of his plane. If he is driving I often look out the window and down the road for the appearance of his car. Does it ever occur to me during the day to look up and expect in the next moment the appearance of my Lord in the clouds of heaven?

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 know every single person in all the world and the preparation of their heart for your return. (2) Thank you that no task is too menial for you to have a personal interest as it relates to your coming. (3) Thank you you have not asked me to do something I cannot do — I can watch — I can be ready. (4) Thank you for the warning that your coming will be as sudden and disruptive as the coming of a thief. (5) Thank you for the promise of a sudden big surprise — even your coming again. (6) Thank you that I can and cannot expect your coming — I just do not know when. (7) Thank you for the several verses that warn over and again “you are coming again.”

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.” Just what hour or time would that be? Someone could write a novel in which the most unlikely time possible would be chosen for your coming. When are we ready for your coming? According to your word it will be when we are looking for you. It will be when we are in prayer. It will be when we have such a loose hold on the things of this earth that we can let go of them

at any moment. We remember Lot's wife in this connection. Your coming is so much like death — always expected and always unexpected. Maranatha!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How I do like to talk with you in prayer! (1) In the field of my labor may I be ready for your coming! (2) As my dear wife serves at her task I know she will be delighted when you come. (3) Could it be you will come on the same day you arose from the dead? It does seem most appropriate — prepare my heart. (4) I am the owner of the house of my responsibilities — I want to welcome the heavenly thief — anytime! (5) Since I am the unworthy man to whom your Son is related I want to express my kinship in preparing this house for your unexpected visit.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I need to hear your voice now! (1) “There will be a time when I take total possession of all men and women.” (2) “You do not know the day — the night — or the hour when I shall come — but you can be ready.” (3) “I have the best surprise of all — it can be the most wonderful or the most fearful.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

China — Points for prayer: (1) *The mushrooming growth of the home meetings strains leadership resources.* Pray for the aging pastors trained before 1949, and their discipling of younger leaders. Pray for adequate training and spiritual maturity of new leaders in spite of no Bible schools and limited study materials and Bibles. (2) *The lack of sound Bible teaching* has caused some to be sidetracked into doctrinal error or emphasis of less important issues. Pray that the Church might keep to the centrality of the Cross and true to Scripture. (3) *The Catholics have been divided* through government interference. The CPA maintains a hostile stance to the leadership of the Vatican, but most Catholics remain loyal despite persecution. Their numbers have doubled since 1949.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I serve a risen Savior,
He's in the world today;
I know that He is living,
Whatever men may say;
I see His hand of mercy,
I hear His voice of cheer,
And just the time I need Him
He's always near.

WEEK TEN

—Wednesday—

The everlasting permanence of your love and faithfulness is such a joy and strength to my heart! I enter my “quiet place” with these thoughts upon my heart.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you established your faithfulness in heaven itself. . . . The heavens praise your wonders, O Lord, your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones” (Psa. 89:2,5). What a joy it is to repeat these inspired words of praise! I can relate them to all who want to hear. Your love is as firm as the most permanent of your creation — yea, more so. There shall never be a time when you are not the same loving heavenly Father you are right now! In heaven the multitude of spirit beings are all ready to tell all who will listen of your absolute consistency!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. It is exciting beyond words to contemplate what goes on in the heavenly realm as they tell of your wonders and faithfulness! As many incidents as we have in your word, there must yet be ten thousand examples we have never heard. It is in telling one after another of these your expressions of love and faithfulness the heavenly beings or “holy ones” occupy themselves. Pure praise is most invigorating. We poor mortals can only faintly imagine what “wonders” these angelic beings describe. There is a lesson in their expression, we *do know* what you have done for us and the world about us, beneath us, and above us. I want to join my voice with these “holy ones” in praising your wonders and faithfulness to me and those I love.

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

Such words as written above seem elevated out of the realm of reality. Ah, we are the ones who fail to live in reality. How content we are to live on a physical earthy level. Open the eyes of my heart! Forgive me.

Because you are love I must not imagine that you have somehow lost your faithfulness. Dear Lord, I am seeking your balance. Forgive my stammering tongue — my feeble words of praise. Cut through the facade of pious words — I want to speak from the center of my heart. I do expect to be delivered from this plane to the world of the spirit — how I want to even now be ready.

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

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?

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

HIS WORD

⁴⁵“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. ⁴⁷I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁸But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’ ⁴⁹and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. ⁵⁰The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. ⁵¹He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” —*Matthew 24:45-51, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord how glad I am to even now make the preparations you here describe: (1) I want to be that

faithful and wise servant. You have left me in charge of a number of people. This has happened for every one of us — or these words would only apply to a few. How many receive your food from us? Each of us touch the lives of many people. There are so many ways we can give them food. There are indeed “proper times” to give the bread from heaven. Will you find me so occupied when you come? (2) What a wondrous promise is made! You will give responsibilities in the world to come contingent upon service given here.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. If I live out my whole life in anticipation of your coming and you do not come in my lifetime — it will be well spent and I shall be ready for the world and life to come. *However* it is possible to be caught up in the mocking syndrome of this world and forget your faithfulness. The abuse I give to those with whom I live is not unnoticed you see — you hear — you know. Some of the sharpest words ever heard were spoken by your Son. To be “cut to pieces” to endure “weeping and gnashing of teeth” is an awesome thought. These are the words from the one whose name is love! If I act the hypocrite I shall take my place with them.

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 privilege of being called to serve you. (2) Thank you for the position of responsibility in charge of other people given to each of us. (3) Thank you that the whole household belongs to you. (4) Thank you for the wonderful food you have given us to give to others. (4) Thank you there is a proper time to give your food to others. (5) Thank you that we shall be called into account for doing or not doing, for feeding or not feeding, serving or not serving. (6) Thank you for the cutting words of Jesus concerning self-indulgence. (7) Thank you for this awesome judgment scene.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“*He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites,*” aren’t these harsh cruel words? Are we surprised that they came from the lips of our Lord? We should add that some of the strongest words of condemnation and censure found in the New Testament fall from the lips of Jesus. Perhaps they are only proverbial, i.e., a Hebraism that was used for such occasions and was not really to be taken literally. *No, No, No!* This is exactly what the deceiver wants us to think and say. Death and condemnation is the reward of those who fail to be ready for the coming of the master. We need to read again

the reason for such stringent measures. “. . . says to himself, ‘my master is staying away a long time.’ And he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with the drunkards.”

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I want to put my desires to be that faithful and wise servant into the form of requests: (1) Since my faithfulness is based on my love for you — keep me from the evil one and near your heart. (2) I do want to be a dispenser of your food to your servants at the right time. (3) Keep me from interruptions of this task. (4) If you should come today may I be full of joy and wonders as I receive you. (5) I can hardly imagine what your “possessions” will be in the world to come — give me faithfulness, wisdom and humility as I use your possessions here.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me this side of your coming: (1) “Everyone is in charge of someone else.” (2) “Everyone is subject to someone else.” (3) “Rewards and punishments are not only real — but eternal.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Taiwan — Points for prayer: (1) *Taiwan’s political future is uncertain.* The growing power of mainland China could bring about changes. Chinese and international leaders need guidance and wisdom. Taiwan is open for the gospel, but the decisive breakthrough has yet to occur. Taiwan is the only country with a major Chinese population which has a shrinking Christian Church. (2) *The Church grew dramatically between 1945 and 1960* through the influx and conversion of Mandarin-speaking Chinese fleeing Communism. There was also a remarkable people movement in the mountain tribes. Stagnation has set in since then, despite major evangelistic outreaches and investment of finance and manpower. There are many factors: the resurgent Chinese religions; entrenched veneration of ancestors; secularism; an alarmingly high level of backsliding; and the failure to mobilize Christians effectively for personal evangelism. Pray that change might come through the work of the Spirit.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

There’s within my heart a melody
 Jesus whispers sweet and low,
 Fear not, I am with thee, peace be still,
 In all of life’s ebb and flow.
 Jesus, Jesus, Jesus,
 Sweetest name I know,
 Fills my ev’ry longing,
 Keeps me singing as I go.

WEEK TEN

—Thursday—

“In the council of the holy ones” or in the assembly of the angelic beings you are worshiped with great awe — can I do less?



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“For who in the skies above can compare with the Lord? In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared; he is more awesome than all who surround him” (Psa. 89:6,7). What remarkable verses are these! The “skies” as used here refers to the dwelling place of yourself. The stars and planets are but an expression of your greatness. We are comparing the creation with the creator — as a result there is only a contrast. In your eternal dwelling place — among the angelic host — once again it is the creature with the creator. There seems to be some type of gathering of the angels. In such a meeting the subject is your greatness — blessed be your name!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. How I do enjoy an attempt at contemplating the spirit-world. You are described here as a part of the heavenly beings — and yet you are apart from them. “He is more awesome than are those who surround him.” Dear Lord, I am at a loss to know how to adequately express my wonder and amazement. Man becomes an infinitesimal speck when compared to the galaxy of stars. When I consider that the angels — here described as the “heavenly beings” and “holy ones,” are even now ministering to me I bow before you in praise and humility.

CONFESSION OF SIN

If we could record our conversation for just one day and play it back to identify what related to our awareness of your greatness and goodness how much of it could we save? How is it we can know you are so exalted and wonderful and yet fail to mention it — or recognize such a fact in any way? Is it wrong to expect far more reverence in the average conversation? Dear Lord, I am probing my own heart — and it *is* out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. In the council of these stupid mortals you are

not feared at all. If we are cut up and consigned a place with the hypocrites we should not be surprised.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Holy, holy, holy!
 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!

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

HIS WORD

25 “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish and five were wise. ³The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. ⁴The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. ⁵The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.” —*Matthew 25:1-5, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It is with great anticipation I read each of these words in your presence. “*At that time . . .*” refers to the coming of our Lord — before he comes — while we wait for him this will be the conditions prevailing. In the first place we are all citizens of the kingdom of heaven. We shall simply make a transfer from this realm of the kingdom to the eternal realm when he comes or we go to him in death. We are pure dressed in white, clean, whole *virgins!* Not because we deserve such a characterization. Such beauty is “in the eye of

the beholder" — not in ourselves. But something tragic happens! We, i.e., half of us, become neglectful, and in the very area or responsibility where we would least expect it.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. We must have our lamps trimmed and burning to enter the marriage feast. Jesus is our bridegroom — we are in love with him. We have planned this event of marriage for years. There is nothing — utterly nothing more important to us. We have on the right clothes, we have our ready lamps. We all wait — and we all sleep. Nothing wrong with any of such preparation. How is it we could leave out the one essential ingredient for light? We have no oil! If the oil represents the Holy Spirit — and we believe it does — then we are on the outside because we do not have him — the Holy Spirit is the life-giver — the energy from heaven.

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 warning of the preparations necessary *before* he comes. (2) Thank you for the description given — "virgins" — we can be pure and foolish at the same time. (3) Thank you for the singleness of purpose described in this text. Do I have some other or better purpose today? (4) Thank you that the reason for the neglect is not given — this leaves it open for my reason. (5) Thank you that rest in the interim is not condemned. (6) Thank you that I can this day take oil with my lamp.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep." No word of criticism is given for falling asleep. The wise virgins slept along with the foolish. The point seems to be here that all of life can seem like a half-night of sleep. It was at midnight "the cry rang out: Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!" How terribly brief life can seem. The wise virgins had made preparations long before they lay down to rest. In the busy flow of life there is nothing — utterly nothing more important than practicing the presence of your very self. There is something wonderfully beautiful about having a light burning in your honor at your coming — but then that is the purpose all through life.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In these fine verses I can easily see five or more requests: (1) How meaningful it is to be a citizen of

your kingdom today. (2) My purity as a virgin comes from you — not me. (3) In the above two expressions — keep me pure and humble in my heart before the great king. (4) Since "the lamp" must be my heart — I do want the oil and fire of your Holy Spirit to burn brightly through me. (5) The only foolishness we see in the five virgins is a lack of oil — what a sad mistake! Impress upon me once again how important is your presence in me and through me. (6) You have indeed been a long time in coming but I believe you are any day — any night about to appear. Is the oil ready? Can I hold up the light? Help me! (7) It is ten or eleven o'clock in my sleep of life — I shall go if you do not come — in either case I want to be ready.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I do so sorely need to hear you speak to me as a citizen — as the bride. (1) "Do not be foolish and assume you have oil — your light will shine if you do — it will not if you do not." (2) "You have only one day and night to prepare." (3) "There is a wonderful feast prepared — do not miss it!"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Taiwan — Points for prayer: (1) *The Protestant Church* was dependent on foreign funds and personnel for too long. Nor has the profusion of denominations — many of foreign origin — encouraged a spirit of unity and cooperation. Indigenous groups and congregations have, therefore fared better. Bible teaching, revival and effective outreach by a truly indigenized Chinese Church are the needs of the hour. There are encouraging signs of a new day for the gospel in the land. (2) *Protestants are unequally distributed among the different linguistic groups.* The majority of the mountain peoples are nominally Protestant (23% actively so) as are 4.6% of the Mandarin, 1% of the Hoklo and only 0.5% of the Hakka. Pray that the Hoklo (Taiwanese) and Hakka groups might open up for the gospel.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

How firm a foundation,
Ye saints of the the Lord,
Is laid for your faith
In His excellent word!
What more can He say
Than to you He has said,
You who unto Jesus
For refuge have fled?

WEEK TEN

—Friday—

I pause in worship to hold up these qualities of yourself — just as if I had not seen them before: Righteousness — justice — love — faithfulness — omnipresence!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you. Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, O Lord” (Psa. 89:14,15). As you rule over the children of men the substrata of your throne is righteousness and justice. If you were to demand of all your citizens absolute obedience to your laws — as good and right as every law is we would all be condemned. If we expected and received total justice we would all be lost. From our point of view your laws are right — your decisions are just. But we can only be saved by your love and faithfulness.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. What a joy to read that your love and faithfulness “go before you” as heralds of your coming. It is because I receive and believe these messengers or qualities of yourself that I can acknowledge “your righteousness and justice.” Dear Lord, just now I acclaim you — I have learned to do so — I am learning to do so. I want to continue to learn this lovely lesson. I do not in any way wish to detract from your righteousness and justice — but I must be saved out of your love and mercy. I walk today in the illumination of these qualities of yourself — even in your own dear presence. Praise your name!

How do you personally relate to this quality of God? Speak it or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

It would be easy to prostrate myself before you and cry out in guilt for your mercy and grace — but such an action must have in it the motivation for change or nothing is accomplished. There seems to be two things you want me to do: (1) *Acclaim you*, i.e., tell others about your greatness and goodness. (2) *Walk in the*

light of your presence. In doing such I will find fulfillment and peace. I have surely found it so. But I am so very short of sharing you as I could and should. I need to keep my heart and eyes open to the many ways this can be done and take comfort in this fact. Walking in the light of your presence is something I am only beginning to learn. What I do know is such a joy I wonder why I am so slow in starting. Forgive and cleanse and renew!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

The great Physician now is near —
The sympathizing Jesus:
He speaks the saddened heart to cheer —
O hear the voice of Jesus!
Sweetest note in angels' song!
Sweetest name on mortal tongue!
Sweetest carol ever sung —
Jesus, blessed Jesus!

HIS WORD

⁶“At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’

⁷“Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’

⁹“‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’

¹⁰“But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

¹¹“Later the others also came. ‘Sir! Sir!’ they said. ‘Open the door for us!’

¹²“But he replied, ‘I tell you the truth, I don’t know you.’

¹³“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.” —Matthew 25:6-13, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It will be one happy privilege to read this word before your throne of grace. Most especially since it speaks to me of the preparations I need to make for the day and hour of your coming! This whole scene presupposes one fact, we are all in love with the bridegroom and long for his coming. At one time at least the foolish virgins shared such love — perhaps they still did. But in that love there must be priorities established. If we really love someone we will think ahead and make every preparation for their place in our life. Practical responsibility is part of that preparation.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. The large lesson I receive from this text is: *There is not enough oil to share with others* — i.e., because of the nature of the circumstance everyone has just enough oil for himself and no more. It is like the manna — each one must provide his himself. In the personal preparation for your coming it must be just that, “personal preparation.” It would seem there were some even at the last hour who thought there would yet be time. Procrastination and neglect will one day catch up with us — and it will be everlastingly too late! God’s mercy endures forever but time does not.

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 picture of life as a day and night — a 24 hour span. (2) Thank you for the wonderful promise that one night we will hear the cry — even now we tune our ears. (3) Thank you that I can keep my lamp trimmed and filled with oil. (4) Thank you for the strong reminder that on this occasion we cannot share our oil. (5) Thank you that there are those who sell oil — we can come and receive an adequate supply. (6) Thank you for the awesome thought that one day the door will be shut — never to open again. (7) Thank you we can know you now that we might live with you throughout eternity.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“But he replied, ‘I tell you the truth, I don’t know you.’” What sad words are there. It is not that the groom did not want to know the bride — he did! But he was busy about many other things. The time and thought necessary for real intimacy was never found. To fulfill the figure of speech we need to say that a very poor inadequate courtship took place. Our joy is to spend so much time with the bridegroom that we are wholly in love with him. We have learned to “know” him in the many changing circumstances of

life. He has endeared himself to us so that being with him is happiness itself.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In these days of waiting for the midnight cry there is much about which to pray: (1) One day we will be called out of this world to meet whatever we find on the other side — isn’t it past time to be ready for him? (2) Jesus chose this figure to describe himself — prepare my heart to live forever with him! (3) Awaken me long this side of the coming of my Lord — how can I best trim my lamp? (4) I need not look to others for oil — I lift my heart up to you — I open your word — I bow before you — give me oil adequate for this day. (5) I want to be walking toward you when you come. (6) What a place of delight will the wedding banquet be! Develop my appetite for it. (7) The door of life will indeed one day be shut — keep me ready for it every day.

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 — I want to continue to listen. (1) “There will be a time when repentance is too late.” (2) “The greatest joy of life is knowing me.” (3) “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Colombia — Points for prayer: (1) *Colombia has a reputation for being possibly one of the most violent countries in the world.* Six communist guerrilla movements and the drug-trafficking “barons” dominate many areas of the country. Corruption, violence, assassination and murder have become common-place. The government is losing credibility through compromises and inability to control the possible breakdown of society. Pray for the nation’s leaders, for peace and for freedom for the gospel to be maintained. (2) *Evangelicals suffered considerable persecution until 1960.* During “La Violencia” a bigoted expression of Catholicism provoked destruction of churches and the robbery, rape and murder of believers. The last 25 years have been a time of freedom for ingathering among a receptive people. Praise God for growth. Pray also for the believers who face a renewed period of pressure during the ’80s. A few pastors have been murdered, Christians intimidated and evangelism resisted by both terrorist groups and Catholic zealots.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

He leadeth me: O blessed thought!
O words with heav’nly comfort fraught!
Whate’er I do, where’er I be
Still ’tis God’s hand that leadeth me.

WEEK TEN

—Saturday—

If those who lived 700 years before the coming of your Son found such joy and peace in your presence, surely we can find even more!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“They rejoice in your name all day long; they exult in your righteousness. For you are their glory and strength, and by your favor you exalt our horn. Indeed, our shield belongs to the Lord, our king to the Holy One of Israel” (Psa. 89:16-18). It is such a good thing to rejoice and praise your name, i.e., your essential being! There are many things and events in every day in which or for which we could find reason to praise you. How I do want to be looking for them. If anyone could exult in your righteousness it would be a Christian — we have been made the righteousness of yourself through your Son. Praise your name!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

You are our “glory” or character and strength. You, in the person of your Son, set before us the kind of person we want to be. I shall never be able to see him enough. There is something about looking at him that develops an inward strength we do not have otherwise. It is a real joy to hold up these attributes of yourself and praise you and thank you. (1) You are righteous and my righteousness. (2) You set before me the kind of person I want to be. (3) You are my strength — I have no other. (4) Any and all power we have comes from you. (5) You are our protection — even our eternal sovereign! How very much is in “your name,” i.e., in yourself.

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

As meaningful as praise is confession has elements we do not find elsewhere. It is my goal to praise you — exult in you all the day long — I surely have not done this — I have been positively morose at times. Forgive me! I have no reason to be anything but full of

praise. If I were to simply count the physical possessions we could say we have so much more than a multitude of others who are also your children. The spiritual treasure in heavenly places is our most precious possession. The development of character is only found in an open giving of myself to you in prayer and meditation upon your word. I want to do this much more than I do at present. Indeed my shield belongs to you — I want to hold it up and hide behind it.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no 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.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁴“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. ¹⁵To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. ¹⁶The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. ¹⁷So also, the one with two talents gained two more.” —Matthew 25:14-17, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It would be easy to pull down from the shelf a commentary or two and read what others had said on this text — and sometimes this is most helpful. But other times, like today, it is better to pause here and let you speak these words into my heart! I know my Lord identified himself when he spoke of “the man going

on a journey." It was your journey back to heaven. Dear Lord, you are calling us to assemble before you — I hear your voice — I gladly come. What an overwhelming responsibility and privilege you have given to us. You have entrusted us with your property. It is almost more than we want to hear. But then you have divided the property in portions commensurate to our abilities.

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 one you gave more than five thousand dollars. To another more than two thousand, and to a third more than one thousand. It makes no difference to me how much you have given me — this is your decision — not mine. It is more than incidental that my Lord talked about free enterprise in this parable. In a wonderful sense each of us have five talents from you, *time, energy, thought, money, ability.* To each man you alone give him these entities. These are not our properties — or talents — but *yours* — we are responsible for their use. What an awesome consideration!

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 beautiful use of ordinary things. (2) Thank you "the man" is going to return from his journey — perhaps today! (3) Thank you for "your property" entrusted to us — how amazing! (4) Thank you for the precious time, energy, thought, money and abilities you have given me — and all. (5) Thank you that there is always the potential for increase in what you have given us. (6) Thank you that you want us to be just like yourself — creative! (7) Thank you for the warning that we can misuse what you give us.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Then he went on his journey." He has been on his journey ever since that day when clouds took him out of our sight. This does not mean he will not return, this is but a fulfillment of his promise that he is on a long journey — i.e., by human estimate. This is such a familiar human expression. We have all been on a journey and looked forward to a return. Since a day with you is like a thousand years with us it has only been the day before yesterday that he left. In the realm of infinity it will seem to us what it now is with you. The longest anyone of us could be separated from you would be the few years of our lifetime so your words are full of meaning to us "keep watch."

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Dear Lord, I do not want to dig a hole for hiding

what you have given — I would bury myself if I did. (1) Call me again to yourself and let me understand your gift to me. (2) Keep me daily aware that all I have is your property. (3) No one complained about what you gave to someone else — guard me from such an attitude. (4) How beautiful it is that you know exactly what to give to whom — I am glad to use it with this understanding. (5) It is a joy indeed to put your money to work and gain more for you — give me grace and wisdom in doing so. (6) May all I do be done for you — for your praise — honor and praise.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I must hear you now and not at the judgment if I am to serve you. (1) "It makes little difference if anyone knows how many talents you have received." (2) "I know what you have received and if you are using what I have given according to your ability." (3) "After having done all you will be saved by grace not your works."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Colombia — Points for prayer: (1) *The Roman Catholic Church* has been radically affected by the changing political scene. Some priests have identified with leftist guerrillas, but the majority have become more conservative in the '80s. The charismatic movement is still widespread, but many Catholic charismatics have joined Pentecostal and other evangelical groups, or returned to the dogmas of Catholicism. (2) *Evangelical growth has been good.* In 1933 there were 15,000 Evangelicals; today there are about one million.

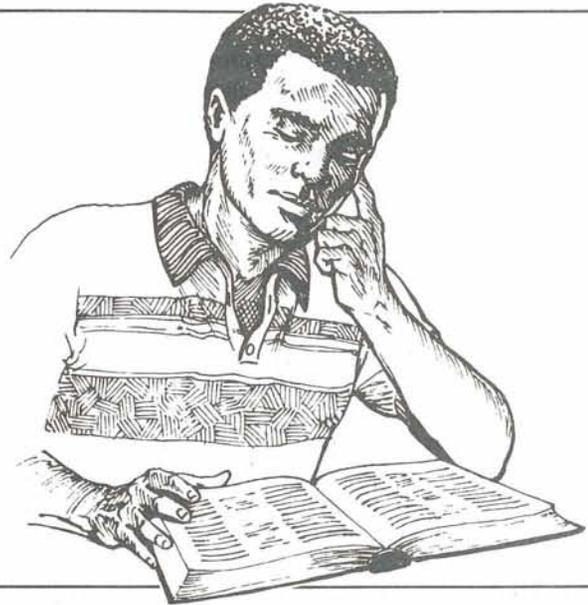
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

"I work so hard for Jesus"
I often boast and say,
"I've sacrificed a lot of things
To walk the narrow way,
I gave up fame and fortune;
I'm worth a lot to Thee,"
And then I hear Him gently say to me,
"I left the throne of glory
And counted it but loss,
My hands were nailed in anger
Upon a cruel cross,
But now we'll make the journey
With your hand safe in mine,
So lift your cross and follow close to me.

WEEK ELEVEN

—Sunday—

If our consciences were truly that of a child we would give life and light to your word as we read it — or heard it. I want it to happen now!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Once you spoke in a vision, to your faithful people you said: ‘I have bestowed strength on a warrior; I have exalted a young man from among the people. I have found David my servant; with my sacred oil I have anointed him’ ” (Psa. 89:19,20). In the relationship you had with David there are qualities of your character that speak to all of us: (1) You have spoken to us once and for all time in these last days through your Son — as revealed in your word. How I want to hear your voice through your word. (2) It is to “the saints” your “faithful people” you have delivered “the faith.”

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. It is not to some special clergy class you have given your words — but to “the saints” at Corinth, Rome, Philippi, or to the nation of Israel, etc. Praise your name for opening my heart to this truth. (3) You do select certain men for certain tasks and give talents according to their ability. In your service all who are called are exalted since we serve such an exalted king and handle the exalted word and labor among eternal truths. (4) Dear Lord, you have indeed found each one of us and have anointed us with your Holy Spirit (II Cor. 1:21,22). We are more surprised than the humble shepherd boy. What an amazement, *we have an anointing from the Holy One* (I John 2:20; 27), indeed it is in our name — each of us are *Christ-ians — the anointed ones.*

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 typical or at least analogous is David and ourselves: (1) David had no sooner found out he was to be the next King of Israel than he had more trouble than ever before. We never knew there was a devil un-

til we became your “anointed ones.” But in Saul’s pursuit of David there were so many, many lessons you had to teach him. (2) David was not at once accepted by all the people, indeed he had problems all through his reign with those who did not, or would not understand his motives. How true this is to our efforts in your service. I want to be as submissive and generous as David. (3) David had faults that affected those nearest to him. Somehow he *did not* save all his family. In all the above David called out to you in sincere repentance — even as myself! Forgive me dear Lord!

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

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.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁹“After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. ²⁰The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.’

²¹“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

²²“The man with the two talents also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.’

²³“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and

share your master's happiness!' " —Matthew
25:19-23, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Just as if I had never read it before I now read these words! Perhaps it is that I have never understood their application to my heart as I do now. *You have returned!* I am given by my Lord a preview so I can relate to it before it happens. We have always been your slaves — bought and paid for — we belong not to ourselves but to you! When you return we will still be your slaves. You have perfect right — which you exercise — *you wish to settle the account*. It will be up to us to tell what has happened — and it better be accurate and true since you already have a record of it. *The servant did know what happened*. Thank you for the fact that we do know where we are in our service.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Could not the servant have gained ten or fifteen talents from what his master gave him? Does our master, even yourself, expect only a 100% gain? The master doesn't compliment him on the amount but on his faithfulness. It is the day-by-day worship and service our Lord sees and rewards. All of our service has a great deal of wood, hay and stubble in it. All our best efforts are terribly alloyed by our own selfishness and stupidity. At the same time we must see that the commendation was on the basis of production. How I do want to hear what you are saying to me in these words!

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 you are going to settle accounts and not some man or group of men. (2) Thank you I can be reminded again that I belong to you. (3) Thank you I can bring to you that which you have helped me to produce (I suppose all I will see will be "the gold and silver"). (4) Thank you for the one quality our Lord expects, a knowledge of entrustment. (5) Thank you for the incredible term "good" as applied to anyone of us — we are only good out of your grace — not our works — and yet not without our works. (6) Thank you for the anticipation of "the many things" that are to come. (7) Thank you for the share we have in our master's happiness — what will that be?

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Come and share your master's happiness." Since our master is in heaven this happiness will be in that place. Our Lord did say: "I go to prepare a place for

you." Part of his happiness is in making us happy. Since we are created in his image or share his nature we are eternal intelligent beings. Part of the master's happiness will be the continuance and expansion of the use of our minds. No doubt we will see things in the eternal realm far beyond human words to describe. We shall hear things that will bring delight to our hearts like nothing else we have ever heard. Will we exercise the sense of smell? Will there be fragrances to lift us and stimulate us?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Such thoughts as those above truly move us to prayer: (1) How can I better prepare for your coming? Open my heart to see! (2) There will be no escaping an accounting — I really do not know what I have done for you and what I have done for other reasons — I want your grace to be able to discern the difference. (3) Teach me the real meaning of "good" as used here. (4) How shall I define "faithful" in this context? (5) Are all men in charge of something or someone in the world to come? (6) Illumine my mind as to what gave my Lord happiness that I might know what to expect in heaven.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me through this judgment scene: (1) "When I come it will not seem a long time at all — since there will be no time." (2) "Judge yourself that you be not judged." (3) "Only your works — not your sins will be judged."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Comoro Islands — Points for prayer: (1) *These islands were totally unevangelized until 1973.* In that year the first Comorian was converted. This man is the only national believer with Bible school training and is now the leader of the small group of Comorian believers. They have experienced much opposition and are not allowed to meet openly. Pray for their stability, growth in grace, boldness in testimony and increase in numbers. (2) *Mission work was permitted after independence.* After an initial period of considerable freedom to witness by the team of AIM missionaries, a revolutionary regime expelled them in 1978 as a result of some Muslims coming to Christ. A gradual re-entry of missionaries was permitted by the present government. Pray for the tactful low-key witness of 11 AIM missionaries serving the people through medical, veterinary, technical and teaching ministries on the three islands.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

If for the prize we have striven,
After our labors are o'er,
Rest to our souls will be given,
On the eternal shore.

WEEK ELEVEN

—Monday—

Your love for David was not love for a perfect man — just one who loved you first, last and always — I want to love you like David.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

‘I have found David, my servant, . . . He will call out to me, ‘You are my Father, my God, the rock my Savior.’ 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. 89:20a; 26-28). What a beautiful description of this man whose heart was like yours. At the same time this describes David’s greater son — even my Lord. It also describes each of your “*firstborn ones*.” We can look behind these descriptive phrases and see the heart of the one who gave them. Blessed be your name!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. In these wonderful words I see you as: (1) My Father to whom I can call out in need or thanksgiving. (2) My God — who created all and is a part of all each day. (3) My Saviour who is a rock! The solidarity and permanence of a rock are at least two of the qualities I see in you! (4) We share all the victories our Lord bought at such great cost — he was the *firstborn* from the dead. We will one day share with him in this position. He is the firstborn or the head, the ruler of all creation! We will also share this glorious position. (6) Your love will never fail — an eternal love in which we can rest and rejoice!

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 can I better, day by day relate to you? How can I take you with me everywhere I go and consciously involve you in all I say and do? I am essentially asking you to forgive me for not so doing! When shall I call out to you as my Father — my God, my rock and Saviour? Will it be only when some emergency arises? Yes — but not only then — I miss so much by not

consciously relating to you in all things. I want to but return what I receive — your love is constant and integrated with all I do. Dear Lord, may my love for you carry but a little of this quality. Forgive me for my failures.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I have a Savior,
He’s pleading in glory,
A dear loving Savior,
Tho’ earthfriends be few;
And now He is watching
In tenderness o’er me,
But O that my Savior
Were your Savior too!

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

HIS WORD

²⁴“Then the man who had received the one talent came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’

²⁶“His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? ²⁷Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.’

²⁸“ ‘Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. ²⁹For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. ³⁰And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weep-

ing and gnashing of teeth.' ” —*Matthew 25:24-30, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Of what is this servant accusing the master? Isn't he saying that his master is a thief? If he harvested where he had not sown he must be harvesting someone else's crop. Or is he saying his master is so devious in his transactions that he cannot follow him? We get the impression that this servant has exactly the attitude so many people have toward yourself. He has a negative image of his master. He considers you much like we would some large corporations — impersonal and totally unpredictable. The best thing to do with such a giant machine is to play it safe and do nothing.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Jesus is saying that this servant was a liar! If he really believed what he said he would have acted in the way Jesus described. He was wicked and lazy! We can think of several ways he could have been wicked in his handling of his master's money. He was far too busy with his own interests to take time and thought for those of his master. He really didn't care at all and wanted to get rid of the responsibility as rapidly as possible. He didn't really believe there would be a judgment day. He hid the money in a place so he could find it if he ever needed it. Most of all he was just plain lazy!

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 I know you are not at all a hard unreasonable judge — but a loving father who cares for his children. (2) Thank you I need not be afraid of what you will say at the judgment — I already know what it will be! (3) Thank you for the eternal principle taught here that “nothing succeeds like success.” (4) Thank you that you do not place limitations on how much we can do for you. (5) Thank you for the warning that a non-productive attitude feeds on itself. (6) Thank you for the strong words of “. . . throw that worthless servant outside. . . .” (7) Thank you for the clear definition of laziness.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents.” At first hearing these words does sound strange. Fortunately our Lord explains his words. He says, in paraphrased form, everyone who works like the man with the ten talents will obtain more, and I want to give him this talent as an indication of my approval of such industry, but the one who does not work and therefore does not gain, even what he does have will be taken from him. But the judgment does not end here, the ultimate results of

both lives are realized. One is welcomed into the happiness of the master, the other is thrown into the utter darkness.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the sad example of this man there is much reason for prayer. (1) Guard me from any “second guesses” as to your nature — I want to believe just what I read about you in your own word. (2) Open my eyes to your whole harvest field — may I see both the need and the harvest. (3) Deepen my awareness of the divinely fertile seed I have in my possession. (4) Sharpen my awareness that *you do* expect returns on your investment of the time, energy, intelligence, ability and money you have given us. (5) Even the minimal efforts from those who misunderstand would be acceptable — I want this opinion of the efforts of some. (6) I do now have another day — today is mine — and that is all! How I do want to use it for you!

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 love everyone so much I care about what they do.” (2) “I know the quantity and quality of all your work.” (3) “No work is done without real appreciation from me.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Congo — Points for prayer: (1) *Praise God that after some years of intense pressure on Christians, there is a softening of official attitudes to Christian activities. Pray that this may continue. Pray for the government, and for committed Christians to be placed in positions of responsibility.* (2) *Tribal religions have been encouraged by the government, and churches are pressured to compromise with fetishism and ancestor worship. Indigenous prophetic-healing churches have greatly multiplied in numbers over the last 15 years. Pray for a deep work of God's Spirit in the hearts of those who bear the name of Christ, that all allegiance to the powers of darkness will be eradicated.*

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Faith of our fathers! living still
In spite of dungeon, fire and sword;
O how our hearts beat high with joy
Whene'er we hear that glorious word!
Faith of our fathers, holy faith,
We will be true to thee till death.

Our fathers, chained in prisons dark,
Were still in heart and conscience free;
How sweet would be their children's fate
If they, like them, could die for thee!
Faith of our fathers, holy faith,
We will be true to thee till death.

WEEK ELEVEN

—Tuesday—

Teach me in this time of worship how to receive your chastening as an expression of your personal concern for me.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I will punish their sin with the rod, their iniquity with flogging; but I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness. I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered” (Psa. 89:32-34). This is in reference to David and his children. We are children of Abraham (and David) by faith. What strong sure words are these about your own nature. None of us “gets away” with anything because you have an interest in everything! The punishment here seems to be commensurate with the disobedience. We are punished and flogged because you care. Yet in it all and through it all, and after all *you love us!*

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I need to define sharply just what is involved in your “faithfulness” so I can rejoice in these provisions. It should be enough to know that you even now look upon me as justified, sanctified, forgiven and redeemed. Praise your name for such a promise. It is enough to know that just on the other side of my last heart-beat is a world and life of beauty and total fulfillment for all we have begun here. I hear my Saviour say: “This is the New Covenant in my blood.” How I do embrace such a promise. It seems totally incredible that I can even now open up the Bible and read what your lips have uttered and know that not one word will be altered. 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

You have various ways of using a rod; all of them out of deep personal love for me — but each of them is an attempt to get my attention for repentance. Dear Lord, I bow before you seeking to understand and

respond as you want me to. I have at times been flogged by you. Not as often as I deserved — but I have felt — not at the time, but afterward such was indeed good and needed. You have been so infinitely kind to me. I have been led as often (yea, more often) to repentance by your goodness. My joy is in your love and faithfulness. My hope is in your promises which shall never fail.

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

Great is Thy faithfulness,
O God my Father!
There is no shadow
Of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not,
Thy compassions, they fail not:
As Thou hast been
Thou forever wilt be.

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

HIS WORD

³¹“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.” —Matthew 25:31-33, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What an awesome overpowering scene is before us! How I do long for that day! Even now — just now — Maranatha! But do I care as to just how many goats there will be? Am I doing all I can to change the nature of man through the glad tidings? My life will be over in ten years? Fifteen? If I live to be 91 I have

twenty years. How many more will be ready for your coming? Dear Lord, I want to increase, by your grace, my productivity a hundred-fold! Just now I want to look up and consider the circumstances of your coming. When your Son comes we will then see the fullness of his character. How little did we see of his real person while he was here. At his coming we shall see him as he is!

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 believe when he comes he will not only bring all his holy angels but the spirits of all those who have died in faith. The nations gathered before him will be those who have been resurrected to stand before him and those who have been changed or transformed at his coming. All men of all nations will be gathered before him. The saved and the lost — the sheep and the goats. The sheep to receive judgment for their works and the goats for their sins. *I say all this to myself!* I want to imbue these words deep on my conscience! How ready am I for this momentous event? There will be no problem for our Lord in his determination as to who is a sheep and who is a goat. Dear Lord, there should be no problem now!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the opportunity to think clearly of "his glory." (2) Thank you for the contemplation of meeting the angels. (3) Thank you for the assurance that the judgment will be wholly fair and just. (4) Thank you for the generalness or universalness of this judgment — all will be there. (5) Thank you for the promise that one day we shall be able to see and know the totality of the world population (amazing!). (6) Thank you that we can be your sheep right here and right now! (7) Thank you for the glorious hope of living forever with you.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left." What a very familiar figure of speech this was to a nation involved in agriculture. There are several wonderful lessons to learn from these somber words: (1) It is the nature of man that determines his destiny. A goat never acted like a sheep and a sheep never acted like a goat. If we have been regenerated we will walk and live and think according to the newness of the new life. (2) It was after adequate time was given for a demonstration of the nature of both participants. It is one thing to say you are "born again," (indeed, this has become a most common claim in our day) it is quite another thing to demonstrate qualities that indicate this is true. Our Lord is going to tell us in the following verses just what these are.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

As I wait this side of your coming and read again your words I am moved to pray: (1) You have come to me in a revelation of yourself in your word — what will it be when you come again? (2) I want to be able to thank the angels for all the service they have given to me during this little sojourn called life — help me in the ability to do so. (3) In the description here a throne means judgment — but there are other qualities of your nature to be seen. I bow now before your love and mercy and long-suffering. Impress these qualities deeply on my conscience. (4) What a mind-boggling sight it will be to see all the nations — all the people of all the nations gathered before you. Prepare my heart even now for that day.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me again through these words: (1) "I am now turning goats into sheep." (2) "I am even now separating the two flocks." (3) "You are my rod and my staff in such recreation and separation."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Cook Islands — Points for prayer: (1) *The Islanders have been Christian for 150 years*, but few have assurance of salvation. Pray for the evangelization of this generation. (2) *Many islands have no known evangelical witness*, and where it does exist it is limited to several AOG churches and small groups within the older churches. A new infusion of spiritual life must be prayed in. (3) *Migration to New Zealand* for employment has given another means of reaching the Islanders. 77% of Niue, 66% of Tokelau and 60% of Cook Islanders are now in New Zealand. Pray for the Island churches in Auckland, etc. Blessing there will affect the islands. (4) *Bible translation*. A revision of the Rarotongan Bible is needed (UBS), and possibly translation into the smaller languages.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

"I am the vine and ye are the branches,"
Bear precious fruit for Jesus today;
Branches in Him no fruit ever bearing,
Jesus hath said, "He taketh away."

"I am the vine and ye are the branches;
I am the vine, be faithful and true;
Ask what ye will, your prayer shall be granted,
The Father loved Me, so I have loved you."

"Now ye are clean thro' words I have spoken,
Living in Me, much fruit ye shall bear;
Dwelling in you, My promise unbroken,
Glory in heav'n with Me ye shall share.
"I am the vine and ye are the branches;
I am the vine, be faithful and true.
Ask what ye will, your prayer shall be granted,
The Father loved Me, so I have loved you."

WEEK ELEVEN

—Wednesday—

Of all times for the contemplation of the brevity of life it is as I bow before you! You have created all men for futility — thank you for saying so so plainly. I worship you to remind myself I am not the body.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Remember how fleeting is my life. For what futility you have created all men! What man can live and not see death, or save himself from the power of the grave? . . . For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night. . . . Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days” (Psa. 89:47,48; 90:4,14). In these verses are all of life and all of the life to come! The brevity and futility of life are so clearly stated. There is just no way for us who live in the time frame of existence to understand a life without time. But we try. It is like considering a thousand years as 24 hours or even as three or four hours. Such thoughts move us to silence and wonder before you!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. How delighted I am to read an answer to this sense of futility: “Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love.” In David’s day such related only to another bright morning. But we are *not* living in David’s day. There is a bright eternal morning awaiting all who sleep in Jesus. I refer to the body in the eternal morning of the resurrection — but there will be a morning for all of us who trust him as Lord this side of his coming. We but close our eyes here to open them in the wonders of the morning of the eternal life in his presence. “To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.” Praise your wonderful name! It is your unfailing love that has given us such hope and such a song!

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 easy it is to be caught up in the futility and fleetingness of life. This life from a physical perspec-

tive is fleeting and is futile. We all know we shall die — but few want to include such a thought in their daily schedule. Forgive me Lord, I have lived often in a fool’s paradise. As often as we have failed to face the reality of death we have also failed to open the eyes of our heart to the reality of heaven. If we were truly satisfied by your unfailing love we would have a confident hope of the eternal morning and we would sing for joy all the rest of our days however fleeting or futile this life may seem. Dear Lord how I want these words to turn into reality in my own experience. Help 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

I am thinking today of that beautiful land
I shall reach when the sun goeth down;
When thro’ wonderful grace by my Savior I stand,
Will there be any stars in my crown?

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

HIS WORD

³⁴“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

³⁷“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

40“The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me.’” —*Matthew 25:34-40, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

All we have done has been the blessing — or provision of yourself. How I do love to consider my joint participation with you in your service. We will be blessed or honored eternally by the Father (out of a very large quantity of grace) but we are also blessed of you right now — all we do is not only *for him* but *of him*. Blessed be his name forever! What a statement I find here! “. . .the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world!” You anticipated the problem and worked out the solution before the problem occurred. The crushing of the serpent’s head was in your mind from eternity past. The beauties and wonders of heaven were as much a part of your planning as this life and its woes.

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 thoughts simply remind me again of your greatness. I am delighted to simply acknowledge them as a fact. Jesus sees and knows and shares in our service for him. It is even more amazing to read that I am actually feeding you (like the women who followed him and gave out of their own provisions for him). We have given him to drink (even like the woman of Samaria). Into how many homes did Jesus go to spend a night during the three years of his ministry. There were 1095 days in three years. Ah, there have been many more since that day — and he has come in the disguise of some poor humble or not so humble servant to spend a night with us. Dear Lord, what an incredible truth!

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 wondrous words: “Come, you who are blessed by my Father” — how I long to hear them. (2) Thank you that I can be an heir with your Son — if I wasn’t I would surely have no inheritance. (3) Thank you for the use of the term “kingdom” — it speaks of such a variety of things — such visions of excitement are created. (4) Thank you for the word “prepared” — since you are the one doing it I know it will be tremendous! (5) Thank you that I can actually feed you — physically and spiritually. (6) Thank you that the needs of others are the needs of yourself and I can meet them.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”

These words have done more to comfort and to convict than any ten thousand words spoken by man. Dear Lord, we do rejoice in your estimate of the value of our service. No doubt our Lord needed several changes of clothes during his ministry. (To say nothing of keeping them clean.) How glad anyone would have been to supply him a robe or tunic, i.e., to such a great man. Are we ready to clothe those who do not even say “thank you” for what we have given? How we *need* his words to help us look behind the one receiving our gifts to see our blessed Lord.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

There will be no hesitancy on my part to lift up before your throne requests from this test: (1) Lord, I want to see you as hungry in the faces of the starving of the world. (2) In everyone who is sick and dies from polluted water I want to see you. (3) There are so many strangers in this world — most of us classify — it could be dangerous to invite a stranger into our home — but then it might be more dangerous not to. Give me your wisdom from heaven. (4) How hard and critical does my heart become to the appeals of those trying to clothe the naked — but then this is only an excuse — I know those who need clothes — break my heart and my pocketbook. (5) It is easier to care for the sick — at least *some* sick — open my heart to see your face! (6) Do I really care about those in prison? Not unless I visit them! Open the prison doors for me!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

How sharply you speak to me in these verses: (1) “Please look on the positive side of all these promises.” (2) “Your service is seen and accepted.” (3) “The poor, sick, imprisoned and naked you will always have with you — I left so you could meet their needs.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Costa Rica — Point for prayer: *The time of reaping in this receptive population has come.* The response is due to a moving of the Holy Spirit in the land, particularly through the effective witness of Evangelicals. Pray that this harvest may not be hampered by political unrest or dissension among believers.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

In the cross of Christ I glory,
Tow’ring o’er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.

WEEK ELEVEN

—Thursday—

The evaluation of all of life can and should happen in this time of prayer — may it be so today!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Who knows the power of your anger? For your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you. Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom” (Psa. 90:11,12). There are many many verses in the Psalms that describe your wrath and judgment. I want to open my heart to understand this quality of yourself. In this prayer of Moses we catch a comparison that makes us catch our breath! “Your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you.” Our fear should be commensurate to your wrath. It is not at all popular to speak of this quality of yourself — it is simply ignored by most preachers, teachers and writers of this day. I shall not do so!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I do want to bow in humble amazement before *absolute anger!* *Total wrath!* Disobedience — willful, habitual disobedience will end in this expression of yourself. When I consider such words as “everlasting punishment” — “eternal fire,” I am afraid — I tremble in fear. I do not want to disobey you. I am moved to follow what you say. I only have a certain number of days to get this done. I am glad that number is known only by yourself. But in what days I have left I want to read often these words describing your hatred for sin — not the sinner, and allow them with all the others on your love to lead me to obedience! In these words I lift up my praise!

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 would seem this whole time of worship has been one of confession. I can see some expression of your anger in the record of your dealing with disobedience in your word. Dear Lord, I identify with some of these persons. Since this psalm is the prayer of Moses

I will relate myself to his sins. (1) How easy it is to imagine that our plans are always your plans — our ways are your ways — Moses sinned in trying to deliver your people in his own strength. I have been there many times — forgive me. (2) It took you forty years to break down the pride of Moses — dear Lord, I do not want forty years in the desert — but if this is necessary — so be it! 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

Standing on the promises of Christ my King,
Through eternal ages let His praises ring!
Glory in the highest I will shout and sing —
Standing on the promises of God,
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

⁴¹“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴²For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’

⁴⁴“They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’

⁴⁵“He will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’

⁴⁶“Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.” —Matthew 25:41-46, NIV

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

None of us like reading these words — we would much prefer to just gloss over them and get to the

next text. (If some who read this take offense at such a statement just put my name in the place of "us.") I am today led by your word to face squarely your wrath and anger against willful sin. Dear Lord, as painful as it is, I want to do it! These words used to describe those who are lost are most enlightening; "those on his left," "you who are cursed," "depart from me," "into the eternal fire," "for the devil and his messengers (angels)." Opportunity was given and refused and on this basis such persons were condemned.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. If I had no opportunity I would have no sin. Where there is no law there is no sin. In opportunity you speak — do I hear you? Not near as often as I want to. It is not an option we have in meeting the needs of the world — it is an imperative! It is easy to excuse ourselves and ignore the problem. It will not go away! My Lord, you have reached me in an area where I have needed your help for so long. How I praise and thank 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 reminding me again of the wide gate and the many who enter in. (2) Thank you for the sharp rebuke to my conscience that *doing*, not saying, is real faith. (3) Thank you for telling me again of the terrible end of those who refuse to meet human needs. (4) Thank you for the variety of needs described here — surely all of us can identify with one of them. (5) Thank you for the eternalness of both the reward and the punishment. (6) Thank you that Jesus is to make the final evaluation. (7) Thank you for the clear fact that unless our faith works in the areas described it can not and will not save us.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." Isn't this one awful thought? No, it is not! It is *two* awful thoughts! It fills me with awe and trembling to consider anyone eternally conscious while in punishment. In this day this is something to ignore or explain away. Men say now it cannot be eternally true. Perhaps the punishment not the punished is the everlastingness here involved. Are not the "cursed" only punished as long as they deserve, i.e., according to their sins, punishment is no punishment without some one to be punished. Are we rewarded according to our works so that heaven only lasts commensurately as long? I simply stand back in amazement and accept what you say!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In these terrifying words I can surely find cause for prayer: (1) I live in time — I want to be thrust into the eternal realm by these words. (2) I want to endure to the end since satan will lose — thank you he has already been condemned. (3) Deliver me today from satan's messengers. (4) May I search out my Lord and feed him today. (5) I want to find someone who is thirsty — for the water of this life or the next — and give him a drink. (6) May I be kind and thoughtful to strangers — since I now know who they are. (7) There are so many sick and others in prison — how I do want to help — show me just how!

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me before it is too late for millions of people: (1) "I have always been present in human need." (2) "There will be a balance of the inequities you now see." (3) "Everlasting life and 'everlasting punishment' should be ever before your consciousness."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Cuba — Points for prayer: (1) *Few Cubans have any meaningful contact with Christianity.* The identification of the Roman Catholic Church with Spanish colonial and subsequent repressive governments meant that the church was never strong in Cuban society. The church has therefore suffered catastrophically since the revolution. Nominal adherence dropped from 85% in 1957 to 38.5% in 1983, and less than 10% of these attend mass. The number of priests has dropped from 725 to 200 over the same period. (2) *The Protestant churches* were decimated by several emigrations of many believers to the USA, a move encouraged by the authorities to get rid of them. Growth and recovery has been slow, but the quality of spirituality has markedly increased. There are now over 1,000 functioning churches. The fastest growing are the Assemblies of God, SDA's and some Baptist churches — with reports of localized ingatherings of many hundreds into the Kingdom of God. Most of present growth is among unregistered churches.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

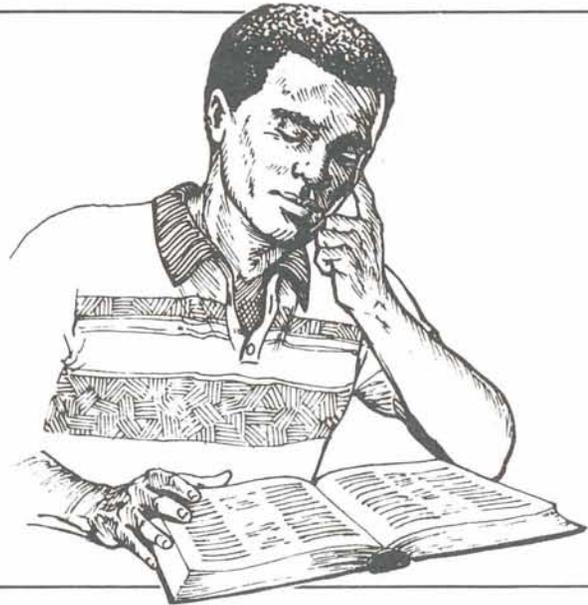
I'm pressing on the upward way,
New heights I'm gaining ev'ry day;
Still praying as I onward bound,
"Lord, plant my feet on higher ground."

My heart has no desire to stay
Where doubts arise and fears dismay;
Tho' some may dwell where these abound,
My prayer, my aim is higher ground.

WEEK ELEVEN

—Friday—

It is with you in prayer the true value of what we do — or do not do comes into focus!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“May the favor of the Lord (even yourself) our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us — yes, establish the work of our hands” (Psa. 90:17). It is a positive delight to be with you today. I feel so alive and alert! It has snowed last night and it is cool this morning, but this is the day you have given me and I am glad in it. In the words before me I see your presence in all I do. The psalmist wants to be sure that all he does is also what you would do. Dear Lord, this is my constant prayer. Give permanence and meaning to the tasks of yesterday and today. How many of our works even have permanence in their nature? Perhaps the psalmist is only asking for the fulfillment of our works. It is enough to know you care and are a part of all we do.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I only ask that you give me wisdom to be able to discern what has everlastingness built into it. I have a very difficult time being interested in that which passes with the using! It occurs to me that the one thing that will last forever is man! Nothing in this world except mankind will survive the fire of your judgment. There are ten thousand things we can do to help our fellow man. None of them are unimportant because man is so important. I want to relate my help to all those about me as close as I can to communicating your will to them. Establish the work of my hands and mind, yes establish by your grace and mercy these efforts. I must ask also that you purify and change them as you see the need.

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

If man is made by my works more comfortable in his lost condition of what good are the works of my

hands? Such works could be a means of reaching him for you. Dear Lord, forgive me for not relating eternal values with all I do. Forgive me also for forgetting the eternal value of what I am presently doing! To consider absolute knowledge and wisdom examining my “works” becomes almost laughable. How alloyed with wood, hay and stubble are all our best efforts. I only ask that you keep me at the task of seeking your kind of quality in my work. Amid it all both of us will have a good time. Forgive me and keep me open — wide open to change!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I have heard of a land
On a far away strand,
In the Bible the story is told,
Where cares never come,
Never darkness nor gloom,
And nothing shall ever grow old.

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

HIS WORD

26 When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, ²“As you know, the Passover is two days away — and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”

³Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, ⁴and they plotted to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill him. ⁵“But not during the Feast,” they said, “or there may be a riot among the people.” —Matthew 26:1-5, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Read also Mark 14:1,2; Luke 22:1,2. In the midst of a hotbed of intrigue and hostility my Lord makes such

casual comments! He is calm because he already knows what will happen. It is such a blessing to see these glimpses of deity in the life and ministry of your Son. He had predicted and described his death before, but had he ever used such blunt words as those in this text? "*The Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.*" After all these predictions and this bold-face promise did the apostles expect something else? How like them we are! You have told us over and over again ever so plainly what will happen if certain conditions prevail — but we want *our* way and ignore your words, Dear Lord, forgive us.

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 can we attend this meeting in the palace of Caiaphas? How I do want to look around the circle and see each face. Who are these men that they can be so blind and deaf to the words and works of my Lord? They are just like us in many ways. Dear Lord, break the pressures of prestige and position and the fear of men! How long did this session last? Such men are always in a hurry to go somewhere else or do something else. How like us! What suggestions were made? We can be sure that aside from listening to the words of Caiaphas the rest of them were only waiting till the one speaking was through so he could give his own plan. This is really a plot for bushwhacking or murder — or "a hit." Such a plan would eliminate the need for a trial. The *pious words* about the Passover, of these hypocrites is beyond belief!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you that my Lord finished all the words he wanted to say before he entered the last few hours of his life. (2) Thank you we can be a part of this incredible drama. (3) Thank you for the mention of the time element, it helps us to relate to each event in this blessed week. (4) Thank you my Lord called himself "*the Son of Man*" to the very end. (5) Thank you that all the plots of all the men of all time will not frustrate your plans. (6) Thank you for these clear words that teach us that some men will never believe. (7) Thank you for "the people" who are always waiting to hear him. Dear Lord, move us out among them.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"*But not during the Feast,*" they said, '*or there may be a riot among the people.*'" Did Jesus know such an attitude and decision was possible? We are sure he did. But his primary purpose of choosing the Passover Feast for the time of his being delivered up to these men and being crucified was that he himself was to be "the lamb of God, to take away the sins of the

world." Jobs, position, power, influence can be so great that irrational behavior results. We believe such was present in this decision, but we also believe these men decided at the very outset of their encounter with Jesus that they would ignore — refuse, reject his claims. We have come a long way in three years! A spirit of stupor has fallen on their eyes and heart.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In this wonderful time of my Lord's life I find much for prayer: (1) Just two days till death — how would I live and act if I knew that about myself? I do *not* know it will be different for me! (2) How powerful is the thought that my Lord knew he would die — just how and when. Teach me to worship him! (3) If Matthew knew all about the meeting of the chief priests and elders I know you knew much more — keep me aware of the fact that there are no secret meetings with you. (4) Will I ever see Caiaphas? I see his counterpart in several situations today. Have I ever seen him in the mirror? Dear Lord, deliver me from the evil one! (5) Lying and deception is so easy — and I have help doing it — deliver me from the evil one!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me. (1) "My Son finished all he began — you too can do this in him." (2) "Keep the blood on the doorposts and lentil of your heart." (3) "If I called myself the *Son of Man* can you call yourself anything else?"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Cuba — Points for prayer: (1) *The churches face a severe leadership crisis* because so many pastors have left the country. Pray for adequately trained replacements and also for the six Bible schools/seminaries still operating in Cuba. Pray for the 30 students in three Baptist seminaries, 10 in the Nazarene seminary, and others in the *WT*-founded seminary. (2) *Restrictions limit evangelism and growth of the churches.* No religious activities are allowed outside church buildings, and all church programmes and membership lists have to be submitted to the government. Pray for the believers to have boldness to witness and win the lost.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I have a Savior,
He's pleading in glory,
A dear loving Savior,
Tho' earth-friends be few;
And now He is watching
In tenderness o'er me,
But O that my Savior
Were your Savior too!

WEEK ELEVEN

—Saturday—

I am compared by the psalmist to a little baby bird — and so I am! Satan is in the business of trapping birds. I hide myself in you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Surely he will save you from the fowler’s snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart” (Psa. 90:3,4). What a wonderful promise of protection is offered just here. Satan is trapping birds. We are the birds he traps. Since Satan has superior knowledge of the spirit world and the ways of man he is a real terrible threat to us. He sets a trap in camouflage perfectly suited to our habits — dear Lord save me! Are germs under the control of the evil one? For whatever cause we have assurance of deliverance from the contagion of sin that brings death. How I praise you for such promises!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. To continue the figure of a bird — there is someone who knows more than the fowler — under his wings we as little ones can hide. Evidently the male bird has taken a real interest in sheltering the young ones from danger. Indeed he has! Even yourself — even ourselves! You have the wonderful advantage of a heavenly perspective. Where I do not see the danger, “lead me not into temptation.” In every situation, “deliver me from the evil one.” I now look at you as *a shield and rampart*, we are in a battle and sorely need a shield — we are besieged and must find a rampart. If our life seems less than this perhaps it is because we are already taken captive. Thank you for these beautiful qualities of yourself!

CONFESSION OF SIN

How often I have been trapped by the evil fowler! I have escaped or he released me in derision. It would seem trapping men — at least Christians — is but a sport for Satan. He knows eternal judgment awaits the coming of my Lord. Once we are infected it could

turn into “a pestilence.” Reinfection works that way. None of us can escape infection — but you can deliver us from an epidemic in our life. How I want to see the deadly danger in a “little sinning.” I am led by my need to the one who waits with outstretched wings to offer me a hiding place! In the battle of life hold up your shield — I believe you are! I want even now to hurry into the shelter of my rampart! Deliver me — love me — protect me — shelter me — quiet me.

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I come to the garden alone,
While the dew is still on the roses;
And the voice I hear,
Falling on my ear,
The Son of God discloses.
And He walks with me,
And He talks with me,
And He tells me I am His own;
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known.

HIS WORD

⁶While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, ⁷a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.

⁸When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. “Why this waste?” they asked. ⁹“This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor.”

¹⁰Aware of this, Jesus said to them, “Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. ¹¹The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me. ¹²When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. ¹³I tell you the truth, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.” —Matthew 26:6-13, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Read also Mark 14:3-9; John 12:2-8. It is so important that we read John's account of this incident so we will know just who was present. I want to see them all, Mary, Martha, Lazarus, Simon "the leper" (the man who was once a leper — but now healed by our Lord — we would assume), the apostles, other disciples, and ourselves. How unusual! Just before he is to die he attends a banquet. What composure! What confidence in yourself! What beauty is here. A lovely alabaster jar. We wonder about its color. All could see it was an expensive item which none of them could afford for the purpose Mary used it. It must be broken to be used. As soon as it was broken the fragrance of it filled the room. Mary once sat at his feet — now she anoints them and wipes them with her hair.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. What poignant thoughts of his coming death filled the heart of Mary, Martha and Lazarus — to say nothing of Peter, John, James and Andrew. But we must remember — as difficult as it is, that other thoughts were also present. Judas thought it first — but other disciples shared his attitude. When the fragrance assaulted their senses and they knew just how expensive that perfume was they said "what a waste!" Jesus immediately responded to their reaction. Since my Lord is more alive now than then (if that is possible) I need to know he knows all things at all times and live and think accordingly. The murmuring must have been obvious enough for Mary to get the message. It bothered her. Jesus described what she did as "a beautiful thing." How I would like to know all the meaning of that phrase.

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for my Lord's definition of beauty. (2) Thank you for the strange, yet true evaluation of "the poor." (3) Thank you that you are telling me my Lord and my relationship with him is more valuable and important than any humanitarian service. (4) Thank you even here Jesus did not ignore the needs of the poor. (5) Thank you for the privilege of being present for this beautiful service of anointing his body. (6) Thank you for my Lord's anticipation of the continuance of his word down through centuries and countries even to our day. (7) Thank you I can tell this thing she did in memory of Mary — and my Lord.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her." Even now this beautiful story is being told somewhere. We are accustomed to say that until the alabaster jar was broken the perfume could not be

used for its wonderful work. Just so with our hearts — indeed our lives. But there are other lessons to learn from Mary: (1) Unless she had understood and believed Jesus was going to be crucified she would not have come. There were many who did not understand him. (2) Unless she was ready to brave the criticism she would not have done it — her love for him must be stronger than the misunderstandings of men. (3) Her love for her Lord and his coming death dominated all her thoughts — she wept unashamed.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How charming is the message of this story: (1) Open my heart to weep over the death of my Lord — I have more reason to than Mary did. (2) What beautiful expensive thing can I give him? Will it be much more time in prayer? (3) Perhaps I should give him my body as his temple. (4) Teach me the meaning of waste and not waste. (5) Give me the patience of Jesus with the dullness and slowness of his disciples. (6) Did any of the apostles know Judas was "dipping in the till?" If so they were very kind to him — if not our Lord did. What can I learn from this? (7) Teach me how to tell this story in the very best way.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You have already spoken to me in these verses — speak again: (1) "Mary is not the only one who has an expensive alabaster jar sitting unused on the shelf of her house — something just like it is in every home." (2) "There are many things besides "the poor" you will have with you as long as you live — the opportunity to do something beautiful for your Lord will not always be there." (3) "She did what she could, what have you done?"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Cyprus — Points for prayer: (1) *The Orthodox Church is very traditional*, and while individuals are free to change to another denomination, social pressures are so great that this rarely occurs. Pray for the gospel in its purity to be accepted by the many nominal Christians. The activity of Jehovah's Witnesses confuses the issue.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I am resolved no longer to linger,
Charmed by the world's delight;

Things that are higher,

Things that are nobler,

These have allured my sight.

I will hasten to Him

Hasten so glad and free,

Jesus, greatest, highest,

I will come to Thee.

WEEK TWELVE

—Sunday—

“Peace, peace, sweet peace” is what we find in your presence — I gladly enter this place!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the plague that destroys at midday” (Psa. 91:5,6). Dear Lord, how precious it is to know you know the absurd feelings we have in darkness — the unreasonable fears we have in some days. There is no darkness with you. You see us as well at night as at midday. Praise your name! It would seem you are trying to say to me that there is nothing to fear in the world around or the world within. I do not believe you are saying there will never be a terror of the night or that we shall escape all arrows — but we need not fear. We can look beyond the terror and the arrow to the one who has prepared a much better place for us.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I want to as much as at all possible to apply this quality of yourself to my inmost being. I do have unreasonable fears. There are terrors in the night for me. There are arrows that fly by day. There is a contagion in the darkness and the plague in the midday. *It is my own terrible selfishness!* How seemingly impossible it is to separate myself from it. Dear Lord forgive me — and help me! I know the more I attempt to analyze it the worse it will become. It is only in a total trust in your love — personal interest, and omnipotence I can be led into the joy of peace. Such a sin is truly destructive deliver me!

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 that we do not have two thoughts about the terror of night? We have the thought of fear but where is our thought of your presence? This is a real basic sin! Forgive me, forgive me! Is there an accident awaiting me somewhere in this day? Has someone

shot an arrow that will find its mark between the chinks of my armor? You know the events of the day before they happen — at yet leave me perfectly free to make my own choices — I do not understand such a capacity — but I trust you wholly. You love me and know what is best. I trust you. There are no accidents in your view of my life. Praise your name. Forgive me for my stupidity and faithfulness!

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 I need someone in time of grief,
Someone my cheer to be,
Jesus I choose, for He gives relief,
He is the best for me.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁴Then one of the Twelve — the one called Judas Iscariot — went to the chief priests ¹⁵and asked, “What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?” So they counted out for him thirty silver coins. ¹⁶From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over. —Matthew 26:14-16, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Read also Mark 14:10,11; Luke 22:3-6. This is that sad tragic account of the one who betrayed him and sold him for the price of a slave. Dear Lord, I want much more than commentary comment as I record these words before you! The chief priests were happy about the offer of Judas. It gave them an unexpected opportunity to carry out their plot to kill him secretly. These were very religious men — did they interpret the offer of Judas as an answer to prayer, or a providential move in their favor? Such questions ought to make me very, very hesitant to interpret every for-

tunate move in my direction as your blessing from you for me. It might be your chastening under a new guise. I am satisfied to let you work uninterrupted and uninterpreted until enough time has passed for a balanced evaluation.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Why did Judas do this? *Answer:* he was stung by Jesus' rebuke at the feast at the house of Simon the leper. He was the one who objected to the anointing by Mary. He was the one who lost several shekels because the perfume was not sold. He was the hypocrite who talked about helping the poor. It is totally remarkable what punctured pride will do! Judas was angry! Lest we become too critical of this graduate from the school of Jesus let's remember how many times we have sold him out in a fit of injured ego! Dear Lord, It is I! Forgive me, forgive me!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the terribly sobering lesson that it is possible to walk and talk in the company of Jesus and yet not really "know" him. (2) Thank you for the clear account of what happened — we know whom to blame. (3) Thank you for Luke's word that "Satan entered into the heart of Judas" — but only because Judas wanted him to — because in his anger he invited the evil one in. (4) Thank you that sin has built into it its own destruction. (5) Thank you I can know it is not necessary to sin. (6) Thank you that Jesus was aware not only of the intentions of Judas but a way to escape. (7) Thank you for the love my Lord had for this man even to the end.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over." How strong and deep resentment becomes! Did Judas forget all Jesus had taught him? The problem is our problem. Judas did not keep the teaching "up front" in his mind. It is what is "up front" that gets the attention. Unless we are day-by-day meditating upon what he has said we can easily allow the problems and misunderstandings of the moment to become so prominent that satan has obtained the advantage. Another matter, and perhaps the most important: Judas never allowed Jesus to obtain a deep emotional involvement with him. We remain loyal to those we love — love in the sense that we have taken them into the depths of our emotional nature. This Judas never did. Dear Lord, speak to me!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What heart-felt requests arise from these verses! (1) Have I given all my heart to you and your Son? — dear Lord, I do it all over again! (2) If Judas, "one of the Twelve" could so betray him — Lord, I want to keep my heart with all diligence. (3) Guard me this day from "the love of money." (4) Protect me from the influence of the religious leaders who are not Christian. (5) May I watch for opportunities today to tell about his love. (6) I want to hand myself over to him. (7) There was a time when Judas was in love with Jesus — he lost it — I want ever and ever to sustain my "first love."

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You speak to me so personally in these verses: (1) "It is those who are watching and praying who are delivered from temptation." (2) "Jesus must be in you not just with you." (3) "Money can always be an occasion for the evil one."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Czechoslovakia — Point for prayer: *The Czech Protestants* have been persecuted for nearly six centuries (since the martyrdom of the great early Reformer Huss in 1415). The Communist regime has followed a carefully stepped-up programme for the erosion of the Church's influence by forced compromise, control of leadership, intimidation and ultimate liquidation of the Church since 1973. This has been especially true of the Catholics and larger Protestant bodies. Teachers, civil servants and doctors lose their jobs, and Christian students have often been denied higher education if they engage in any religious activity. Persecution is more severe in Slovakia. Pray for our suffering brethren that they may stand firm and continue to win people for the Lord.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I am so glad that our Father in heav'n
Tells of His love in the Book He has giv'n'
Wonderful things in the Bible I see:
This is the dearest, that Jesus loves me.

Tho' I forget Him and wander away,
Still He doth love me wherever I stray;
Back to His dear loving arms would I flee,
When I remember that Jesus loves me.

WEEK TWELVE

—Monday—

I want to live and move and have all my lifestyle in you! I do not do this — I need your help. I enter worship for this purpose.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“If you make the Most High your dwelling — even the Lord, who is my refuge — then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone” (Psa. 91:9-12). We immediately recognize the last half of the twelfth verse — it is what satan quoted to our Lord in his temptation. It does not make it less true! To misuse the scripture does not deny it. I am most eager to enter this beautiful text and find the areas where I can praise your name. In you we are to live and move and find our total being. If I lived no longer and found this truth it would be enough! You are our dwelling!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

It can be very misleading and disappointing to attempt to find the promise here of deliverance from physical harm because we are Christians. I believe you are *not* saying this. What was intended to be a threat and a hurt does not harm us. Even in the most severe physical disaster our spirits are not hurt. At the same time we need to remember that many many disasters are diverted by your love and do not come near our tent. The comparison here is that the response people give to so called “natural” disasters — and the devastation of war is not the response we give. We live in *him* — *he* is our refuge. Such an intimate identity with you protects us at all times in every circumstance. 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

How very very little do I consider the wonderful ministry of angels. They are under your command.

They are sent out by you to serve us. They are for our protection, i.e., “to guard” us. Keep my heart open to such wondrous thoughts! There is nothing I do or say or think today that is not under the constant surveillance of angels. When a rough place appears in the path ahead they will lift us up to escape such a stumbling. Dear Lord, how blind I have been! Somehow I have allowed satan’s misuse of this text to hide me to the promises in it. I have been a long time in an attempt to make you my dwelling place — how I thank you you have shown me again how far I need to go — but I am greatly encouraged!

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 of life, beneath the dome
Of the universe, Thy home,
Gather us who seek Thy face
To the fold of Thy embrace,
For Thou art nigh.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁷On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?”

¹⁸He replied, “Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, ‘The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.’” ¹⁹So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover. —Matthew 26:17-19, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Read also Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-13. We learn from the other accounts that the disciples who come

to Jesus to inquire about the Feast of Unleavened bread were Peter and John. There was much to do to get ready for the proper observance of this important feast. First in the agenda would be to find a room large enough for the thirteen participants. The wonderful foreknowledge of our Lord is again shown to us. He does not make a production of it. His abilities are all used unobtrusively. How this does speak to my heart! It would be unusual to find the owner of the house carrying a pitcher of water. It would be more unusual for the disciples to be there at the *very moment* this happened!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Jesus refers to himself as “the Teacher” — dear Lord, I want you to teach me every day of my life! I surely like the owner or master of this house. Whatever the Teacher wants or needs is at his disposal. Somehow this man had a large upper room all furnished and ready, i.e., clean of all leaven. How I would like to know the thoughts in the minds of Peter and John as they returned from the house. How somber and full of wonder they must have been. Once the room was located there was much to do. The lamb must be purchased and taken to the temple to be slain — some of the blood must be brought back to be applied to the doorposts and lentil with hyssop. From this perspective I want to see your lamb and his blood on the doorway of my heart!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the irreversible march of time — it brought us finally to a day on which our passover lamb *must* be sacrificed. (2) Thank you for the wonderful total forgiveness we have in him. (3) Thank you for the obvious omniscience of Jesus seen in this incident. (4) Thank you for the wealthy who loved him — without this man we would not have had a Passover Feast — at least not as here given. (5) Thank you for the willingness of Peter and John to follow strange instructions. (6) Thank you for the candid open accounts given by his biographers. (7) Thank you for the careful fulfillment of the law by my Lord.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“They left and found things just as Jesus had told them.” If we will leave our own opinions and put our total trust in our Lord we too will find everything just as Jesus has told us. In the realm of hope can we apply this principle. Perhaps more here than anywhere. He himself said: “If it were not so I would have told you.” Paul believed this principle implicitly. “For me to live is Christ, i.e., he is the center and circumstance of my living — to die is gain.” “To be absent from the body (death) is to be at home with the Lord.” He

demonstrated over and over again that whatever he said came to pass. He did this to develop a confidence on our part for all else he said. Dear Lord, I believe it will be even as you have said.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Penetrate my heart and its needs through these words: (1) How glad I am my Lord has become the lamb for me — pass over my sins this day! (2) I want to repent of all that separates me from you — but absolute holiness must always offer me forgiveness. (3) How I do want to make adequate preparations that on this Lord’s day I might eat and drink with the real meaning of your supper. (4) Open my eyes again that I might see just how impossible it would be to guess at the conditions in the city of Jerusalem as related to the upper room. (5) How I would like to find my place in that room — I am *so* glad I can listen to his words — every one.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to my heart as you reached the hearts of the Twelve: (1) “I know everything about you and I love you.” (2) “I know what you could be and do if you would — believe me.” (3) “In every circumstance trust me.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Czechoslovakia — Points for prayer: (1) *The religious freedom of 1966-68 was a gift of God.* The rather discouraged Christian witness was revived by a move of the Spirit right across the country. It was especially marked in Slovakia where evangelical believers are relatively few. The churches were filled, many were converted and new churches built. The move was most evident among the young people. There has been a great deepening of spiritual life since the Russian invasion and the subsequent sufferings. (2) *Communism has been completely discredited* in the country by the Russian occupation of the land. Pray that this may lead to a great turning to the Lord in spite of the high cost of following the Saviour. There is a religious awakening in progress that disturbs the government, especially since it is largely underground.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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.

WEEK TWELVE

—Tuesday—

If loving you and acknowledging you grants me your rescue I am happy to comply — or am I? I want to turn theory into reality — in worship!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“You will tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent. ‘Because he loves me,’ says the Lord, ‘I will rescue him, I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name’ ” (Psa. 91:13,14). We remember Paul’s words: “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet” (Rom. 16:20a). The description of our adversary as a roaring lion and a serpent gives us great courage when we read we shall tread and trample upon them. There is no way at all that we are a match for Satan apart from your strength. I remember the words of Jesus to the vacillating Peter, “Simon, Simon, Satan obtained you by asking” (Luke 22:30,31). Sounds a great deal like the transaction in heaven over Job. We are in your care and protection — Satan has no power over us unless either we or yourself give him.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. What a grand encouragement these words from yourself are to me! I am more than a conqueror and can do all things through your Son. He always leads me in triumph! Praise your wonderful name! How often I have been rescued, only yourself and the holy angels know. Your ways are always so subtle (at least most all the time) that I only enjoy their benefits and cannot mark your footprints. I praise you nonetheless. I am so glad you offer your rescue and protection on the basis of love and acknowledgment — this is all I can offer.

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

I have been devoured by the lion and bitten by the cobra. I have been trapped and slain by the fowler. I read here that it was because I wanted to be — it was out of your permission for a purpose. In all of this it

seems to me you take a tremendous risk. Suppose I do not learn the lesson of dependence on you and become bitter? Ah, but then you do not give us a temptation or trial too great for me, there is always the way of escape. You know our frame and remember that we are dust. You know and love your children, each one, better, much better, than we know our own, so you only permit the lion or serpent to do what could be the victory of treading upon them. Forgive me for so often failing the test.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I’ve reached the land of love divine
And all its riches freely mine;
Here shines undimmed one blissful day,
For all my night has passed away.
O Beulah Land, sweet Beulah Land,
As on thy highest mount I stand,
I look away across the sea,
Where mansions are prepared for me,
And view the shining glory-shore,
My heav’n, my home for evermore!

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

HIS WORD

¹⁴When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. ¹⁵And he said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

¹⁶For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.”

²⁴Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. ²⁵Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. ²⁶But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. ²⁷For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is

at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

²⁸You are those who have stood by me in my trials.

²⁹And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, ³⁰so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." — Luke 22:14-16, 24-30, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Read also Matthew 26:20; Mark 14:17. Dear Lord, I want to sit at the table with him. I hear him — and necessarily I interpret him. He says to me that among the several passover meals he has eaten with us it is this one he has eagerly anticipated. It is just before his suffering. How full his heart must be as he lifts the bread and the cup! My dear Lord, can I receive with all the real meaning you intended the words of your Son? ". . . I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." Was my Lord present to hand us the loaf and the cup when we ate as citizens of your kingdom? My Lord, how can it be I was so blind?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. If the apostles knew (or believed what they knew) that Jesus was to be crucified how is it they would argue over who was to be greatest in his kingdom? The plain awful obvious truth is they did not believe he would suffer. Then how incredibly kind are the words of my Lord to these ignorant selfish men! Dear Lord, there is hope for me! Break the shell of my selfish stupidity and write these words upon the tablet of my heart, ". . . I am among you as one who serves." If I am not serving others I am not serving you. How I do long to follow him. Help 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 clear word of authority in all my Lord is saying here. (2) Thank you for this plain expression, "you are not to be like that." Hear it, oh my soul! (3) Thank you that the one who rules is defined as "the one who serves." (4) Thank you that Jesus said of the apostles in their poor attempts to serve him, "you are those who have stood by me in my trials." (5) Thank you for the wonderful promise of the kingdom — may I enter it and serve in it. (6) Thank you I can eat and drink at your table in your kingdom. (7) Thank you for the treatise of Luke that tells me of the fulfillment of the promise of judgment of the twelve over the twelve tribes of Israel.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

". . . so that you may eat and drink at my table in

my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Jesus came to be king — he came to sit upon a throne. He did set up his kingdom by ruling from the hearts of his followers. His kingdom is not at all "of this world," i.e., obtained by force. He gained citizens by loving teaching and by a loving example. Just as he from the Father obtained his kingdom — so he has asked that his followers obtain their rule. There is no way for me to describe the full meaning of eating and drinking with him at his table in his kingdom. We do it every Lord's day, but in many ways, "we know not what we do." May I pause long enough next time to remember these words.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I want to read these words as if I had never read them before and pause before your throne to pray: (1) How good it is to observe my Lord, disciplined, but not an ascetic. (2) Dear Lord, I want to be just like Jesus. (3) Your Son knew where he was and what he wanted to do at all times — if I would plan my work I am sure you would help me to work my plan. (4) It is so easy to identify with almost anyone at your table except you — forgive me — help me. (5) Since I am your slave-citizen I want to truly hear what you are saying to me as we eat and drink together at your table.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORDS AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Perhaps there will be a new fresh message each time I come to sup with you if I will but listen: (1) "There will always be disputes over greatness — they are all settled in the same way." (2) "The greatest among you shall be like the youngest." (3) "I was among you as one that served — the servant is not greater than his master."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Denmark — Points for prayer: (1) *Denmark needs a fresh visitation* from God. Although the vast majority still maintain formal links with the national church, church attendance in most parishes varies between 2% and 4%. Praise God for signs that the tide is turning against permissive secularism. (2) *The evangelical witness is small* both within and outside the State Church, so pray for all seeking to live for the Lord in this land that their testimony may lead many to a personal faith in the Lord. There has not been much active evangelism in the past, but the Lord is stirring up a number of groups around the country to win their countrymen to Christ. Pray for the raising up of many new evangelical congregations.

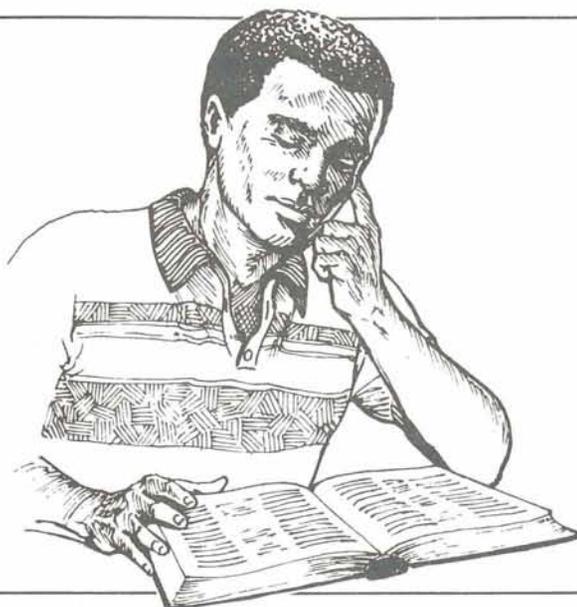
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I am thinking today of that beautiful land
I shall reach when the sun goeth down;
When thro' wonderful grace by my Savior I stand,
Will there be any stars in my crown?

WEEK TWELVE

—Wednesday—

How these words of Psalm 91:14,15 take on reality in the closet of prayer! I bow in your presence to find such fulfillment!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“He will call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation” (Psa. 91:14,15). I hope the expression “praise your name” does not become monotonous. It isn’t to me. Perhaps it is like the expression, “I love you” — it is always good when it is said from the heart. I do praise you for hearing prayer. Surely there are so many of us who pray such stupid selfish things, and yet you hear with personal interest every one of them. There is always a response from you. “Yes,” “no,” or “wait.” But such answers come in such a personal manner. Praise your name!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. The promise that you will be (and are) with us in any trouble and will deliver us either out of or through such trouble is a marvelous comfort. The honor of your personal interest is enough! How glad I am to acknowledge your omnipresence in all human need. The promise of a long satisfying life is obviously not to everyone. We think of the psalmist David as the immediate recipient of this promise. But then there have been thousands of others. Have they all looked to you as the one who so numbered their days? Dear Lord, I want to be at least one who does! The best is surely the last! “I will show him my salvation.” Show me all over again your redeeming grace — 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

Dear Lord, you have not answered me because so often I did not call upon you. Forgive me for my prayerlessness. I do pray at this time of personal worship, and there is no more precious time than this.

But I want to call upon you far more often than just this time. In every trouble may my first thought be of you. I am trying — dear Lord, I am trying — but I have been so long a time in the rut of this world. Break me out of it! I am not looking for honor — to know you is my honor — your personal interest is honor enough for me. It is so easy to say and so difficult to truly mean what one says. How can I say “thank you” for the days you have already given me? I can not and will not presume on one more day. Forgive my complaint in any day.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Christ, the Lord, is ris’n today, Hallelujah!
Sons of men and angels say, Hallelujah!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Hallelujah!
Sing, ye heav’ns; thou earth, reply, Hallelujah!

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

HIS WORD

13 It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.

²The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. ³Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. —John 13:1-5, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

My Lord, how shall I prepare my heart to read these

words? I shall really *never* be prepared to read them for myself — how can I read them to you? The effort will better prepare me than anything else. My Lord was always conscious of his coming death — but now he knows the very day upon which he will leave this world. How unselfishly he did love his own disciples! How little did they understand his love or return it. John tells me in what follows I shall see the full extent of his love. How I do want to receive it! Someone had neglected to perform the menial task of washing feet. Jesus will do it! Dear Lord, what does this say 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. Since Jesus represents your very self you are like him. You wash my dirty feet! What an awesome thought! How incongruous! You are trying to teach me the humility that should characterize all my conduct. Not in one act or attitude — but in all of life! I am not ready — any more ready than the egocentric disciples. You are breaking down some of my barriers and I *want* to be like my Lord. There are surely many dirty feet in this world. There are the silent unseen jobs — for this is exactly what this task became before the preoccupied disciples discovered what was being done. Why didn't one of them say something — anything — before he came to Peter? Could they have been so occupied with their conversation they didn't even notice who washed their feet? We 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 once again reminding me of the omniscience of my Lord (2) Thank you for the two worlds in which all of us will have a part — I want to be with him. (3) Thank you for the incredible constant love of my Lord for those who did not return his love. (4) Thank you that Jesus never gave up on anyone until after death. (5) Thank you that Jesus was ready to wash the feet of Judas. (6) Thank you for the clear statement of the omnipotence of Jesus made by John in verse six. (7) Thank you for the living visual demonstration of the attitude we should have toward one another.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him." When had the Creator of the world washed dirty feet? There was one great, wonderful fundamental lesson he wanted to teach us: *God is love — God wants to help in every way we will let him.* There are some subordinate lessons to follow in this act of humility: (1) God is aware of all the small acts of love that go to make up

the fabric of love's expression. Washing feet was a little task that was easily overlooked. (2) God is aware of the status man must have for self-worth. He wants us to find it in service.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the five verses there is much cause for prayer: (1) I am glad that only you can know the time for my departure from this world — I want to be ready. (2) What encouragement there is to read here of the world and life to come. I want to live every minute of this day aware of that stupendous fact. (3) Teach me the kind of love your Son had for "his own." (4) What is the "extent" of my love? How fragile and selfish it is many times — forgive me! (5) Even when Jesus had the power to command obedience he would rather win it through service — Lord, I want to follow you. (6) What garments of service characterize me? Humility? Lowliness of mind? Counting others better than myself? Dear Lord help me!

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I love these verses — I have for so long — speak to me through them. (1) "He was among men as one that served — why are you among men?" (2) "Are there *any* tasks too menial for you? Not for Jesus!" (3) "He washed the feet of the one who betrayed him — how do you treat those who do not like you?"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Djibouti — Points for prayer: (1) *The way opened for the first evangelical witness* in 1975. Praise God for this. Pray for the land to remain open so that a strong local church may be planted among the indigenous peoples. (2) *The only missionaries serving in the land are 13 workers of the RSMT*, though the French Mennonite Church is considering opening a ministry too. Pray for the missionaries serving in what is reputed to be the world's hottest country. Pray for reinforcements. (3) *Ministries have been established* in the realms of education, agriculture, literature, Bible translation and, lately, in public health, though opportunities abound for personal work. Much interest is shown in the Somali and Afar gospels. Pray that these ministries may lead to conversions. (4) *There is only a handful of scattered indigenous believers.* Pray for the planting of viable churches.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,
And cast a wishful eye,
To Canaan's fair and happy land,
Where my possessions lie.

WEEK TWELVE

—Thursday—

How good it is to have a separate time set apart for no other purpose than praising you — thanking you — and just resting in your goodness.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“How great are your works, O Lord, how profound your thoughts! The senseless man does not know, fools do not understand, that though the wicked spring up like grass and all evildoers flourish, they will be forever destroyed. But you, O Lord, are exalted forever” (Psa. 92:5-8). In these four verses I can hold up several attributes of yourself for praise: (1) Your works declare your greatness. Your endless imagination is seen in the variety of your works. Your love for color is seen in the magnificent array of color profusion. The check and balance of your creation is an amazement to behold. (2) Behind this physical world is the mind who conceived it. In all this I lift my heart in adoration!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. A great cloud of darkness has spread over the land to obscure the qualities we have just described. You have retained the right to define what makes sense and what does not. To view the life and world in which we live from any other perspective is senseless and foolish. Dear Lord, how do I need to remember this. Evil is out of balance with reality and therefore has within itself its own destruction. Your creation, like yourself was made to live forever. How glad I am that there will one day be a new beginning for all things. Yea, the creation itself was subjected to its temporary state in hope of such a deliverance. Praise your name, how I do long for the revelation of the sons of yourself.

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

If I believe all the world all about us is created by you — and the ten billion galaxies above us — how is it I do not spend much more time examining the wonders

of your creative genius? Surely I could stand before one flower and learn much. I could meditate on the formation of one tree and come away the richer for the experience. Forgive my terrible pre-occupation with the plastic efforts of men. Why am I so impressed with men’s use of what you have already made and forget who gave him the materials and the ability to put them together? Forgive my senselessness. How I do want to exalt your name. Since your name shall be exalted forever I want to do my little part in this life and this world.

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

6He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?”

7Jesus replied, “You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.”

8“No,” said Peter, “You shall never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.”

9“Then, Lord,” Simon Peter replied, “not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!” —*John 13:6-9, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It is always helpful to read about Peter. We relate so

easily with him. Had Jesus actually been washing the feet of other disciples before he came to Peter? So it would seem. Such a thought becomes so engrossed with their dreams of greatness and glory that they could ignore Jesus altogether. The informality of this feast — at least this part of it — was far more than we had at first envisioned. At least Peter had the grace to identify the one who untied his sandals and bathed his feet. Our Lord knew that when “the Other Comforter” came he would show him (i.e., Peter) all the meaning of Jesus’ humiliation.

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 have far less reason than Peter for not knowing all that he did. My Lord’s sharp all-inclusive words to Peter burn their way into my conscience! “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.” If I cannot follow his example of humiliation — if I will not accept his decision of Lordship I cannot be at all associated with him. Dear Lord, no wonder Peter was shocked! Do I truly accept his example of humility and his Lordship? The answer is both “yes” and “no.” How I do *want* to be like him — I *do want* to yield in every area of life to his Lordship. I *must* adopt the disciplines necessary to the fulfillment of such desires. Help me my Father.

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for Simon Peter — the impetuous one — so like myself. (2) Thank you that Peter was more interested in Jesus and what he did than the discussion of greatness. (3) Thank you that we are constantly moved to accept your incredible grace and mercy — keep me sensitive! (4) Thank you that you do not permit us to form our standards of greatness. (5) Thank you that you insist on an acceptance of your estimate of greatness. (6) Thank you for the really repentant Peter — i.e., he changed his mind. (7) Thank you for this experience of worship — oh how I need it and want it!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . not just my feet but my hands and my head as well.” Peter is full of extremes! He makes the grand confession of the kingship of Jesus and immediately rejects it by rebuking the Lord for telling Peter of his coming death. He pledges his loyalty to him — even to death, and in contrast with others who would not do so, and within a few hours of such a declaration he has denied our Lord three times. Even after the resurrection and Pentecost Peter fluctuates from living like a Gentile to readopting the exclusiveness of the Jews. But by reading his epistles we can see our Lord finally won his whole heart. He is an encouragement

to many of us for it has taken an equally long time for our Lord to gain the throne of our hearts.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the actions and attitudes of this impulsive disciple we see areas for prayer: (1) “Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.” (2) How I want to look deeply into the example before me and follow him. (3) Dear Lord, it is later, do I yet understand? (4) How easy it is for each of us to decide what the Lord will or will not do — deliver me from this presumption. (5) I have said many things fully as presumptuous as Peter — dear Lord, forgive me — teach me. (6) I am so glad for the part you have given me in your service — lead me into a fuller expression of it.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As you spoke to your impulsive apostle, speak to this needy person: (1) “There are always lessons to learn later that cannot be learned now.” (2) “It is still necessary to express humility in my service.” (3) “Is a servant above his master or like his master?”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Cuba — Points for prayer: (1) *Persecution of believers* has moderated, but there is considerable discrimination of Christians in employment and education. Pray that believers may resist economic and social pressures to conform. A number of pastors and believers suffered much in earlier days. (2) *There are now about 1,000,000 Cuban refugees*, mostly from the white middle and upper classes, living in the USA. Pray for these uprooted people — they have many opportunities to trust in the Lord. It is estimated that 10% of these exiles are now Protestant. Pray that peace may come to their land again and permit their return.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

When I need someone in time of grief,
Someone my cheer to be,
Jesus I choose, for He gives relief,
He is the best for me.

I choose Jesus when I need a friend;
What I need I know that He will send;
I have proved Him, good and true is He,
I choose Jesus, He is the best for me.

When I need someone to guide my soul
Over the stormy sea,
Always to Jesus I give control,
He is the best for me.

I choose Jesus when I need a friend;
What I need I know that He will send;
I have proved Him good and true is He;
I choose Jesus, He is the best for me.

WEEK TWELVE

—Friday—

What powerful promises are made in Psalm 92:12-15! I enter this time of worship to revel in every one of them.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar in Lebanon; planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green, proclaiming, ‘The Lord is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him’ ” (Psa. 92:12-15). Since all the promises made to us come from your gracious heart we are actually discussing the qualities of yourself reflected in your children. You give grace to us that we shall flourish as a palm tree in contrast to the temporariness of the grass. The wicked are like grass, the righteous like a palm tree. Thank you — praise your goodness.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. How exciting it is to relate the qualities I see here to yourself through me! (1) A palm tree flourishes in a most difficult situation — a desert or at least a barren land. My source of strength is not in the environment but deep down in my heart relationship with you. (2) The cedar of Lebanon stands on the mountain and actually thrives on weather that would topple or kill another tree. These are just some of the most obvious comparisons I can find in this text. How I need to remember *you* are the root system that makes this possible. (3) When planted in your courts (and such is my place) we have the tremendous advantage of a constant supply of our every need. This can be dangerous. Help me!

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

Old age. What is it? When is it? It is the dissolution of the clay house in which we live. If such a process is related too closely with the man inside a sad loss is sustained. Dear Lord, I am so glad, yea, more than glad

— *delighted*, that you have taught me over and again that *I am not the house but the occupant*. Like a tree that comes into total productivity at a certain age and continues to bear fruit for many years so is the promise to those in old age! Only when we abide in you and your word abides in us is this true. Forgive me dear Lord if such a word ever becomes just a pious platitude! Deliver me from religious form without meaning! Keep me fresh and green in your courts.

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 deep rev'rence, praise.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁰Jesus answered, “A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.”
¹¹For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean. —John 13:10,11, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Jesus makes a comparison here I do not want to miss. I do want to read it over and over in your presence so as to absorb each word! When a person takes a bath before he leaves for a banquet he need not take one when he arrives. So it is with our preparation for the marriage supper of the Lamb. When we have bathed in the bath of regeneration we are ready for the feast and the joy and fellowship of that meal. How delightful to identify with your cleansing and our

cleanness by your blood. How sad to remember that it is possible to go through a form and yet not be clean. So it was with Judas. Jesus knew the difference then and he knows it now!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. In entering my priesthood I did indeed bathe in the laver of rebirth (Titus 3:5) and arose from that bath justified, sanctified, redeemed, and saved. But I must and gladly do sustain the same commitment I gave you on that day. I do need to wash my feet from time to time, yea, even twice at a time. When did my Lord know Judas as a betrayer? Was it in the all night prayer vigil you revealed this to him? i.e., just before he called the twelve and sent them out? Dear Lord, the potential of betrayal is always in us all. Guard me from falling that I might be presented before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy.

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 patient explanation of my Lord to a disciple who should have known long ago. (2) Thank you for the wonderful promise of the total cleansing of the whole person. (3) Thank you that you can keep us clean, i.e., when we are willing to recognize our need to do so. (4) Thank you that my dear Lord is never surprised. (5) Thank you for the wonderful plan you have for every life. (6) Thank you that betrayal and death are able to work for our good. (7) Thank you for the feast we shall all have from which we shall never return.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“For he knew who was going to betray him,” the tense of the verb “knew” suggests that our Lord did not only know at this time, but all along who was going to betray him. Was Judas never sincere? Even before he met Jesus didn’t he have the potential of a good and an honest heart? I would say “yes” to such questions. But I also believe when he decided to betray our Lord Jesus knew it. Perhaps it was stealing from the treasury of the apostles that started him on the road to betrayal. For what ever reason we know Jesus loved him and gave him time after time for repentance. He did not go into hell unloved. There will be no one who goes to everlasting punishment unloved — but surely multitudes will go there with far less than Judas had.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How I do need the requests that arise from these verses: (1) Dear Lord, I relate to Simon Peter, I do

want you to have my whole being. (2) How I do need the washing of my heart — each day — I come to you just now for such a cleansing. (3) The cleanness our Lord promised is what I want and need for every day. (4) My Lord, you know when I only pretend, I need to remember that you know. (5) What a sore temptation is compromise! Deliver me from this temptation. (6) I regive my self to you — “wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.”

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

This is a somber text — speak to me through it: (1) “You do need my refreshing foot wash every day.” (2) “My kind of cleanness keeps you clean.” (3) “Betrayal is an ever present threat.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Dominican Republic — Points for prayer: (1) *Only since 1975 has there been significant growth in the Protestant Churches.* The Republic was one of the last of the Latin American countries to be entered by Evangelicals. Growth has largely been among the Pentecostal groups and the Seventh Day Adventist, but both the *Brethren* and Free Methodists have grown too. Pray for effective evangelization and the establishment of strong, well-led missionary-minded churches that have a vision to reach out in evangelism. (2) *There have been many leadership problems in the churches* — immaturity, mission/church relationships and lack of money to support pastors locally. Pray for the emergence of a strong and mature leadership. Pray for the Bible school ministry of many churches and missions — such as *WT* and *UFM*; there are now nine Bible schools or seminaries for Protestant churches.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I come to the garden alone,
While the dew is still on the roses;
And the voice I hear,
Falling on my ear,
The Son of God discloses.
And He walks with me,
And He talks with Me,
And He tells me I am His own;
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known.

He speaks, and the sound of His voice
Is so sweet the birds hush their singing;
And the melody
That He gave to me,
Within my heart is ringing.
And He walks with me,
And He talks with me,
And He tells me I am His own;
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known.

WEEK TWELVE

—Saturday—

What does the word “*majesty*” mean to me? What about the word “*eternity*?” Both words describe our God! After reading the dictionary: “*grandeur*” and “*limitless time.*” I enter worship to give these words reality to me.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The Lord reigns, he is robed in majesty; the Lord is robed in majesty and is armed with strength. The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved. Your throne was established long ago; you are from eternity” (Psa. 93:1,2). It is good to lift up this day your own sovereignty. It is a solid comfort to us to know that despite all the chaos and turmoil of this earth you reign in complete serenity. Not in indifference and aloofness but *you are always in control!* Praise your name! Since the psalmist says twice over that you are “robed in majesty” I better open my heart to understand and receive such a quality of yourself! You are exalted and full of beauty — but a beauty that helps as well as impresses.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Your strength is beyond human measure — beyond all our wildest imagination. It is your defense against any and all efforts of satan. Your sovereignty and strength could be compared to the immovable earth on which we live. Whereas we know from your revelation that this earth will be moved — indeed, “burned up” — yet as we stand on it and survey the heavens all seems everlastingly firm and immobile. Such a quality is eternally true as related to yourself. Praise and glory to your name! From all eternity you have held such a position. It is good for me to think these thoughts in praise to yourself!

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

What a contrast! i.e., our usual response to yourself is sometimes so limited, cramped and small. In sorrow, in loss, in misunderstandings, in every human hurt I want to say: “The Lord reigns, he is robed in majesty.” Dear Lord, give me grace to do it! It is true

whether I say it or not. How easy it is to live on almost a totally horizontal level. In the exchange among men we have such a temptation to imagine everything is settled down here; when all the while you are the one who rules in the affairs of men — forgive my short-sightedness — nay, my blindness! Sensitize my memory!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

¹²When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you,” he asked them. ¹³“You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.” —John 13:12-17, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

So often I feel quite inadequate to the task of relating your word in a divine perspective. I do want to tell

you all these words mean to me, and praise you for them, but I am at a loss as to how best to do it. I do want to understand just what you have done. You washed the feet of your disciples — you did it as an example. A literal washing of our feet when we bathe every day and wear shoes and stockings hardly seems appropriate. Particularly in a public service. I want to gladly serve in the menial — sometimes dirty jobs always before us. You are indeed my teacher and I am trying to learn your lesson — help me. As he was in the world so do I want to be.

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 is a blessing promised to those who serve as he served. We need not look far for those we should serve — we live with them, “serve one another.” Dear Lord, lead me to someone today with dirty feet that I might wash them. Such a task was to bring refreshment and confidence to the one being served. There are so many all about me who need their kind of help. Kindness and thoughtfulness in “little things” is so sadly lacking in the daily routine of my life. How I wish I could catch the light in the eyes of Jesus as he did this lowly task — perhaps I could be like him.

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the very obviousness of his action — it served to impress us. (2) Dear Lord, thank you that you expected us to understand — how I do want to! (3) Thank you I can own you as my teacher in everything! (4) Thank you I can submit my will to your will — you are my Lord! (5) Thank you I need never begrudgingly serve you — you never so served me. (6) Thank you for the title of servant — nay, the task of servanthood. (7) Thank you I can be your messenger to someone today.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.” Footwashing is a very ancient practice. I do not believe the formal washing of feet that do not need washing is what our Lord had in mind. There is a degree of humility involved in such an act; and it is no doubt intended to carry over into all of life as an attitude not a ceremony. However Jesus did not ask us to do *what* he did but *as* he did. The example is in the attitude. He was a servant-leader not a leader-servant. There does not on the surface seem to be a great deal of difference in these two designations but there is all the difference between true humility and the lack of it!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Such verses call for prayer in fulfillment: (1) Lord, we will never be able to plumb the depths of your humiliation — but I want to try. (2) You are indeed *the teacher* for me — I want each day to be taught by you. (3) Just for today I want to find another area of my life where I can submit gladly to your Lordship. (4) Whose feet can I wash today? Lead me to him. (5) There will be times and places this day where your kind of humility can be shown — lead me into it. (6) Send me on your errands. (7) I know the blessing of yourself will be in doing — help me not to dream — but do!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these last hours of my Lord’s life he can speak to us so poignantly in his word: (1) “I am not finished washing feet — my body is called to the same service.” (2) “People are dirty and tired — they need my cleansing and refreshment — give it to them.” (3) “Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Ecuador — Points for prayer: (1) *The nation suffered severely in 1983* through both economic and climatic disasters, but this has further enhanced the receptivity of the people. Pray for the ripened spiritual harvest to be gathered in! (2) *Ecuador long held the record for the smallest percentage of evangelical believers in Latin America.* This was due to the strong opposition of the Roman Catholic Church in the past, divisions among believers and inefficient methods of outreach. Since 1960, there had been a sixfold increase of Evangelicals. Much of this growth has been through Pentecostal and *CMA* growth in the urban areas among the Spanish-speaking majority, and *GMU* among the Chimborazo Quichuas. Praise God for this; and pray for the unity of believers that transcends class, culture, personalities and denominational tags so that the Body of Christ may exert a decisive influence on the life of the nation.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Is your life a chanel of blessing?
Is the love of God flowing thro’ you?
Are you telling the lost of the Savior?
Are you ready His service to do?
Make me a channel of blessing today,
Make me a channel of blessing I pray,
My life possessing, My service blessing,
Make me a channel of blessing today.

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Sunday—

Power — firmness — holiness — and yet the tender love of a Father — a mother — I find them all in you — in worship!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Mightier than the thunder of the great waters, mightier than the breakers of the sea — the Lord on high is mighty. Your statutes stand firm; holiness adorns your house for endless days, O Lord” (Psa. 93:4,5). If you have stood on a shore line of rocks at high tide and watched the breakers smash against the shore with the force of millions of gallons of water and tons of weight it is indeed impressive. The roar of the water’s breaking makes us realize what power you have built into your creation. Such is as nothing when compared to the sound that could be made by the collision of just two of the stars you have made. And infinitely beyond that thunder clap is the might of the one who created them all! Praise your name!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I can only imagine what might is involved in the sea and the stars — I *know* the power of your *statutes*. The heavens will be dissolved and the sea dried up before one word of your statutes disappears or is altered. Holiness is essential separateness but — not in any negative sense. Your dwelling place is just unique. Beautifully charmingly different. Your house today is the human body. Indeed how beautifully different is that person in whom you live. I hesitate to claim to be such a person — but I am only one among millions who have had and do have such a privilege and shall have for “endless days.” How good you are to us!

How do your 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

Those who live many miles from the sea can only imagine or try to remember the “thunder of great waters.” Sad but true we also live many miles from your majestic nature and the wonder of your

greatness. Ah, what an impoverishment! Those of us who love the sea hang pictures on our walls to take us in memory back to the shoreline. Dear Lord, I want to hang the pictures of your word upon the walls of my memory! Your word is full of such wonderful descriptions of yourself. Particularly in the gospel accounts. I want never to neglect or forget — but I do. Forgive me. Remind 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

Waft it on the rolling tide:
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!
Tell to sinners far and wide:
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!
Sing, ye islands of the sea;
Echo back, ye ocean caves;
Earth shall keep her jubilee:
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!

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

HIS WORD

¹⁸“I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill the scripture: ‘He who shares my bread has lifted up his heel against me.’”

¹⁹“I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am He. ²⁰I tell you the truth, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me.” —John 13:18-20, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Jesus is going to make another attempt to penetrate the hard heart of Judas. How full of meaning is that little phrase: “I *know* those I have chosen.” Indeed he did. He had read the hearts of all of them — as he

reads my heart right now! There was one present who had ears but did not hear — he had a heart, but did not believe. Deception and pretense are the tools of the evil one. Judas deceived no one but himself at this time. He surely did a good job. In this whole action scripture was being fulfilled. No one *made* Judas do what he did — it was all entirely voluntary — but at the same time scripture *was being fulfilled* (Psa. 41:9). This is but part of the omniscience and foreknowledge of yourself. What wonder fills our hearts as we consider this event!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Our Lord used his foreknowledge to establish his deity in the hearts of those who followed him. Dear Lord, I want to be one of the very first to learn this lesson. I do believe you are the anointed of God! What an awesome thought you have given us in these words: “. . . whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me. . . .” Since you are yet in the sending business I want to listen most closely to what you are saying through your servants. I know Jesus referred primarily to the “sent ones,” i.e., the apostles. I have documents written by four of them. It is one startling thought to consider; *when they speak both you and your Son speak to me!* Give me ears to listen and a heart to believe!

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 know me so well. I need not pretend at all. (2) Thank you that you have chosen each of us to be your own. (3) Thank you for the sad example of how close we can be to you and really never know you. (4) Thank you for the confirmation of prophecy. (5) Thank you for the plain evidence of deity in my Lord’s foreknowledge. (6) Thank you that my Lord has told us the source of authority in those he has sent. (7) Thank you for sending yourself in your Son.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me.” How varied are the reasons people do not want to accept you! But how infinite are the reasons people want to accept you. The *one* basic difference is a willingness to *know* you. To know him is to love him and accept him. The apostles are the prime examples of those who accepted and one who rejected him. How eternally crucial it was to accept him — to fail to do so was to lose all — and some men do indeed seem determined to do all they can to reject him. A stubborn perverseness seems to pervade their very nature. It is a cultivated capacity. Such was the condition of Judas and full many more like him. How we thank you and take courage when we think of Peter and John and James and Andrew.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What sobering requests for prayer arise out of these verses: (1) Dear Lord how easy it is to receive all your good gifts as if they were insults to our stubborn independence — deliver me. (2) Why did Judas take offense? There really doesn’t need to be a reason — sin is many times irrational. (3) What scriptures are being fulfilled in my own experience of which I do not even have the slightest knowledge? Whatever it is I want to accept it very willingly. (4) I in a very real practical sense share your bread with you. Not only in every part of every day of life but in a new eternal sense around your table on your day. For times of depression and child-like selfishness dear Lord forgive me. (5) How secure is all of life when tied to your scriptures — more and more I will relate my life to your word.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to my conscience in these verses: (1) “I know you so well, if you will remain calm and open I can help you to share this knowledge.” (2) “There is a sense of the inevitable where prophecy is viewed from the human perspective — this is only your limited view — not mine.” (3) “Live on the side of life not death.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Egypt — Points for prayer: (1) *Pray that the promise of Isaiah 19:19-22 for Egypt may be fulfilled.* In spite of legal difficulties and the increasing militancy of the Muslim Brotherhood, there is evident hunger for the Good News among Muslims, with several hundred Muslims turning to Christ every year. Pray that Egypt’s economic trials and Islam’s failure to meet man’s deepest need may turn many to the Lord Jesus. (2) *Unreached peoples.* Few Muslims have ever heard a Christian testify. Pray that the Christians may win opportunities to speak through their Christ-like life. Specific targets: a) *The urban population* — many are uprooted peasants in squalid slums. b) *The “fellaheen”* (peasants) in the rural villages of the Nile and oases. c) *The Nubian people* who were largely converted from Christianity to Islam in the 17th century but are open to the gospel. d) *The desert dwellers* — Bedouin, Siwa Berber, etc. have had little contact with the gospel. e) *Arab visitors* to Egypt come from many “closed” Muslim lands — especially during Ramadan to avoid the rigours of the Muslim fasting month!

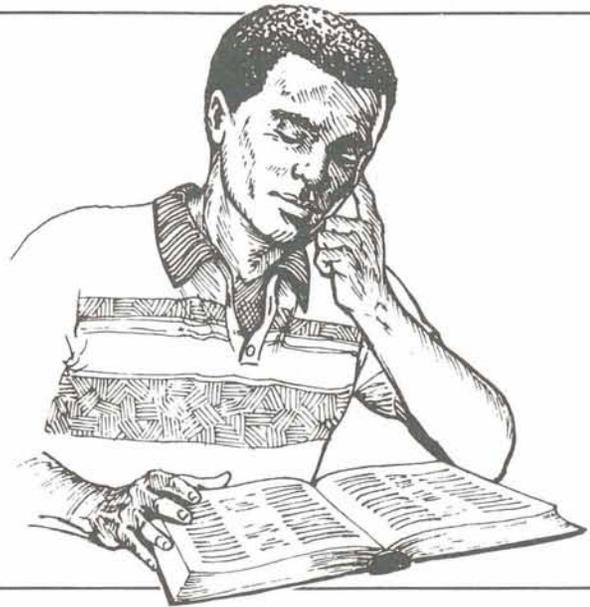
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I gave my life for thee,
My precious blood I shed,
That thou might’st ransom be,
And quickened from the dead;
I gave, I gave my life for thee:
What hast thou giv’n for me?

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Monday—

All the intelligent capacities of man are of his spirit — and you are the original spirit being. Open my mind to these truths as I worship you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Does he who implanted the ear not hear? Does he who formed the eye not see? Does he who disciplines nations not punish? Does he who teaches man lack knowledge? The Lord knows the thoughts of man; he knows they are futile” (Psa. 94:9,10). How comforting a thought it is to know the capacities of hearing, seeing, thinking, i.e., with a purpose, learning and teaching are all from yourself! I am simply delighted to acknowledge all these abilities are but an extension of yourself. Without you all these capacities become what the one word describes, “futile.” But to turn the word around and let you fulfill your potential in me — in all men then we hear, see, think, learn and teach with eternal purpose! Praise, oh, praise your name!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Since I only five days ago lost all touch with the five senses and moved only minutes away from your eternal presence in what is defined as a *heart attack* I feel far far more sharply about this expression of praise than I would otherwise. I knew nothing to do but cast myself upon you and trust in others who could do far more than I could. If you had not chosen the time and place for such an occurrence I know I would not be here to write the words — it would be in many ways, “very far better,” but not for those left behind or for the work you yet have for me to do. It is hardly work anymore — just worship and praise to you. I do want to be taught and be a teacher.

How do you personally relate to this quality of God? Speak it out or write it out.

CONFESSION OF SIN

How could I ever think of hearing without your listening? How could I ever open my eyes to see without a knowledge that you are also seeing the same scene — and, oh so much more! It is provocative to

be told here that you are constantly in the process of disciplining the nations. This surely gives much more depth to the daily news! There is a sad, awful punishment being meted out in certain places and peoples. I cannot say who or were — I do not pretend to be your counselor — but it is true — and I *am* impressed. How gentle and good has been your instruction to me all the short days of my life — praise your name! Guard me from following the futile path of men’s thoughts. I do feel exceedingly humble before you this day. 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

Far away the noise of strife
Upon my ear is falling,
Then I know the sins of earth
Beset on ev’ry hand;
Doubt and fear and things of earth
In vain to me are calling,
None of these shall move me from Beulah Land.

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

HIS WORD

²¹After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, “I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me.”

²²His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. ²³One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. ²⁴Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, “Ask him which one he means.” ²⁵Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, “Lord, who is it?”

²⁶Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.” Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon. ²⁷As soon as Judas took the

bread, Satan entered into him. —John 13:21-27a, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Our Lord was visibly agitated and this could be observed by his disciples. Something was wrong! Unlike so many of us Jesus was ready to speak directly to the problem. He was ready to face into the difficult. He was open to identifying the betrayer. There was no question about it someone in the upper room was guilty of an unspeakable crime but Jesus had named it. Isn't it human to immediately decide someone else has done it? In the few moments (or seconds) that elapsed no doubt several had conjured up motives for their friends — or had searched their own hearts to find something they had said or done that he might call betrayal. It was Peter who prevailed on John — the nearest to the ear of our Lord, since he was leaning near him on the reclining couches. Did the other disciples hear the answer of Jesus?

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 sobering a scene is this! How it does speak to my heart. Why did Jesus do what he did? Because he wanted to try once again to reach the heart of Judas. If there was anything in the heart of this man that would move him to recognize Jesus as the one who knew him better than he knew himself he would have at this juncture broken down and repented. The rebuke was delivered to the heart but most discreetly. Judas could ignore it and the other disciples would not have known. This he chose to do. In an instant a transaction went on in the spirit world. Satan was poised awaiting the outcome. When the decision was made he moved in! Dear Lord, I have tried to visualize all of this because I see myself in every part of it.

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 my Lord did not hide his deep feelings. (2) Thank you Jesus did not ignore the betrayal of those he loved — this was a part of his love — to enable them to face their sin. (3) Thank you for the startled looks on the faces of the disciples — so much like all of us. (4) Thank you for Peter's perception of John's nearness to Jesus. (5) Thank you that Jesus welcomed the nearness and dearness of John. (6) Thank you for the wonderful change in this "son of thunder!" (7) Thank you that Judas could have refused the bread and Satan.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"As soon as Judas took the bread Satan entered into him." Isn't it remarkable that such actions were simultaneous? It is also not at all strange. There is so

much to encourage us in this act! (1) Satan is a subject *not* a master; a *slave* not a *king* when we are ready to consider and treat him as such. All angels are messengers or servants — Satan has never been a man — therefore does not share your likeness — *we do!* Ah, wonder of wonders that this is so! Satan "obtained Peter by asking," (Luke 22:30,31) he obtained Job in the same manner (Job 1:1ff). He has no more power over us than we are willing to give him. We are not the masters of our fate we simply decide who will be our master. How gladly I give your son control!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I am glad to make requests from this text: (1) I do want my spirit to be troubled over the same things that troubled Jesus. (2) For this day in every changing situation guard me from any betrayal. (3) I am glad that I must look into myself and at others for several unanswered questions — you alone can answer me. (4) How I want to be able to call myself "the disciple whom Jesus loved." (5) Can I somehow lean back upon your breast today? (I do sorely need such solace in the stress of the day.) (6) Jesus will always be totally honest with all honest questions — I do want to in meekness accept his answers. (7) Deliver me from the evil one today.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

It will be easy to receive a word from you in this text: (1) "Betrayal need not be irreversible." (2) "I love those who betray me just as much as those who do not!" (3) "My love is to help never, never hurt anyone."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Equatorial Guinea — Points for prayer: (1) *This ravaged land will need years for recovery* from the effects of economic devastation, murder and exile of virtually all educated citizens. Political rivalries, corruption and attempted coups prolong the agony. Pray for stability and full freedom for the gospel. (2) *The persecuted Church has not emerged unscathed.* Church leaders were forced to compromise theologically or suffer. Tragically, many Protestant church leaders are living in sin and more interested in power politics than in the spiritual nurture of their flocks. Some vigorously resist any open preaching of the gospel. Pray both for repentance and revival. (3) *Theological education has been strongly influenced by liberal institutions in Cameroon.* Pray for adequate Bible training for a new generation of leaders, now woefully lacking.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I am a stranger here, within a foreign land;
My home is far away, upon a golden strand;
Ambassador to be of realms beyond the sea,
I'm here on business for my King.

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Tuesday—

The true learning experience happens best in prayer and meditation. Here is our best opportunity.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Blessed is the man you discipline, O Lord, the man you teach from your law; you grant him relief from days of trouble, . . . For the Lord will not reject his people; he will never forsake his inheritance” (Psa. 94:12,13a,14). The word “blessed” has been translated in so many ways. Translators have used the words, “happy,” “content,” “fulfilled,” and “mature.” I like the last two words. Man can not or will not take the steps necessary to control the environment so you sometimes in your mercy take this into your hands. When we are truly prepared to be fulfilled it will happen. When we want to grow we can expect you to provide ways such growing can develop. Your law is contained in either your word or human experience. I praise you for giving obvious evidence of your interest in my desires to grow and be “blessed.”

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. There is reason enough for you to reject me. How many men and women move on the face of this earth totally oblivious to your existence — and let alone your direction? Millions and millions and more of people live as if you never existed! How sad from both points of view. Dear Lord, count me as one who gladly relates to your claim on my life. The more closely I can find your way I *want* to walk in it. Not because it will make me better than any one of the millions mentioned above — but because I so sorely need you! I claim your interest and love for those who are your “inheritance” or your “household.”

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

I do need discipline — of both kinds, corrective and instructive. Why do I usually think of your discipline as only corrective? Perhaps because it is so obvious —

or we can see areas where such is needed. No child is helped until he responds positively to the efforts of the parent to correct him. The two responses of Hebrews 12:5 I want to avoid: “My Son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you.” I could easily look about me in the hospital and see any number of people who have had the “tough luck” of a heart attack and mark it up to, “that’s how the cookie crumbles” — what a light, stupid assessment! Or I could go into the morose coma I see just across the hall and lose all reason for living. Dear Lord, I am open — teach us! But first 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

’Tis the grandest theme thro’ the ages rung;
’Tis the grandest theme for a mortal tongue;
’Tis the grandest theme that the world e’er sung,
“Our God is able to deliver thee.”

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

HIS WORD

²⁷“What you are about to do, do quickly,” Jesus told him, ²⁸but no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. ²⁹Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the Feast, or to give something to the poor. ³⁰As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night. —*John 13:27b-30, NIV*

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

What a sobering joy it is to detail each of these words in your eternal presence. Why the urgency in the voice and words of Jesus to Judas? Perhaps the pain would be a little less for both of them if Judas did in haste what he had decided to do! How infinitely kind my Lord was to this traitor! Evidently giving the bread to

Judas was done in such a concealed manner that it could not be seen by the other disciples. The words to Judas struck home to his heart like the arrow of heaven's judgment — but out he went — pierced through, but intent on his insane mission. I have been involved in some such headlong — headstrong — stupid missions of selfishness and sin! Dear Lord it has always been night!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Men — especially our friends, can make excuses for us — if we do not have them ourselves. But our sin is between ourselves and our Lord. Lord I want to remain inside the upper room. I am afraid of myself and the evil one in the night of separation from you! Dear Lord, I do not trust myself at all apart from you — I am too weak — too willful — too ignorant. I need your counsel — even when at times I do not understand it. I need it and want it. I will stay with you until the supper is over and you leave. It will be dark — but you will be with me. Perhaps most of this sounds immature to you — but it is because I am immature in some areas of my relationship with 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 did not want the curse of guilt to last any longer than necessary. (2) Thank you that I believe Judas *could* have repented anywhere along the sad dark road to hell. (3) Thank you that I want to repent and open my whole heart to him. (4) In my handling of money may I even remember the part the love of it played in the betrayal of my Lord. (5) Thank you for the good construction some of the apostles put on the terrible action of Judas — i.e., they did not suspect him. (6) Thank you that we can believe that there is nothing that is hidden that will not be brought to light. (7) Thank you that even the darkest night ends in dawn.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“As soon as Judas took the bread he went out and it was night.” The comparisons of light and darkness run throughout the life of our dear Lord. There was never a darker night on this earth than the one into which Judas had just entered. Was there a deep resentment burning in the breast of this former disciple? Nay, he was much more than just another follower. He had been chosen — called — equipped and trained. How we would all like to know the family background of this strange man. There is no reason to excuse him — he was inexcusable or Jesus would have long ago excused him. Time has all but run out — there will be one or two last attempts to reach out to him in love. The morning can and will

come if we only will suspend action. Some wrong choices made at night can cancel all possibility of morning.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITION

Let me think deeply about these words to Judas — there is much to speak to my heart: (1) Guard me from hasty actions — but move me to hasten in what you command, give me your wisdom to know the difference. (2) How much of all the life of America is filled with trivia that takes up time and destroys the capacity to think — break me out! (3) How I need and want your single eye of service and love. (4) How good it is to live in light not darkness. (5) While it is day I want to find the center of your path and walk in it. (6) As I handle money that belongs to someone else may I remember Judas.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

There was no one to whom Jesus spoke more personally than to Judas — he didn't hear him, but he *did* speak. Dear Lord, I do want to hear. (1) “When my word enters your heart action is not optional.” (2) “When my word has not entered your heart there can be no change.” (3) “My work is never dependent on betrayers — it will survive them all.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Ethiopia — Points for prayer: (1) *Praise God for the thrilling growth of the evangelical witness in the new churches over the last 25 years* (from 241,000 adherents in 1960 to 3.5 million in 1985). Great vision, courageous evangelism, and vigorous leadership training have almost doubled the believers in the last 10 years of trial and hardship for the Church. All churches that are open are packed every Sunday. (2) *Pressures on Christians have been severe*, but defections have been few despite much suffering, imprisonment of leaders, confiscation of buildings and closure of churches in some areas. During 1985 over 700 churches in the province of Sidamo were closed. Pray for an unabated vision for the lost, courage if they are called upon to suffer for the name of Jesus, patience to love when they are misrepresented, and discernment to know the vital issues on which they need to stand firm.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I love to tell the story
Of unseen things above,
Of Jesus and His glory,
Of Jesus and His love;
I love to tell the story
Because I know 'tis true;
It satisfies my longings
As nothing else can do.

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Wednesday—

In place of fear is peace and love — in place of worry is consolation and confidence. All of this and more we find in you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Unless the Lord had given me help, I would soon have dwelt in the silence of death. When I said, ‘My foot is slipping,’ your love, O Lord, supported me. When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul” (Psa. 94:17-19). Such an experience in the form of a heart attack had just happened in my own experience. It seems more than remarkable that these should be the very verses I was considering in this juncture of my experiences. The “silence of death” refers only to what people would have seen and a reference *only* to my body. While I am in the body it is proper to refer to it as me — but not afterward. My hold on this terra firma was surely slipping. I called out to you. Ah, I didn’t even need to — you were so near! Praise your omnipresent name.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. The physical pain and struggle of a heart attack are so much up front there is little else to occupy the mind. But your love (like the dear love of my wife) is always there, what a strength and support you are. I am here and full of life and hope because of your marvelous supporting love. There was anxiety great within me — but there was something else that really didn’t matter what happened since your comfort, your consolation, your presence was the joy of my whole life. Not in some euphoric feeling but in the solid fact of my confidence in yourself. Blessed, oh, blessed be 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

There surely have been times in my experience when I would have been so very, very much unprepared for such an intrusion from eternity! I have no way to ade-

quately thank you for the mercy I find in my experience. I need not confess all the sins of yesterday and the long days before you have forgotten them — and it is best that I do the same thing. I only want to confess the problem I have in living at the same time in two worlds! I am bombarded by peculiar activities and thought processes — “creature comforts?” But then my dear Lord did the same thing. I need your grace to homogenize the two. How life in the spirit could change all the life of this world. Ah, for the day when heaven and earth shall be one!

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 in sin but Jesus rescued me,
He’s a wonderful Savior to me;
I was bound by fear but Jesus set me free,
He’s a wonderful Savior to me.

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

HIS WORD

³¹When he was gone, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. ³²If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.

³³“My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

³⁴“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.”

³⁶Simon Peter asked him, “Lord, where are you going?”

Jesus replied, “Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.”

³⁷Peter asked, “Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.”

³⁸Then Jesus answered, “Will you really lay down your life for me? I tell you the truth, before the

rooster crows, you will disown me three times!"
—John 13:31-38, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Read also Mark 14:27-31; Matthew 26:31-35; Luke 22:31-38. Dear Lord, it is hard to assimilate these precious words from your Son. The hours had reached the countdown — how important was every hour — but in particular these last hours just ahead. The Old Testament prophecies were much in the mind of Jesus. Zechariah 13:7 and Isaiah 53:12 were about to be fulfilled. The boasting and ignorance of Peter was also very much with him. His stern yet poignant rebuke of the braggart was all a part of the loving heart of our Lord. How totally did Peter decide to ignore my Lord's words in this circumstance? The only one who knew where he was going or the purpose of the events was Jesus.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Didn't anyone hear his words? His beautiful words: "A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another." Blessed John remembered! What Jesus said he wrote long afterwards — and we believe through the help of the Holy Spirit wrote them down. The new commandment is the new kind of love, the Jesus kind of love. My dear Lord, there is utterly *nothing* I need more than your kind of love. I want to spend so much time with him that I assimilate his attitude — this is the only way I can truly emulate his love. It is not in a code of ethics it is in a way of life. His way. How I do want to walk in it!

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 beautiful hills of Galilee — especially in the springtime when Jesus appeared after his death and resurrection. (2) Thank you for the tremendous personal moral courage of Jesus as he rebuked Peter. (3) Thank you that the vehemence of men did not impress or affect Jesus — today or then. (4) Thank you that Satan could not even get Peter without asking. (5) Thank you for the wonderfully complete preparation my Lord made in the lives of his apostles for his soon coming resurrection. (6) Thank you for the calm confidence and supernatural insight my Lord had in all that was here about to happen. (7) Thank you for the great shepherd who was to lay down his life for the sheep.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"It is written: 'And he was numbered with the trans-

gressors;' and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment." In so many wonderful ways he was (and is) "numbered with the transgressors." (1) Of course we think of the scene on Calvary where Jesus was crucified "in the midst" a transgressor on each hand. But this is probably the least fulfillment of this prophecy. (2) He was numbered with all us transgressors when he chose to "empty himself" and share the form of a man — yea, "a servant." (3) He was surely numbered with the transgressors when he took the form of "sinful flesh," i.e., all the limitations and weaknesses of the same body we live in today. (4) When he was baptized by John in the Jordan this was but another way to say that he was being numbered as the sinless with the sinful. All of this culminated in his death in our place when he who knew no sin was made to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Certain very meaningful requests arise from these verses: (1) Give me a much fuller understanding of your total character as seen in the light of Calvary. (2) I want to understand the depth of meaning in the word "glorified" as used here. (3) Just how did you glorify your Son "at once?" (4) It is so good to read that Jesus spoke of going on a journey — not ending his existence — give me this same understanding. (5) Open my eyes to ways of expressing your kind of love for today.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You spoke in strange and wonderful ways to your disciples in these days — do the same for me: (1) "Satan has no more power over you than you give him and I permit him." (2) "I am always praying for you." (3) "Denial is not irreversible."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Ethiopia — Points for prayer: (1) *Pray for the following:* a) *Various Pentecostal churches have grown dramatically of late.* The long-persecuted Mulu Wengel Church has greatly increased through urban house churches. Some Swedish and Finnish missionaries work in fellowship with several of these groups.

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

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Thursday—

*As we come before you we do so in joy
— even with shouting and singing.
Teach us how to extol you.*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song” (Psa. 95:1,2). It is always good to sing the praises of our Lord. It should be that every day we have a reason to lift our voices in joy to yourself. How could joy persist in the darkness of persecution and privation? It did! How can joy break forth as a flower from rock-hard soil? But it did! When we have the deep, deep springs of joy there is no way we are going to stop it. The wonder of forgiveness and your presence — of the purpose you give to life — of the value you place on service. The psalmist is not content with just a song — he must *“shout aloud.”* Once we catch a long look at your greatness and goodness this will be our inevitable response.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. To appear before you with less than thanksgiving is indeed a contradiction of nature. To you we are indebted for all we have and are and ever will be. How could we do less than thank you? It would be easy to find limitations and inequities and complain about them. And this old world is full of such persons. Man who refuses to see, or hear, or learn — and has so lived for centuries is not about to come before you with thanksgiving. In the clear light of reality thanksgiving, music and song are very much in order. I am delighted to be one who wants to so express my praise to you.

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

There are indeed times — several times when praise — thanksgiving and music are not at all possible — but

it is out of selfishness such conditions prevail. Forgive me. Even when physical circumstances are a part of the depression we feel we know we serve and worship one who lives above and beneath and through every circumstance! Praise your wonderful name. There is a song we can use to extol you. I want to find it and sing it! Lift me out of myself!

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

See, the streams of living waters,
Springing from eternal love,
Well supply thy sons and daughters,
And all fear of want remove:
Who can faint while such a river
Ever flows their thirst t’assuage?
Grace, which, like the Lord the Giver,
Never fails from age to age.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁷After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it among you. ¹⁸For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”

¹⁹And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”

²⁰In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.” —Luke 22:17-20, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Also read Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; I Corinthians 11:23-26. To read these words in your presence is almost more than I can do! I follow what is probably the earliest account, i.e., Mark 14:22-25, but I so

greatly admire the wording of Luke that I hardly know what to say! The awesome promise of his eating with us in your present kingdom stretches my mind — my emotions to the breaking point. Oh my Lord! How can it be you are with us again to offer us the bread and the cup each time we gather? I know you *are* — I claim your promise — but I want to pause again and assimilate these words. “*In remembrance of me!*” The new agreement! How delighted I am to claim my part — ah, but to consider what it costs you — shall I ever really know?

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, there have been for me hundreds, yea thousands of Lord’s day’s of times around your table. But there has never been a time when the wonder and awe I feel just now was not present — *because you were there!* I need not feel it for it to be so. How could your Son say, “thanks” for a cup filled with that which represented his own blood? How could he break and thank you for bread that symbolized in such a graphic way his own broken body? Ah, the mystery and wonder and beauty of it all! But the release and freedom I feel when I know it is my sin that is forgiven and forgotten! It is in remembrance of his death — but it is in acceptance of present forgiveness we eat!

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 beauty and simplicity — the universality of this wonderful feast. (2) Thank you for the inexpressible content of the cup. (3) Thank you we can indeed drink anew — over and over again in “your rule in the hearts of men.” (4) Thank you for the broken body — bread that came down from heaven that we may eat and not die. (5) Thank you for the unbreakable covenant (from your Son’s point of view). I want to keep my part. (6) Thank you for the wonder we renew each time we gather around his table. (7) Thank you I shall never really enter into the fullness of the cup and loaf until I see him as he is.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“*For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.*” There are two promises made by my Lord concerning his supper: (1) That he would eat it anew with us — and how we praise him and try to visualize his presence here. (2) That we are “proclaiming his death until he comes.” Just what is it about his death we are proclaiming? We are claiming the all sufficiency of this once for all sacrifice for sin. This is indeed a feast of thanksgiving and praise for what has been done on our behalf. To whom are we making this proclamation? To all the angels in heaven and all the demons

in satan’s control — and most of all to satan himself!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

It is altogether appropriate as we gather around your table that we also gather around your throne of grace for the lifting up of petitions: (1) Paul says he received his description of this supper from the Lord himself, i.e., by revelation — how I do want to hear his every word. (2) On the same night of his betrayal he had his mind and heart on the needs of the disciples — not himself — what an example for me! (3) Could I venture to form the words in the thanksgiving of my Lord for the loaf? If he could thank you I surely have reason for gratitude. (4) Open my heart to see his body as I have never seen it before! (5) Give me a new memory for every time I gather around his table. (6) What a wonderful seal of acceptance is your blood. Help me to claim it. (7) Maranatha — even so come Lord Jesus. The Lord’s day seems a most appropriate time for your coming.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As a pause in meditation speak to my heart in these four accounts: (1) “Let everyone drink — and everyone discern the blood.” (2) “If ever I am present with you I am present now as you eat and drink.” (3) “Until you see me in eternity you will never know all I put in *the covenant* I here made for you.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Ethiopia — Points for prayer: (1) *Christian literature is in short supply.* The intensive government literacy campaign is creating millions of new readers hungry for any reading materials. The KHC press in Addis Ababa is working at full capacity producing teaching aids, books and commentaries, which are distributed without much restriction. However, no Christian magazine has been published since 1981. Pray that this ban may be lifted. (2) *The use of cassettes* for teaching of, as yet, unpublished Scriptures has been a vital tool for church growth. Pray for the provision of supplies and effective distribution. (3) *Radio.* Transmissions in Amharic and Somali are prepared in Nairobi for broadcast by FEBA, Seychelles. Pray for this programme to be widely received and expanded into other languages.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I must tell Jesus all of my trials;
I cannot bear these burdens alone;
In my distress He kindly will help me;
He ever loves and cares for His own.

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Friday—

If all nature is ready to praise you who are we to hesitate? Open our hearts to you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it; let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy; they will sing before the Lord, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his truth” (Psa. 96:11-13). What a magnificent psalm this is of praise and worship! I want to mark carefully just what of your creation worships you and just how they do it: (1) The heavens are to rejoice — is this a reference to the ten million — billion galaxies of created stars and planets? Or to the unnumbered angels of various ranks? No matter — all should respond in this manner — this is an appropriate expression before your greatness.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I can even now from the seventh floor of a medical center look out on a small part of your great earth. This whole created sphere should give voice in praise to the infinite one who has so created! Somehow the waters of the deep could be given a great voice along with all the creatures of the deep — each and all should lift their voices in adoration and wonder. The trees of the forests — of all the forests that now are or ever have been — or ever will be should be talking trees and should sing together a song of joy. Could it ever be that such expression and meaning could ever come from the visible creation about us? Nothing is impossible with you. Romans 8:22ff speaks of an anticipated deliverance when the creation itself will be enabled to praise your name in its deliverance from bondage.

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

The whole world will be judged in righteousness — i.e., all will be set in balance and all men will freely

confess the fairness of all you have done and are doing. There is a “truth”: the balance and equity of all things. All the world is at present out of balance. *There is a standard* — a norm from which all else can be put right. One glad day you will come and we shall understand it all. If there is no norm — if there is nothing right or wrong we would also have no rhyme or reason to life or the world in which we live. Throughout the pages of your blessed word there *is* a right a *true* — a truth that equals reality — all that does not equal such reality is false and wrong. I am glad to search your truth day and night that I might walk in the light and not the dark.

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

It may not be on the mountain’s height,
Or over the stormy sea;
It may not be at the battle’s front
My Lord will have need of me;
But if, by a still voice, He calls
To paths that I do not know,
I’ll answer, dear Lord, with my hand in Thine,
I’ll go where you want me to go.

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

HIS WORD

14 *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. ²In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴You know the way to the place where I am going.”* —John 14:1-4, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What blessed words these are! How precious they

have been to many a grieving heart. What solace they offer to those who wait this side of the Father's house. The anxiety of the apostles was in the loss of their dear Lord. He had told them time and again he was leaving but they did not choose to believe him. Jesus had also prepared them for his return to his Father's house. Our Lord made constant reference to his coming from heaven and his return to heaven. Jesus was looking forward to returning to the presence of his Father. He wanted his disciples to know there was plenty of room in his Father's house for each of his disciples. The wonderful promise of his return to take his disciples to be with him stands today as it did then — as true now as then.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Jesus is saying just one thing to me: "Trust me!" Put the same confidence in me as you put in God, (because I am God). He wants to tell me about heaven — and oh, how I *do* want to listen. "Heaven is commodious — it is abundantly large enough for everyone. I am not raising a fond hope I cannot fulfill. If there was no world and life to come I would have told you. I am a realist in the realm of the spirit. I am going to personally prepare a place in my Father's house for each one of you." Ah, what will that "place" be like? It will perfectly suit each one of us. Jesus personally knew the disciples better than they knew themselves. "The place" or activity in the Father's house would be perfectly adapted to the talents and temperaments of every one of these men.

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 sure promise of life after this life. (2) Of more than existence a real world of satisfying activity. (3) Of more than enough room so no one would ever be crowded — there will be a vista of endless expanse. (4) Thank you that our promise of heaven is based squarely on the integrity of Jesus. (5) Thank you for the wonder of expectation of just what one who has no limitations in any area could create just for us! (6) Thank you for the sure promise right here that he would come again. (7) Thank you we know where Jesus went and we shall one day be with him.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"You know the way to the place where I am going." Did Jesus really believe these men now knew the way to heaven? Or was this just a rhetorical question? Surely our Lord had spoken often enough about heaven and the way to that home. How earth-bound are all of us! How good it is to find one who is both the way and the destination. To follow him is to be

on the way. Jesus referred to the place where he was going as back to the Father, to be with the Father, from my Father, where I was before the worlds were made, the glory I had with the Father. Surely in all these superlative descriptions there would be one to capture their imaginations! But not when our eyes are focused on the events of the next few hours.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

If ever I should pray it would be in this hour: (1) The solace and confidence of his words cut through all my cares — "Let not your heart be troubled." (2) I do trust in you — increase my confidence. (3) I lean my whole confidence on my Lord — gladly do I do so! (4) I want to envision a real place in your house — an exciting — adventuresome mind-stretching place. (5) Thank you for thinking of my particular needs in the preparation of a particular place for me. (6) Today I look for your return — I await my change and my elevation into your eternal presence! (7) How I long to be with you and be forever fully satisfied.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in these four beautiful verses: (1) "Whether I come or you go these verses will be a reality soon." (2) "If you do not appreciate or enjoy this world you will not be prepared to enjoy the one to come." (3) "Behold, I come quickly."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Falkland Islands — Points for prayer: (1) *The traumatic Argentinian invasion* and their subsequent ejection by British forces in 1982, decisively affected the economic, political and spiritual life of the once complacent Falkland Islanders. Pray for a turning to God. (2) *There are only two small evangelical congregations* (Anglican and the Tabernacle United church) and a handful of actively witnessing Christians. (3) *The British forces* based on the Islands face a lonely, thankless task — pray for openness to the gospel and to Christian witness by believers in the forces.

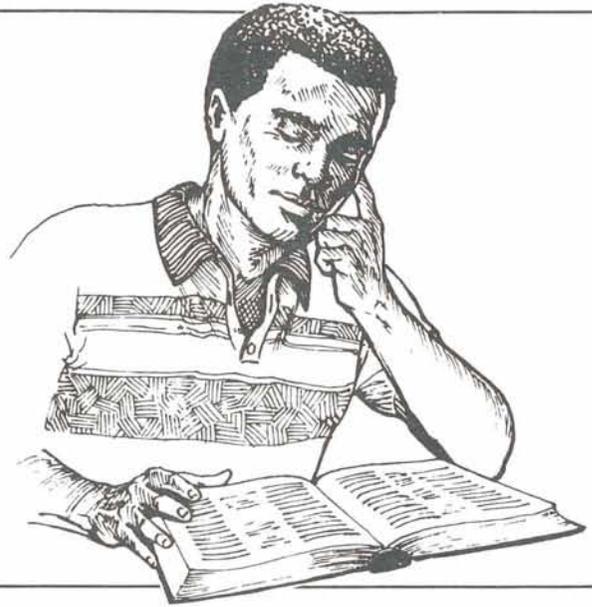
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

All to Jesus I surrender,
All to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him,
In His presence daily live.
I surrender all, I surrender all;
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,
I surrender all.

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Saturday—

Open our eyes to what you created — we can learn so much of the Creator through his creation.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“For the Lord is the great God, the great king above all gods. In his hands are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land” (Psa. 93:3-5). There could hardly be a clearer declaration of your creative power. I want to detail the aspects of yourself. (1) A great king — i.e., majestic as a ruler. (2) Above all who claim to be gods. (3) The whole creative process is in your hands. The undisclosed strata of the earth upon which we live is all very well known to you. (4) It is interesting to attribute the ownership of the mountain peaks to yourself. (5) No wonder our Lord could command the sea and it obey him — the seas belong to you by right of creation! Praise and adoration are surely in order!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me! Just how great you are there would be no way of knowing — or of putting into the feeble words we have to use. I just want to exult in your presence and say “thank you.” All other gods are but submissive servants to you as a great king! I want no other God before me — I want to give you total rule in my life — ah, how easy to say! As I hold a hand full of sand and pour it out so do you hold the depths of the earth. In comparison to the nearest smallest star the hand full of earth would be exceedingly small. It is good to stand at the foot of some giant peak and look at its majestic slopes and snowy crags and know they all belong to you! I never tire of standing on the shore line and tasting the tangy air and listen to the roar of the waves and the call of the gulls.

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

Keep me from complaining! There will be a time —

or will there — when I am too weak to do the least of what is so easy today. Your power has not diminished — your greatness has not lessened. As long as my spirit is free I can praise you — there is great strength in this! I put the label “*lie*” to every attempt of man to attribute to himself anything you have made — or worse to give to blind, unreasonable chance all that we have in your wonderful world! Deepen my hatred of this parent sin. In the same action guard me from pride as if I know and others are stupid who do not. Give me love, Jesus’ kind of love for disbelievers.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

This is my Father’s world,
And to my list’ning ears,
All nature sings, and round me rings
The music of the spheres.
This is my Father’s world,
I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas;
His hand the wonders wrought.

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

HIS WORD

⁵Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”
⁶Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
⁷If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”
⁸Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”
⁹Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’”
—John 14:5-9, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

There is to be an exchange here between the disciples and our Lord. *Thomas* is a most interesting person. He is full of questions and inquiry. We are glad he is. Thomas no doubt had a temporary, earthly meaning to his words. He meant he could not anticipate his Lord's next move and he could even less anticipate just how he was going to arrive at where he was going. How dull and lacking in understanding were these men! Yet how loyal in their devotion to him. Jesus had said he was going to "the Father's house." He now lays down the eternal pathway to the Father and his home: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Did Thomas know anymore about the way or to where he was going after the answer than before? We doubt it!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. Speak these words into my heart, "If you *really* knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." It was too much for *Philip*; he must ask for an explanation. Jesus spoke of the amazing fact of seeing God — but once again the disciple is in the physical realm. God is an invisible spirit being. How can he be seen? *Philip* evidently was asking for some visible manifestation — perhaps of such a dramatic form that no one from henceforth would doubt his Messiahship and would once and for all declare him king and break the yoke of Roman bondage. The startling news! God is already here in the form — in the lowly form. In the humble person of Jesus himself! We have often thought facetiously — Jesus could have said: "Do you want to see God in person?" "Yes, yes," said *Philip*. "Shake hands," said Jesus. Shake hands with God — or "kiss God" — "kiss the Son and kiss God."

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for *Thomas* — without his inquiry we would never have our Lord's beautiful answer. (2) Thank you for *the way* to anywhere — anytime — for any reason. (3) Thank you I know what is reality — it is even Jesus himself. (4) Thank you that in him is the life and the life is the light of men — even for this man. (5) Thank you for the blunt exclusiveness of Jesus. (6) Thank you that the more I see my Lord and know him the more I see and know you!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"*Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father?'*" Oh my Lord — show me yourself all over again! I want to memorize every verse recorded by the divine biographers. I also want to record in paintings every event — every word every movement. It is so, so important that I not only read, and see but assimilate your words — to *see* you,

oh, to *see* you! To hear you, to believe you! I shall never tire of reading again all you have said. But behind the lives and the words I will find the real word!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In these verses I shall never exhaust the requests I must make: (1) I know the way you went and the way you chose to go. I want to follow your steps. (2) Oh, my way to the presence of yourself lead me to there in this life that I might be well prepared for the next. (3) How simple, yet profound a word is the statement: "From now on, you do know him and have seen him." Grant me a measure of wisdom to plumb its depths. (4) Could it be that twenty long centuries have come and gone since *Philip* first voiced the cry of the human heart: ". . . show us the Father?" Wasn't it just this morning I voiced it? (5) You have indeed been some long time with me — and I *do* know you — but not like I would like to indeed be with you in every circumstance of life.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me from the lips of the disciple whom Jesus loved: (1) "I have a way for you for this day — and I am it." (2) "I have a special truth to show you today — it is in myself." (3) "There is life today new and fresh and clean and I am that life."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Fiji — Points for prayer: (1) *The indigenous Fijian have been Christian for 100 years*, but the older churches are more cultural than spiritual: 90% of all Methodists are regular church attenders! Legalism, nominalism and lack of evangelism characterize the majority of churches. Yet there is an openness in the Methodist Church to biblical evangelism and teaching. Pray for a deep spiritual awakening. The newer evangelical churches and Mormons are growing quite rapidly. There are groups of charismatic believers that are growing in some sections of the Methodists, Anglicans and RCs. (2) *Tension between the major communities* limits concern among Fijian Christians for the evangelization of the Indian majority. Pray that true believers may demonstrate that the Cross has broken down barriers to fellowship.

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.