

PERSONAL WORSHIP

VOLUME SEVEN

Intimacy With God

Don DeWelt

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Volume Seven

Acts 18:11-28:31

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THE PRAYER LIFE OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

by Tommy Kelton

God speaks to us in the Bible; we speak to God in prayer. One reads the Bible to discover God's will; he prays in order that he might receive power to do that will.

These two qualities are interdependent. Unless we know what God's promises are, we will not be able to pray the way we should. Unless we pray, we will not have the disposition of heart that keeps us studying.

THE APOSTLES AND PRAYER

The apostles devoted themselves to prayer (Acts 6:4). They regarded prayer as one of the two most important works of their lives. Much of Paul's time, strength and thought was given to prayer (Rom. 1:9; Eph. 1:15-16; Col. 1:9; I Thess. 3:10; II Tim. 1:3).

PRAYER AND THE EARLY CHURCH

The church devoted themselves to prayer (Acts 2:42). The church lifted their voices together to God (Acts 4:24). Prayer without ceasing was made by the church (Acts 12:5).

PRAYER IS TO BE MADE FOR ALL

For all the saints (Eph. 6:18); for all men (I Tim. 2:1). All men and women need our prayers. We should pray for those in authority, those in need, those preaching the gospel, and all that are alone. We should pray for those we love and those who are our enemies. There isn't anyone that doesn't need our prayers.

PRAYER IS TO BE MADE IN EVERYTHING

"In everything . . . let your requests be made known to God" (Phil. 4:6). "Pray everywhere" (I Tim. 2:8). There isn't anything too big or too small to pray for. From our daily bread to the direction of our lives, we need to talk to God and depend on Him to hear us. All of our problems should be talked over with Him. Tell Him all your needs and rely on Him to meet them.

PRAYER IS TO BE MADE CONTINUALLY

"Pray at all times" (Eph. 6:18). "Pray always" (Luke 21:36). "Pray without ceasing" (I Thess. 5:17). "Be constant in prayer" (Rom. 12:12). "Continue steadfastly in prayer" (Col. 4:2).

These passages make it plain that we must always be in an attitude of prayer and that we must pray much and often. These prayers do not have to be long, for-

mal prayers. They can be brief sentence prayers spoken as we go through our busy daily lives. The important thing is to have communication with our Father continually on our minds.

PRAYER IS TO BE MADE IN THE NAME OF CHRIST

"Whatever you ask in My name, I will do it." "If you ask anything in My name, I will do it" (John 14:13-14). "Whatever you ask the Father in my name, I will give it to you" (John 15:16). "If you ask anything of the Father, He will give it to you in My name" (John 16:23-24). "Ask and ye shall receive."

These three promises of Jesus tell us if we will ask the Father in His name, then "He will do it," second, "He will give it," and "we shall receive it." Thus, we have a threefold promise that we will be heard; He will do and give and we shall receive

WE MUST PRAY BY FAITH

"What things soever you desire, when you pray, believe that you have received them and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24). "Lift up holy hands without doubting" (I Tim. 2:8). "Ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind" (James 1:5-8). "Without faith it is impossible to please Him. He that cometh to God must believe that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6). "Everything you ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matt. 21:22).

Faith is definite, specific, asking for and expecting the things for which we ask. It must be free of doubt. It must believe that what "He saith shall come to pass."

Prayer is the highest expression of faith. You no longer let yourself be guided by the invisible. Unbelief believes what is seen; faith sees what it believes.

If we are to have real faith, we must study the word of God and find out what is promised, then simply believe the promises of God. Trying to believe what you want to believe is not faith. Believing what God says in His Word is faith (Rom. 10:17). If I am to have faith when I pray, I need a specific promise of God on which I can base my faith. The most wonderful thing is that such promises are always to be found.

No matter how positive any promise of God's word may be, we will not enjoy it in actual experience unless we confidently expect its fulfillment in answer to our prayers. We must act as if our prayers have

been heard and answered long before we actually receive, or realize the answer.

Faith does not grow discouraged because prayer is not immediately answered; it takes God at His word, and lets Him take what time He chooses to fulfill His purposes. Faith knows there will be delays in answering prayer and regards such delays as times of testing. Faith knows that He that has promised is faithful.

WE MUST KEEP GOD'S COMMANDS FOR PRAYER TO BE ANSWERED

"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (I John 3:22). "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). We are to "lift up holy hands" (I Tim. 2:8).

The one who expects God to do as he asks Him, must do whatever God bids him do. If we give a listening ear to God's commands to us, He will give a listening ear to all our petitions to Him.

His commands are not grievous. In all the scriptures, there is not a single instance recorded of God having commanded any man to do a thing beyond his power. If we will obey Him, God will answer our prayers.

PRAYER MUST BE ACCORDING TO GOD'S WILL

"If we ask anything according to His will He hears us" (I John 5:14). Christ prayed, "Not My will, but Thine be done" (Mark 14:36).

God has revealed His will in His Word. When something is definitely promised in the Word of God, we know it is His will to give that thing.

When we have a specific promise in the Word of God, if we doubt that it is God's will, or if we doubt that God will do the thing that we ask, we make God a liar. God has made His will known in His word. By diligent study, we can know that will.

What we ask of God must be in accordance with His revealed will and not just our desires. We must ask for what He wants us to have, not just what we want. We must always be assured God will hear us when we ask according to His will.

WE MUST ABIDE IN CHRIST

"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you" (John 15:7/NASB).

To abide in Christ is for us to bear the same relations to Him that the branches bear to the vine; that is to say, to abide in Christ is to renounce any independent life of our own, to give up trying to think our thoughts, or form our resolutions, or cultivate our feelings, and simply and constantly look to Christ to think His thoughts in us, to form His purposes in us, to feel His emotions and affections in us.

In addition, if we are to obtain from God all that we ask from Him, Christ's words must abide or continue in us. We must study His words, fairly devour His

words, let them sink into our thoughts and into our hearts. We must keep them in our memory and constantly obey them in our lives.

Prevailing prayer is almost an impossibility where there is neglect of the study of the Word of God.

WE MUST PERSEVERE IN PRAYER

"Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight and say unto him, Friend lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine, in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give you. I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him because he is a friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth" (Luke 11:5-8).

"And he spoke a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man; and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while; but afterwards he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubles me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you he will avenge them speedily" (Luke 18:1-8).

Importunate praying never faints nor grows weary; it is never discouraged; it is sustained by a hope that knows no despair, and a faith which will not let go. Importunate praying has patience to wait and strength to continue.

These passages of scriptures clearly set forth the truth that prevailing prayer must persevere. We must ask and keep on asking without growing tired or wavering. We must have the courage to so fix our purpose in mind to such an extent that we will not give up. If we do this, we will be heard.

PRAYER IS TO BE WITH THANKSGIVING

"Have no anxiety about anything; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7). "Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (I Thess. 5:17-18). "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving" (Col. 4:2).

In approaching God to ask for new blessings, we should never forget to return thanks for blessings already granted. One of the reasons we have so little faith when we pray is because we take so little time to meditate upon and thank God for blessings already received. To pray like we ought to pray, we must be thankful and express our thanks continually to the Father.

THE SPIRIT HELPS US WHEN WE PRAY

“Likewise, the Spirit also helps our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Rom. 8:26).

When we pray, both Christ and the Holy Spirit make intercession for us. The Spirit helps us even when we do not know all we should pray for.

This promise should give us assurance, when we pray, that our needs will be met. The prayers will work together for good, and we will be heard.

BLESSINGS OF TWO AGREEING IN PRAYER

“If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 18:19).

This passage shows the power of Christians joining in prayer. We should pray with and for one another. We should tell our prayer needs to others and request them to join with us in praying for these needs. The church has the power to move the world if we will only join together in concentrated prayer.

GOD IS ABLE TO DO ABOVE ALL WE ASK OR THINK

“He is able to do exceedingly above all we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Eph. 3:20). “He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things” (Rom. 8:32). “With God, nothing shall be impossible” (Luke 1:37).

The only limit to prayer is the promises of God and His ability to fulfill these promises. We must believe that God is able to do all He has promised and that He has proved by giving His Son that He will fulfill these promises. Our challenge is to meet the requirements that He has made of us in our prayers.

WE CAN KNOW WE HAVE RECEIVED WHAT WE ASK

“This is the confidence that we have in him that, if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us: and we know that he hears us, whatever we ask, we shall know that we have the petitions that we desired of him” (I John 5:14-15).

“Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believing that you have received them, and they shall be granted you” (Mark 11:24/NASB).

No matter how positive any promise of God’s Word may be, we will not enjoy it in actual experience unless we confidently expect its fulfillment in answer to our prayer. Act and speak as if you have already received all your desires. Make your desires real in your mind, by prayer, based on the promises of God. Accept them as realities when you pray.

ADDITIONAL PROMISES FOR PRAYER

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).

“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (John 16:24).

“The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth” (Psa. 145:18).

“He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him” (Psa. 91:15).

“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice” (Psa. 55:17).

“In the day when I cried thou answered me, and strengthened me with strength in my soul” (Psa. 138:3).

“Yes, the Lord hears the good man when he calls to him for help, and saves him out of all his troubles” (Psa. 34:17/LB).

“Be delighted with the Lord. Then he will give you all your heart’s desires” (Psa. 37:4/LB).

“Commit your way to the Lord, trust in him and he will do it” (Psa. 37:5/NASB).

“Call upon me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor me” (Psa. 50:15/NASB).

“In the day of trouble I shall call upon thee, for thou wilt answer me” (Psa. 86:7/NASB).

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (II Chron. 7:14).

HINDRANCES TO PRAYER

“Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts” (James 4:2-3).

“Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear” (Isa. 59:1-2).

“Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard” (Prov. 21:13).

“Let us ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. Let not that man think that he shall receive anything from the Lord” (James 1:6-7).

“When you pray, forgive, if you have ought against anyone: that your Father which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses” (Mark 11:25).

These hindrances can cause us not to receive an answer to our prayers. If we are going to be blessed by our prayers, we must be certain that we avoid all these hindrances.

CONCLUSION

I affirm, with absolute certainty, that Almighty God answers prayer. That He hears and answers every and

all prayer where the true conditions outlined in this study are met. Either this is so or it is not. If not, there is nothing in prayer. Then prayer is just the recitation of words, a mere verbal performance, an empty ceremony. But if what we have said in this material is true, then there are great possibilities in prayer. It is far reaching in its scope and wide in its range. Prayer can lay its hand upon God and move Him to do great and wonderful things.

I beg everyone that reads this to realize the power of prayer. To realize His promises to answer, and to do and give "all things," "anything," "whatsoever," and "all things whatsoever" are so great that we cannot "stagger at the promises through unbelief."

We cannot afford to prove faithless to His Word. His promises are for all of us. He means to do for all of us who pray just what He says He will do. "For he is faithful that has promised."

Make prayer a vital part of your life. "Pray without ceasing" and you will be more than a conqueror. God will be with you and help your every need. You will have strength and encouragement when you are low and a friend you can always turn to.

THE MODEL PRAYER

That this prayer was intended to be a model, and not to be prayed verbatim, is seen in the comparison of Matthew's and Luke's account given in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4. Luke records it in fewer than one-half the number of words used by Matthew; the phraseology is different; and part of that included by Matthew is omitted by Luke. If the Lord was giving us a prayer to be memorized and recited, He would not have given us different words the two times He gave it.

In Luke 11:1, the disciples said, "Teach us to pray." They did not say, "Teach us a prayer." It is something else to know how to pray.

Matthew 6:7 says, "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen." Would Christ then immediately follow by giving us a prayer to repeat?

In addition, there is no occasion in the entire New Testament on which this prayer is ever repeated by anybody else.

It is a model, a skeleton upon which to put flesh.

"OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN"

Seldom was the term "Father" used to speak to God in the Old Testament. Of all the terms used to address God in prayer in the Old Testament, Father is not among them.

Jesus was the first to make prayer a personal discourse with His Father.

Jesus constantly prayed to God as His Father, and spoke of Him as His Father. The gospels contain about 170 occurrences of Jesus praying to God as His Father or referring to Him as being His Father. Except for praying, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" from the cross (Mark 15:34), every prayer of Jesus recorded in the gospels is addressed to

God as Father.

Jesus prayed not to God as a distant "Father" but a close and loving "Abba" (Mark 14:36). Jesus spoke to His heavenly Father with the same simplicity and intimacy that a small child uses to speak to his earthly father.

This great privilege of approaching God in such a personal way belongs only to the body of Christ. Only those who have been adopted into His family can call Him Father. Those who are His children can cry, "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:14-17).

Christians do not have to approach God in fear. We are sons and daughters, confidently approaching our Father. Through Jesus Christ we have a great intimacy with God. We can go to our Father with our every need and He will hear us.

"HALLOWED BE THY NAME"

To hallow is to sanctify; to deem and render sacred. I Peter 3:15 may throw light on this. Peter says, "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts." The meaning is: set apart the Lord God in your hearts as the only true object of supreme, eternal adoration, worship and praise. Place Him alone on the throne of your hearts. Let Him be the only hallowed object there.

Our prayer is to let all adore God — the infinite Father — as the only object of universal adoration, praise, worship and love. Without such reverence for Jehovah's name, no prayer can possibly be acceptable.

"THY KINGDOM COME"

We cannot pray "Thy kingdom come" today, because the kingdom came on the First Pentecost of the Jews after the resurrection of Christ (33 A.D.).

Paul declared that he and the Colossian Christians had been "translated into the kingdom of the son of His love" (Col. 1:13). The Hebrew writer says, "Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe" (Heb. 12:28). John declared, "He made us to be a kingdom" (Rev. 1:6), and he professed to be in the kingdom (Rev. 1:9).

There are some ways in which we can pray similarly. We can pray that the church, or kingdom, may spread, that the church may grow, and that the good news of the kingdom might be preached or come to others who have never heard it.

"THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN"

Whenever we pray, we are to pray in accord with God's will. The literal Greek of this statement says something like this: "You will, whatever You wish to happen, let it happen." And then the Greek adds, "As in heaven, so in earth." In other words, "God, do what you want."

This attitude is seen in Christ's life. "My food is to

do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work" (John 4:34). "I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent Me" (John 6:38). "And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to Him" (John 8:29). "I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love" (John 15:10).

This attitude of Christ, "Not my will but thine be done," must fill our prayers.

"GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD"

This shows our dependence on God for all the blessings we either possess or need.

This petition is remarkably comprehensive. It names only bread, and only the bread for "this day," yet it includes our water and our needful clothing — whatever we really need for our health and usefulness on earth. For all these we look to God.

This prayer implies a state of heart that leans upon God for everything. Our minds look to God, expecting from Him, and from Him alone, every good and perfect gift. And this is daily dependence.

After you have prayed for "our daily bread," He wants you to trust Him for the supply. Paul wrote, "Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7).

And verse 19 of the same chapter assures us: "And my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

They pray best who pray for today's needs.

"FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE ALSO HAVE FORGIVEN OUR DEBTORS"

Of the requests in the prayers, the matter of forgiveness is of such enormous importance that it is the only one which our Lord later took the time to reemphasize and develop in length.

When we pray, "Forgive us our debts," we are openly admitting ourselves to be guilty of wrong doing.

To receive the forgiveness of these sins we must be willing to forgive those who sin against us. We must forgive all that wrong us, and forgive them from the heart. God requires us to love our neighbors as we love our friends — He requires us to forgive others as surely as we ask forgiveness for ourselves.

"LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL"

Jesus is not suggesting that God will tempt us to evil if we do not petition Him otherwise. James 1:13 specifically says that God tempts no one.

Jesus is saying that we should ask the Father to deliver us from the evil one. In His "High Priestly Prayer," Jesus asks the Father not to take His disciples out of the world, but rather to ". . . keep them from the evil one" (John 17:15).

In foretelling Peter's denial, Jesus said, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail; and when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren" (Luke 22:31-32). In other words, Jesus was telling Peter that on his own he would be putty in the hands of Satan.

Likewise, we need the help of our Father to deliver us from the evil one.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

I cannot say, "Our," if I live only for myself.

I cannot say, "Father," if I am not His child.

I cannot say, "Who art in heaven," if I am laying up no treasure there.

I cannot say, "Hallowed be Thy name," if I am not striving for holiness.

I cannot say, "Thy kingdom spread," if I am not doing all in my power to see it grow.

I cannot say, "In earth as it is in heaven," if I'll not serve Him here and now.

I cannot say, "Give us this day our daily bread," if I will not work for it.

I cannot say, "Forgive us our debts," if I harbor a grudge against anyone.

I cannot say, "Lead us not into temptation," if I deliberately place myself in its path.

I cannot say, "Deliver us from evil," if I do not put on the whole armor of God.

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About the author:

Tommy Kelton was educated at Freed-Hardeman College, Florida Christian College and graduated from Abilene Christian University. He has preached in Camden, Arkansas; Odessa, Texas; Nigeria, West Africa (Missionary); Vealmoor, Texas; Pharr, Texas; Abilene, Texas; and Blackwell, Texas.

Brother Kelton says anyone can use this material freely.

WEEK ONE

—Sunday—

One day our strength will be everlasting. Just now it is only in you we are strong!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Everlasting Strength (Isa. 26:4). (So many of these terms are applied to our Lord Jesus, but I like to remember the oneness of the nature of my Lord and our Father — as well as the blessed Holy Spirit.) It is one thing to be strong some of the time — it is quite another to be strong all the time. To contemplate One who is described as “Everlasting Strength” is quite beyond our grasp, but nonetheless just what I want, what all men want for our God! Bless your name! There has never been a time when you were not strong. There has never been a circumstance in which you were anything less than Everlasting Strength. There never lived a man who has ever found you less than everlasting Strength.

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

Everlasting strength for me! Dear, dear God! How more than encouraging this is to me! My strength is multiplied infinitely when I recognize by faith that my strength is your strength — “according to the power that worketh in me — both to will and to work your good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13). My strength is not “like that of ten thousand” — nay — but like the strength of the Creator of all. I have often blocked the channel of both receiving and communicating this Divine energy, but it is not because it is not there or I could not or should not have it. For the tasks of today — for the temptations of today — for the opportunities of today — Oh, Thou my Everlasting Strength!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

What a commentary on sin! I am weak when I could be strong! This is the fundamental sin: “Don’t bother

me, I’ll do it myself”! “For while we were without strength Christ died for the ungodly” — it is because we left you out that we were without strength. Dear God, forgive me for the sin of all sins — living, thinking, willing, without you! “Factions” — When some poor weak man has gathered a little group about him and separates from others, and somehow feels he has “found the truth” a faction is formed.

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

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;
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

¹¹So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

¹²While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him into court. ¹³“This man,” they charged, “is persuading people to worship God in ways contrary to the law.”

¹⁴Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, “If you Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanor or serious crime, it would be reasonable for me to listen to you. ¹⁵But since it involves questions about words and names and your own law — settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such things.” ¹⁶So he had them ejected from the court. ¹⁷Then they all turned on Sosthenes

the synagogue ruler and beat him in front of the court. But Gallio showed no concern whatever. ¹⁸Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time. Then he left the brothers and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. — *Acts 18:11-18a, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Paul stayed eighteen months in Corinth after you spoke to him in a vision. I am glad for the heavenly vision of your Son through whom you speak to me today. How long was Paul in Corinth before you spoke to him? Six months? Was he two years in Corinth? So good to read here that Paul's primary task in Corinth was "teaching them the word of God." Who was taught? The potential people of God — the very ones our Lord commanded us to teach. After he taught them he baptized them and then taught them again.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

You promised that "no one is going to attack and harm you" — yet here is a united attack made on Paul in the very place where the promise was made. When did it occur? Eighteen months later — after many people were taught and became Christians. What came of the efforts? Harm came to the attackers not the attacked. The judge's sympathies were with Paul, not those who opposed him. How encouraging it is to see you at work in the affairs of men. You work through opposition — politicians and any or all misunderstandings. It turned out to Paul's good and your glory. Dear God, I know you are at work today in ever changing circumstances of my life.

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for Paul's letters — full of meaning and help to us. (2) Thank you for Paul's sentimental attachment to those with whom he worked. (3) Thank you that Paul was a "persuader" — what an example! (4) Thank you for Roman law which helped Paul and others to respect orderly, fair procedure (at least at times). (5) Thank you for Gallio — perhaps he was one of "your people" in Corinth — at least he seems to be able to evaluate. (6) Thank you that sometimes the law of planting and sowing produces a harvest in this life, i.e., as in the case of Sosthenes. (7) Thank you for all the many converts made in Corinth. I hope to meet each one and hear of all the circumstances of their conversion. In heaven there will be no time or thought limitations. Amen!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time." This statement appears after all the opposition. What

caused such a decision? Perhaps it was the words of the Lord in the vision: "I have many people in this city." Paul wanted to find a few more of God's family. Perhaps it was his attachment to the people he had already found. How near and dear these new Christians became to Paul. The encouragement of the people themselves — i.e., their words of gratitude and love could have been a large factor. By reading again the two letters Paul wrote to this assembly we see the strong attachment Paul had with them. Establishing new believers in the faith was a very large part of Paul's work. May such dedicaion and purpose ever be with us.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

This was the time and place for Paul's first of many letters to the churches he established. There are a number of requests suggested: (1) May I have the perseverance necessary to continue amid opposition. (2) Thank you for the wonderful capacity of memory. (3) Give me the grace to write a letter of encouragement — even this day. (4) Help me to appreciate the law and order that makes all our preaching and teaching so much easier. (5) Deliver me from unreasonable and wicked men. (6) Give me wisdom as I read the letters Paul wrote to the church at Corinth. (7) Thank you for the family concept so evident in all Paul's work — help me to imitate him.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me from these few verses: (1) "Find your fulfillment in the joy of others." (2) "I can bring the wisdom of this world to nothing." (3) "There are men who will not listen — find some who will."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Uruguay — Points for prayer: (1) *The secular spirit* has made Uruguay Latin America's least Catholic country. Over one third of the people claim to be non-religious or atheist. Apathy to the gospel message has been widespread and the response slow. Pray for a change that will bring true liberty. (2) *The hurt and frustrations in society since 1968 hang like a shadow over steps towards full democratic rule.* Pray for the nation's rulers. Pray that these tensions may create a longing for spiritual reality.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK ONE

—Monday—

Oh blessed shepherd I come to you in the closet of intimacy — lead me, feed me, protect me.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Shepherd (Psa. 80:1-17; Isa. 40:11; Jer. 28:4). We think of our Lord as the “good shepherd” and he is indeed. But we need also to worship you as the Great Shepherd of all men. How beautifully good it is to hallow your name as “Shepherd.” (1) You know every man who has ever lived or will live — by name and by every need. There are no sheep caught in the dark and cold that you do not want to bring light and warmth. (2) For every sheep you have for food just the greenest of pastures and the quietest of waters for restoration of heart. (3) There are many in high places who do not know the families or interest of those who work for them. This is not at all true with you.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Shepherd for me. It is one thing to worship you as the universal shepherd; it is quite another thing to consider your personal interest in every part of my life. The dark valley of death is not the only valley through which you have led me — and will lead me. (1) The valley of decision — how often have I come into this place. I want to pause and read your directions and look up, and wait and then walk for you are “with me.” (2) The valley of disappointment — how dark this place can be! But this could well describe the total response you received in the visit of yourself in the Person of your Son. You have been there — you can lead and comfort me. I pause to read again and again and again to you the Great Shepherd.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Oh, oh, how basic is my sin! To be a dumb (stupid)

sheep — and I am — and to imagine (somehow) that I could “direct my own feet” is so fundamental a sin as to be the parent of all other sins. Dear Father and Shepherd, forgive me! I do love you. I know by sad experience I cannot find my way without you. I come again into your care and acknowledge gladly your interest and direction in all of my life.

Envy — do I envy those who do more or have more in the same area of my interests? A super-critical attitude toward them would indicate I am indeed envious. When you have given me abilities and possessions to say nothing of a particular position that no one else has — for the simple but profound fact that no one else is me! Why should I be envious? 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

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

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

HIS WORD

Before he sailed, he had his hair cut off at Cenchrea because of a vow he had taken. ¹⁹They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. ²⁰When they asked him to spend more time with them, he declined. ²¹But as he left, he promised, “I will come back if it is God’s will.” Then he set sail from Ephesus. ²²When he landed at Caesarea, he went

up and greeted the church and then went down to Antioch. — *Acts 18:18b-22, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How I wonder what vow Paul had. It has taken the form of the Nazarite, but what was the content of the agreement? It could very well have related to the work at Corinth. I wonder why Luke included this comment if he does not tell us what it means. Thou Lord knowest! Am I to take a vow today? Priscilla and Aquila could tell me. I want only to thank you and praise you for all you are saying to me in these verses. Why is it the wife is here mentioned first? How good to see your will being worked out in the every day activities of Paul.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

If I were to take a vow to lose weight, or to overcome a habit, or to fulfill a project, how would I do it? Perhaps more important: should I see Paul's practice as an example? He was a Jew, and a Pharisee — vows were a part of the Old Testament economy, but was this why Luke included this comment, i.e., to teach us something for today? Paul let his hair grow until a certain time — he took the hair he cut off and put it on the altar in Jerusalem, as a part of the ceremony of the Nazarite vow. Are vows necessary if we have made the all-time, one-time commitment to our Lord. Because I do not have answers and so want to *know* — 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 mind-stretching incidents and questions. (2) Thank you that I can choose; that no one is forcing me into a choice not my own. (3) Thank you for that great city of Ephesus and all the associations we shall have later with this place. (4) Thank you that your will is found in the daily activities of life — Jesus said his Father was always at work. (5) Thank you for Paul's careful thoughtfulness. He left someone to serve when he himself could not. He brought greetings to the church to whom he really never owed anything. (6) Thank you for the wonderful renewal of friendships that must have occurred at Antioch.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Three facts about Aquila: (1) He and his wife were both tentmakers and therefore shared in the source of livelihood. (2) They worked together in hospitality for Paul. Perhaps they shared together in their acceptance of Jesus as their Messiah and Savior. (3) They shared together in accompanying Paul to Ephesus and in the work of our Lord there. What did Paul do every Sabbath? He attended the synagogue services — with the

purpose of sharing his faith with the Jewish people there. Why did Paul separate himself from the Jews at Corinth? In each case the Jews separated from Paul — they judged themselves unworthy of eternal life.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

The record of the second journey is completed in these verses. It is a good time to seek your will in prayer: (1) Although we do not know the purpose of Paul's vow, give me the same dedication to your purposes. (2) Thank you for Priscilla and Aquila — give me fellow workers of similar attitudes. (3) Dear Lord, I need reasoning powers from yourself. (4) Help me to know when to stay and when to go in every situation. (5) Thank you for the confidence I can have that your will is being worked out through circumstances. (6) Thank you for every safe journey.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me from 18:18-22; (1) "Vows made and kept can help your discipline." (2) "Even Paul did not accept all speaking opportunities." (3) "Follow Paul's example in selfless dedication."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Vanuatu — Points for prayer: (1) *Vanuatu's motto is "In God we stand."* Pray that the leaders of this complex little nation may be an example in doing so. There are Christians in the government. (2) *The Protestant church is numerically strong.* Mainly Anglicans in the north, Presbyterians in the center and south. Some islands have been touched by revival, and there is much encouragement; however, in other islands and areas, spiritual life is at a low ebb. Pray for the training of leaders in the three Bible colleges.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Come, friends, sing, of the faith that's so dear to me,
 Revealed through God's Son, in Galilee;
 He brought peace on earth
 and good will to the sons of men,
 Go tell it to the world, her king reigns again.
 I am so happy in Jesus, Captivity's captor is He;
 Angels rejoice when a soul's saved,
 Some day we like Him shall be,
 Sorrow and joy have the same Lord,
 Valley of shadows shall sing;
 Death has its life, its door opens in heaven eternally,
 Christ is King.

WEEK ONE

—Tuesday—

I am trying in this time of worship to respond to you as a ransomed captive — help me!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Redeemer (Isa. 59:20,21; Hosea 13:14; Gen. 3:15). The last few names have had a dual meaning, i.e., our Lord as well as our Father. You surely are a redeemer though the person of your Son. All the work of your Son is a joint work with yourself — blessed and wonderful is your name. All mankind has sold himself to Satan — the ransom price was paid out of your love for us. How tragic to be taken captive and held for ransom — and yet this is just what has happened to the whole world. Why would you want to ransom someone who has chosen of his own free will to be a captive? What an enormous price must be paid! What could possibly be of equal value to the eternal spirits of all men at all time? Billions of dollars could not be an adequate price. The ransom is for something of moral worth — it can not be in animal blood, or in silver or gold. Spirit must pay for spirit — man must pay for man — but in this transaction it was through the Son of Man. You considered the death of your Son of equal value to the eternal death of all men. We are redeemed!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

I am redeemed! Dear Lord, I do, I do want to enter fully into this relationship! That you would consider me so valuable that if I was the *only one* to be taken captive you would have left heaven to pay the price for me. Is God obligated to Satan? Of course not! I am! It was my debt he paid. He paid the wages of sin for me.

If I had not heard that the price has been paid or I have not accepted it Satan yet has possession of me. But once I have accepted the incredible fact of my redemption I am now free! The beautiful thought is that the price that freed me bound me to my redeemer with golden cords of love. I am free to serve you — this is the only true freedom!

How do you personally relate to the redemption of God, and God who is Redeemer?

CONFESSION OF SIN

How sad to return to the bondage from which I have been liberated. “For freedom did Christ set me free.” Oh, dear God, that I should want to return to slavery! I am so constituted that I must — I will serve someone, or something, and his I am whom I serve — if sin, then death, separation, frustration — if I serve my Lord, then I have all that is in him. Dear, dear God, I do not want to return to bondage; I do love you, I do gladly accept the freedom of service in my Lord.

Drunkenness is a sin described in your word. What a terrible price is paid for intoxication! Battered wives and children are part of the price. Horrible self-loathing is more of the same price. But there is intoxication in more than the bottle of liquor. I have been drunk on pride more times than I like to think. God, forgive me — oh, humble me — I hear you say “humble yourselves.” I have been drunk on self-pity — my values have been so, so distorted. Forgive, forgive, heal 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 am thine, O Lord, I have heard Thy voice,
And it told Thy love to me;
But I long to rise in the arms of faith,
And be closer drawn to Thee.
Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To the cross where Thou hast died;
Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To Thy precious, bleeding side.

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

HIS WORD

²³After spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out from there and traveled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

²⁴Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. ²⁵He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.
—Acts 18:23-26, NIV

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Paul's task is my task — if he was ready to revisit some places several times so as to teach and encourage I am sure I can and should do likewise. What a pleasant name is "disciple" — or learner. My blessed Lord is still at work through his learners making more disciples. We can all become stronger in our understanding, and dear Lord I purpose to do so, and help others to become strong!

I like this man Apollos — I want to be just like him!
(1) A "learned man" — probably meaning he had a good formal education from the schools in Alexandria. There are fine Christian secular schools where one's mind could be disciplined. (2) "With a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures." Dear God, this means a knowledge of *every word* you have written — if you will give me strength and time I will pray through every word you have given in your book. (3) He was instructed in the way of the Lord — someone had taught him. I want to be taught everyday, everyday by someone.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for men who speak with fervor — it sets your fire in us. (2) Thank you for accuracy, i.e., concerning our Lord. I want to be most accurate on every word and thought of my blessed Savior. (3) Thank you for the capacity and desire to change, to learn more. (4) Thank you once again for the marvelous example of the greatest born of woman. (5) Thank you for many, many men and women who spoke out boldly for you in the face of severe misunderstanding. (6) Thank you for the loving concern of Priscilla and Aquila. (7) Thank you for a humble heart in an eloquent man — a rare combination only our Lord could produce.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Explained to him the way of God more accurately."
How good to find a preacher who will listen to two "laymen" explain the scriptures to him. Most especially when they are pointing out his deficiencies. But perhaps we are assuming something that didn't exist, i.e., the distinction between "the clergy" and "the laity." Perhaps Priscilla and Aquila were on the same level as Apollos as a brother and sister in the Lord. Perhaps it was the scriptures themselves that became the authority for right and wrong.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

The record of Apollos is a cause for prayer. (There are so many like him today.) (1) I do not know what prompted Paul's third journey — give me courage to strengthen whatever disciples I can. (2) Thank you for men like Apollos who have become true students of the scripture — I want to be one of them. (3) Thank you for whoever it was that instructed Apollos — may I be patient with those who disagree with me. (4) Give me the fervor of Apollos. (5) I need more boldness. (6) Send men and women like Priscilla and Aquila into my acquaintance. (7) Help me to find the time and thought to speak one-on-one with those whom I consider limited in their understanding.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

From 18:23-26 I want to hear your messages to me: (1) "There are yet some who would make human merit a part of salvation." (2) "Knowledge of the scriptures does not always mean a man cannot be taught more." (3) "There are humble disciples like Priscilla and Aquila who could teach you much if you would listen."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Venezuela — Points for prayer: (1) *Praise God for the open door for the gospel*, 30 years of stable government and the steady growth of evangelical witness. The country is ready for a spiritual harvest. (2) *The political stability* of the nation is threatened by the combined effects of the decline in the value of oil exports, inflation, the Central American confrontations and the narcotics traffic that has so effected neighboring Colombia. Pray for all in authority, and for wise handling of the growing economic crisis. (3) *The Evangelicals* are growing steadily, though progress has not been spectacular. The encouragements: a) *The increased fellowship* between some Venezuelan leaders of different denominations, and their desire to cooperate in evangelizing the many unchurched areas. b) *The first missions congress* ever was held in 1985, giving a new sense of thrust and vision to the churches.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK ONE

—Wednesday—

In this time of worship teach me the meaning of this mortal putting on immortality — this corruptible putting on incorruption.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Immortal (II Tim. 1:10). How good to find someone over whom death holds no sway. The whole source of a deathless existence is found in you! Wonder and praise and joy and hope! All these and much more are in yourself? Man was not created to die, but to live — death is a result of failure — and itself is the ultimate failure. Would not all men be delighted to discover there is a Being — the Being over whom death has no influence at all? Created in your image, i.e., sharing your nature, death does not affect us any more than yourself — only our bodies — it is the body that is mortal. We will be given an immortal body and live in the land of endless day! Amen! Amen!

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Immortal to me. Endless life — a deathless body — what astounding thoughts are these! My body gives me no end of problems: two operations on organs that do not function as they should; repair of a major kind — all testify that this body is wearing out. I'm so, so glad I am not the body — as fearfully and wonderfully as I am made it is still made out of dust and to dust shall it return. What a joy — what tingling anticipation is mine for the new body! Not only for myself, but for my dear father whom I miss greatly — and one day we shall live in the New Jerusalem in the new body. It is all because of Calvary "all who are in the grave (the only thing that comes out of the grave is what went into it — the body) will come out."

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

If the body is doomed to death — and we know it is — how is it we spend so much time with it? It is the only tool or instrument we have until the resurrection! Yet it should be buffeted, brought into subjection,

made a servant. Dear God, this is my sin! If I do not beat my body it will beat me. I do not, I will not be a body slave. You do not want me to; your Son was no such slave — forgive me for pampering the flesh. The sin of *orgies* seems particularly appropriate in light of a discussion of the proper and improper use of the house you have given us. Any excessive, selfish, indulgent use of the senses is an orgy — particularly in self. Dear God, from such bondage 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

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

²⁷When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. On arriving, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. ²⁸For he vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. — *Acts 18:27,28, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Why did Apollos want to go to Achaia? (to Corinth?) Was it because Priscilla and Aquila had just come from there and had shared the joys and needs of Corinth with him? Was it because he felt some embarrassment at returning to the synagogue in Ephesus to tell

of his new found faith? What did "the brothers" at Ephesus say to him as words of encouragement in his desire to go to Achaia? What was written in the letter to the disciples in Achaia? I ask these questions because I know you know the answers and I will too one day. What a charming expression: "those who by grace had believed"! Paul or someone else had told them of how the grace of God appeared in the person of his Son (Titus 2:11). From this hearing and grace came belief!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

It does bother me greatly that I am so complacent about the religious people around me who are inadequate in some areas of their belief. I have not "vigorously refuted" them in public debate. Some say today that no good can come of this. If Apollos would have asked those who believed in Corinth, he would have received the same discouraging response. This could have been true in days gone by when public debate became a great source of education. Are the scriptures given as a riddle or a revelation? Would public debate help clarify this? Dear God, speak to my heart!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the desire of Apollos to speak in an area he did not know — and where he was not known. (2) Thank you for brothers who encourage us — without them we might never go. (3) Thank you for the example here of what we might call "a church letter," i.e., a letter of recommendation from one congregation to another. (4) Thank you for the vigorous manner of Apollos — wherever and with whomsoever he was. (5) Thank you for those who listened to the debate and were helped — the participants perhaps were not convinced, but others were. (6) Thank you that it is possible to prove from the Old Testament scriptures that Jesus is the Anointed One. (7) Thank you for the wide acceptance this man found in Corinth. Cf. I Cor. 1:12.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"The brothers wrote to the disciples to welcome him." It would seem "the brothers" were running the church in Ephesus. The elders were not yet a part in the church here. Literacy was assumed in the congregations of those days. The term disciples was used with more frequency than "Christians." Hospitality was a large part of the life of the body. All of these facts speak to us right now. We need to feel that every member is a vital working part of the body of Christ. Genuine hospitality can be a blessed part of our mutual life for each other.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What a good man was Apollos — he moves us all to prayer: (1) Help me to remember how very much we all influence each other for good or bad. (2) There are so many letters I could write to encourage — help me to write one today. (3) Give me the openness to be an encouragement to others. (4) May I always remember that it is by grace I have believed. (5) I want to be known as a helper of my brothers. (6) What kind of debate can I use today to help men to believe? (7) Thank you for the overwhelming evidence that Jesus was the Christ.

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) "Others depend on you to help them in my service." (2) "You depend on others for your service to me." (3) "Argument can be very helpful or harmful — it depends on the attitude of those involved."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Venezuela — Points for prayer: (1) *Opposition to the evangelization of the Amerindian tribes has been intense.* Some areas assigned to Catholic missions are closed to Evangelicals. In recent years there has been a vicious campaign launched by anthropologists, leftist politicians and some Catholic priests against evangelical missionaries. Pray for: a) *The defeat of slanderous attacks* on missions for harming the cultures of the indigenous people. Only a few thousand Indians still live in the old traditional ways. b) *The opening up of the few remaining unevangelized tribes* for evangelical missionaries — possibly Venezuelan missionaries would be preferable. c) *The continued ingathering* of Amerindians among the Guajiro, Maquiritare, Yanomano, Panare, Motilone, etc. Most of the larger tribes have now significant and growing churches. d) *Bible translation work* which continues in 20 languages. Translation work may only be needed in a few languages. Pray for the impact of God's Word to be such that these peoples may be spiritually mature enough to cope with the inevitable encroachment of Spanish culture and all of the trappings of civilization. (2) *Leadership training* is fundamental if present growth rates are to be maintained and urban areas evangelized. There are three seminaries in the country.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK ONE

—Thursday—

To say that I honor you is really an understatement. You are more precious to me than life. Reinforce these truths just now.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Precious or held in honor, reverence (Psa. 8:5; Isa. 28:16). There could be no more appropriate title or name. You are precious to all men — the sad fact is they do not even know. How can I pray this prayer, express this thought before you and not do more about it? The whole world could know today like no other time in human history. If somehow the preciousness of yourself could be broadcast on all TV networks and held before the world for just 24 hours thousands would believe — thousands would not believe and many more thousands would not understand. Personal teaching as done by your Son is the way to tell of your preciousness.

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

Precious to me. Dear, dear Lord, you are precious to me. I want to hold you up before me in honor, majesty, power, beauty, holiness — all this and ten thousand times more. I purpose to so honor you today before men that others will want to share your honor with all they meet. This is no substitute for my personal witness and teaching — but you do receive the recognition that you so richly deserve — I love you! To pause before your throne and accumulate all the names of yourself and but read them overwhelms my mind and heart!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

I have read that you will not share your honor with another. This disturbs me greatly because I have accepted praise that truly, truly belongs to you. Forgive me, rebuke me even more deeply than I presently feel the conviction of your Spirit. Surely this is a basic sin.

When we are so ready and anxious to spend time and money and so much energy to promote anything but the beauty of yourself we are sinners! Forgive me! *“Hardening of the heart.”* This seems to be my occupation! Dear God, how often I have repressed or resisted or hesitated to open my mouth or show compassion and the end result was hardening, or shutting up of my heart. I hardly knew what to do but confess it and ask for forgiveness. I truly want to repent, but I know not how.

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 songs 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

19 While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples² and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”

They answered, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”

³So Paul asked, “Then what baptism did you receive?”

“John’s baptism,” they replied.

⁴Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is in Jesus.” —Acts 19:1-4, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

The term *Achaia* now becomes a synonym for *Corinth*. Was it because of the time of the year, i.e.,

when the mountain passes were open that Paul makes this long trek to Ephesus? It is easy enough for Luke to cover hundreds of miles and days and days of weary walking in only one verse. But then, I know you were with him and shared every step. Dear Lord, I do want to know if the disciples Paul met in Ephesus were converts of Apollos? Their knowledge had the same limitations. It would seem as clear as words can make it that the Holy Spirit was expected when they became Christians. Was it because of some lack in their attitudes that Paul asked the question, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" I believe it was. But you know and I only surmise. Christian baptism gives us the Holy Spirit seems to be the point of Paul's question: "Then what baptism did you receive?"

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Read this word for *myself*! Indeed I shall! Did I receive the Holy Spirit when I became a Christian? Yea, and amen! He came as a gift at my new birth — indeed he was involved in my new birth. I "came out of" the water and the Spirit at the time I became a Christian. He is present as an unseen guest in my body now. My physical home is his holy tabernacle. Sad to say, at times I am so unresponsive to his presence, to his word that my attitudes belie his presence in me. I want to repent, from the inside out, to change my mind. Is there some way I can consciously identify the Holy Spirit's presence in my body, i.e., apart from the plain statement of the text that it is so? If there were, of what help would this be?

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 tremendous amount of energy Paul gave in walking from place to place in your service. (2) Thank you for the twelve disciples of John — they were so transparently sincere, ready to learn and grow. (3) Thank you for the blessed Holy Spirit all of us receive when we become Christians. (4) Thank you for the various designations for becoming a Christian — here it is "when you believed." (5) Thank you for the clear examples in the Acts accounts of men and women becoming Christians. (6) Thank you again for the good man, John the Baptist. (7) Thank you so much for repentance — how often I need it — I want to grow!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"A baptism of repentance"! Was baptism the important emphasis or repentance? John let us know as he spoke to some who came to be baptized. "Bring forth fruit worthy of repentance." He actually refused to

baptize some people. Actions and attitudes would be the fruit of repentance. Deep, genuine, personal sorrow for sin was the preparation for repentance. The volitional choice to do what is right is repentance. In such a frame of mind men and women were prepared for John's baptism and the reign of the Messiah in their lives. We need to be told again and again that repentance was an essential prerequisite to Christian baptism.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What a *long* walk it is from Antioch to Ephesus. Paul must have prayed much on this journey. We too can find petitions in the text: (1) Keep me aware that others work for you each day in their field as I do in my field. (2) Keep me sensitive to the task of making disciples. (3) Why did Paul ask about the Holy Spirit? (4) Dear Lord, give me wisdom as I seek your answers to questions raised in this text. (5) What relation does baptism have with the Holy Spirit? (6) Give me courage to repent. (7) Dear Lord, may I baptize people today for the same reason Paul did in Ephesus.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these four verses you can speak to me: (1) "All disciples have not learned the same lesson." (2) "The Holy Spirit is your birthright." (3) "The baptism of Christ gives you the Holy Spirit."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Vietnam — Points for prayer: (1) *The Communist occupation of South Vietnam* ended the war, but brought great hardship to the population. About one million were "resettled" in "New Economic Zones" (virgin jungle), many to die of starvation. Many who had links with the former government were sent to re-education camps, and about 1.5 million fled to other lands. Pray that the suffering Vietnamese may find solace in trusting in the Savior. (2) *All open missionary work ceased in 1975*. Pray that the years of sowing the Word may now bring forth abundant fruit. (3) *The Catholic Church has long had a big influence*. Restrictions and persecutions have reduced the number of congregations and priests, but not the number of Catholics.

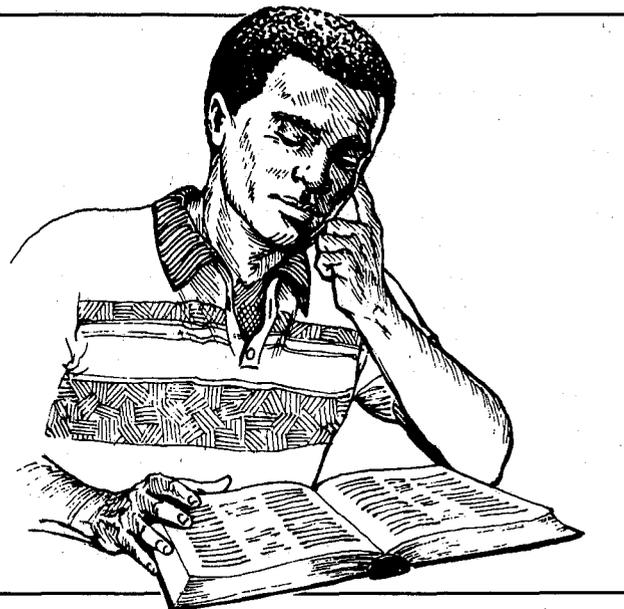
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK ONE

—Friday—

If there is one quality I admire it is kindness — I enter the closet for help.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Kindness. To contemplate yourself as total kindness is such a beautiful thought! Kindness is much like mercy — it is meeting human need wherever you find it. How fully does this describe what you do everyday for everyone! Your thoughtful kindness is giving rain, fruitful seasons, the beauty of flowers, birds and butterflies, the compassion of a mother, the warmth of the sunshine. Then when the kindness of God our Savior appeared in the person of your Son, we all knew the ultimate of thoughtful mercy.

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

Kind to me — such a surprise and delight is your kindness. When I deserve justice, you offer me kindness. Praise your glorious name. Your goodness is to give me opportunity to recognize the source of all those good gifts and begin to live soberly, righteously, and in the presence of yourself. Dear God, I so respond. May I be as kind to others as you are to me.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Of all my sins, the sin of unkindness is at the same time both the easiest and the most difficult to confess. It is easy to admit I have been thoughtlessly, selfishly unkind; it is more difficult to tell why. My life has been cast in the midst of those who love me — in the center of an abundance of good things — why, oh why, should I ever be selfish and mean? Forgive me, but open my eyes to a deeper need — to stay humble-minded.

“Continual lust” is a sin — not only for sex — although this is true — but of “status” and “things.” Break this bondage by my happy marriage, by my

understanding of how you see me in society, by “things” of eternal beauty and value.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest.

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

HIS WORD

⁵On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. ⁷There were about twelve men in all.

⁸Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. ⁹But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. ¹⁰This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord. —Acts 19:5-10, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What unusual and moving words these are! These twelve men were baptized in the name (or by the authority) of your dear Son. Did they not at that time and in that act receive the Holy Spirit? Is not the expression, “the Holy Spirit came on them” to be associated with his supernatural coming? The very same words are used in reference to the hands of Peter and John in Acts 8:16,17. Dear Lord, I want to

be right in my understanding. But then I know you are right and I am sincere in my desire to know and this is enough! If I am to define the word "tongues" from the day of Pentecost (and where else will I look for a definition?) then these men are given the ability to speak in languages they never learned. In the multi-lingual city of Ephesus they would need this ability in their teaching and preaching.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

What an example for me! Speaking boldly in the synagogue is equal to what in my experience? Boldness is almost equated with confidence. I cannot avoid the fact that I think of several denominational bodies of people of several cults in the same category. What have I done about it? Almost nothing! Dear God, forgive me and move 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 that the text is so clear about believing — they could if they would. (2) Thank you for that beautiful description of "the Way" — oh, how I want to walk in it. (3) Thank you that even Paul could not stay with some people. (4) Thank you that Paul did not run away but stayed to work and win. (5) Thank you that Paul's discussions (was this preaching? teaching?) were with the disciples, and happened every day — when? how? (6) Thank you for daily discussions for two years that produced self-starters that shared their faith with thousands of others. (7) Thank you for the "one body" — neither Jew nor Greek — and through it you reached out to the many cities of Asia (Turkey today). Dear God, where is our faith today?

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"So that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord." We do not believe it was possible for all the Jews and Greeks of Asia to gather in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. It was rather that those who heard the daily discussions fanned out into the whole province of Asia with the glad tidings. Was this the seven churches of Asia? There was something wonderfully solid about the life and witness of these early Christians. There are 43 million people living in the whole country of Turkey. How many thousands lived in the province of Asia? It can happen again, even in the same district where it happened before. In the Aegean region of Turkey today there are 4 million eight hundred thousand people. This is much of the same area where Paul worked. Dear God, I lift these people up to you!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

It is so good to pray directly from your word: (1) Help me to help disciples today who know nothing about the Holy Spirit. (2) How good it is to baptize people into the name of the Lord Jesus — help me to promise them all you have promised. (3) Why did Paul lay his hands on these men? (4) What were the "tongues" spoken by these men? (5) Why the gift of prophecy here? (6) I claim your wisdom as I search your word for the answers to these questions. (7) May I live as a citizen of the kingdom of heaven — right here and right now.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

How much you can say to me through these verses: (1) "Be as helpful and bold as Paul in meeting the needs of men." (2) "If Paul could succeed in Asia you can where you are." (3) "Ephesus offers an example in so many ways — read the letter to this church."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Vietnam — Points for prayer: (1) *The suffering church today* has been largely forgotten in the West. News is sparse, mail censorship strict, and memories sad. May Christians in the rest of the world not forget their brothers and sisters, but pray for them. (2) *The Protestant Church grew steadily* in the midst of war, despite massive movements of population, intimidation, terror, and the murder of pastors. Almost half the Christians were in minority tribal groups among whom people movements to Christ have occurred. Praise God that this growth has continued despite Communist attempts to prevent it, and despite the flight of many believers from the country. There is a widespread hunger for God with many young people crowding into any church services that are permitted. (3) *The mountain tribes have long been hated and despised*. For years their fields have been confiscated, their harvests stolen, and their numbers decreasing because of starvation and disease. The Hrey and Jeh became Christian in large numbers before Communism came. These Christians have suffered particularly severely.

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.
Glory to His name,
Glory to His name;
There to my heart was the blood applied;
Glory to His name.

WEEK ONE

—Saturday—

Personal worship is a time and place to practice an awareness of your presence in me — above me — around me. Gladly do I now bow before you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Presence. What an amazing quality to discuss! How much I want to enter fully into this attribute of yourself and appreciate more than ever before the fact that you are now present with me — in me, above me, before me, behind me, ahead of me — and what is true for me is true for all men. What a startling, awesome fact! I want you to permeate all the atmosphere, all my being. As an invisible Person you could be present and no one would know it — only those who sense, or are sensitive, who are made aware of this reality, appreciate your presence.

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

Present for me. Dear God, this is one mind-staggering concept! That you as the almighty God are here present. I fall down like John of old — that you can see and hear and knew totally all about me and be at the same time in me is such information I cannot assimilate. Will you make your presence known? Yes, yes, I could not write these words if you had not already told me you were present. I read it in your book. At the same time I want to practice your presence. I want to ask you to share my thoughts every minute of this day. It can be done. I have thought that often about other things or people. Oh, Present One, I love you!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

The sin of all sins! To ignore your presence — to live and talk and think just as if you were not always present. To not include you in my conversation, to not look your way to gain your nod of approval or frown of disapproval. To talk on and on to others and fail to talk with you. I know, I know you are interested in

all I say and do and want to help (in ways I so much need your help), but I fail to ask or seek your face. Dear God, forgive me, forgive me!

Deceit. This sin strikes so close to my heart. Dear God, I want to be open and transparent before men (I know I am always open and known to you). I fear men and their frown more than yours. Forgive me. Penetrate my conscience deeply.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

¹¹God did extraordinary miracles through Paul.

¹²Handkerchiefs and aprons that touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

¹³Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." ¹⁴Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. ¹⁵The evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know and Paul I know about, but who are you?" —Acts 19:11-15, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, how unusual, how indeed "extraordinary" is the description I read here of your work through Paul. Was it because there were so many persons in Ephesus who needed such confirmation of your word before they would believe? From

what we know of the religious background of these worshipers of Diana, and many other gods such seems to be the case. Are we to expect the same "extraordinary" miracles in a similar situation today? Surely we do as to people and their circumstance. But we also have today the record in written form of your confirming word. This those of Ephesus did not have. Does this make a large difference? Why was it written and preserved through two thousand years if it did not? Open my mind, dear Lord, I *want* to know.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I know you can do such work today! I would be much closer to accepting the account here and elsewhere as normative if someone like myself instead of Paul, the apostle, did such signs. I know that such signs were to follow "believers" (Mark 16:17), but the "believers" according to the Acts are the apostles and those upon whom they laid their hands. Since Paul spent at least two years in Corinth on one occasion and visited there at least twice afterward, it could have been that all the signs described in I Cor. 12:1ff. could be from this same source. I am sure there must have been hundreds of prophets spread over the Roman Empire (if not thousands). Could the twelve or Paul have laid their hands on each one of them? It is possible.

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 miraculous works that galvanized the attention of the Ephesians so they could hear with their inner ear the message of salvation. (2) Thank you that as strong as Satan is Jesus is stronger. (3) Thank you that we are protected from pretenders, i.e., if we want to be. (4) Thank you that you cannot be deceived. (5) Thank you for the clear difference between religion and Christianity. (6) Thank you for the reminder that the spirit world is the real world. (7) Thank you for the possessed man from whom we can learn so many things.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who are you?" These are the words of a demon through the lips of a man. This is a mind-challenging thought! There are yet demons in the world. Here are several questions I have asked myself and my Lord about them: (1) Are demons in me? Am I to associate my stubborn sins with demons? i.e., am I to conclude because I cannot, or will not, stop this sin or that one that such is the work of a demon or demons? I would be glad to thus interpret my sinning if such were Biblical. The only reference to stubborn resistance of demons has reference to a son who had some physical, emotional,

mental problem not a stubborn unyielding sin problem. The possessed was but a child — not a Christian because salvation through his blood was yet a promise. (2) How do I recognize demons in myself or others? By discerning spirits. What a large claim to make! How was the presence of demons determined in the city of Ephesus? Paul and those upon whom he laid his hands had such powers. Perhaps the efforts of these seven sons were done on those who had no demons until they met one who did. If they identified demons someone had the gift of discernment.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

There is something wonderfully extraordinary about this whole text (19:11-15): (1) Why did you do the unusual things you did in Ephesus? (2) Why were the miracles performed in this city? (3) Dear Lord, I am expecting real wisdom in answering these questions as I search your word. (4) Deliver me from deciding truth from experience — good or bad. (5) Protect me from the attacks of demons today. (6) May I want your Son in such a personal manner that he will be Lord of all my life.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What can I hear from this text especially for my life? (1) "Evil spirits are nothing to treat lightly." (2) "Evil spirits were not in Christians." (3) "Evil spirits know and respect Jesus as one of all authority."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Wallis and Futuna Islands (French Territory in the South Pacific) — Points for prayer: (1) There are no known evangelical believers on these isolated islands. No definite effort has been made by Protestants to establish a presence there. (2) Over half the population works abroad in New Caledonia or in Vanuatu. Pray that some may hear the gospel, believe and return with the message to their homeland.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK TWO

—Sunday—

In him we are complete — in every area of life we are furnished unto every good work. Open my thinking as I bow before you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Complete. How could we better describe yourself? There is nothing you lack — you are whole in every sense. It would help me to worship you if I listed just two areas where all men can find you perfect: (1) Complete in knowledge — there is no branch of science in which you do not have absolute, complete information. It will be a part of the joy of heaven to investigate this total body of information. (2) Complete in sympathetic understanding love. My love and the love of all men is so inadequate — alloyed with our own selfishness. How glorious to worship and praise and know you; to commit myself, and for all men to do likewise is no effort, it is a privilege!

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

Complete for me. What all men find in you I now find personally and intimately. I want to enter into a secret pact. In you I am whole for you are wholeness itself! I can pause any time of any day and cast myself upon you. I *know* you care for me, you love me, forgive me, chasten me, have specific plans for me — bless your wonderful name! I find *no* help, *no* hope, *no* fulfillment in anyone or anything else! You have made my life so full, so meaningful — I want to reaffirm my wholeness in you! I am really anxious to enter into the larger part of my life right on the other side of my last heart beat!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

If you are so complete for every area of my life, how is it I seek fulfillment outside yourself? It would be easy to say with Paul, "It is not I who do it, but sin which lives in me," or "so then it is no longer I that

do it, but sin which dwells within me" (Rom. 7:17, RSV). Jesus *can* and *does* deliver me from this bondage of separation. I live by my response to the environment. My largest need then is to so condition my reflexes that I will always (by habit) respond to your sweet will and not that of Satan, the deceiver. I have lived so long in Satan's world (with all that is in his [the] world), that I am like the Israelites who didn't recognize the deliverer. Oh, dear God, dear Savior, I do want out!

What personal sins do you want to confess? There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

¹⁶Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

¹⁷When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor.

¹⁸Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. ¹⁹A number who had practiced brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas.

²⁰In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power. —Acts 19:16-20, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Father, I am sure you must smile as I do when

we find out who cast whom out! The seven men were all cast out of the house by the one poor demon-possessed man. I am impressed and warned when I see what super human strength this man had. I do not underestimate the power or strength of the enemy. I am no more able to overcome than the sons of Sceva. This but points up negatively my need of you! Satan can and will hurt me. It is more than interesting that the devil leaves us naked and bleeding. Oh, oh, my Lord, when will I ever learn that I cannot do anything without you and with you I can do all things. Teach me — I am listening, I am waiting, I am yielding.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Lord, I want this text to penetrate the deepest recesses of my heart! When something truly divine — truly significant — happens, word of it spreads and it is known! How many Jews and Greeks were living in Ephesus at this time? Were there as many as 100,000 or even 200,000? This is not at all impossible. How I want to examine this phenomenon *carefully*: (1) It was so obviously supernatural that no one even thought of denying it. (2) The standard of truth was very clear — no question about morality — the source of right and wrong was very plain. “Jesus, whom Paul preached” gave peace and deliverance.

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 definition of repentance. We cannot mix sin and righteousness; superstition and prayer. We cannot, we must not, we dare not serve God and mammon. (2) Thank you for the example of open confession of sin. (3) Thank you for the final full break with sin — it was burned up! (4) Thank you for the shocking (?) revelation that Christians in Ephesus were not at all as mature as we have at times imagined them to be. (5) Thank you for the public participation in the life of the church — everyone knew! (6) Thank you that Christians were willing to spend thousands and thousands of dollars to show their faith and commitment. (7) Thank you for a demonstration of how faith can spread as widely today as then.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.” In this day of emphasis on church growth we surely do want to know just how “the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.” Notice: (1) It was through an open confession of personal sins. (2) It was through a public declaration of their break with sorcery and idolatry. (3) It was when men and women began to “put their money where their mouth was.” As large as the congregation was in

Ephesus, as influential as some of the people were, these actions and attitudes had a strong impact on the city.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

A good number of petitions must have been raised in the homes of the Ephesian Christians: (1) May Jesus be Lord of all in my life. (2) Help me to fear him who can destroy both body and soul in hell. (3) Lord, I want to learn from the tragic experiences of those who have disobeyed you. (4) Somehow may I see just how exalted is the name of my Lord, even in the world of demons. (5) Give me the humility necessary to confess my sins to my brothers. (6) Keep me aware that the spirit world is the real world. (7) Burn up all that is false in my worship.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these verses you can reach my conscience: (1) “You are no match for Satan without me.” (2) “Honor me in your thoughts.” (3) “If I cannot rule your spirit I cannot rule you at all.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

North Yemen — Points for prayer: (1) The nation’s stability and social structure are threatened by external attack, internal feuding, and the widespread use of the narcotic qat. The latter debilitating habit has diverted much valuable agricultural land into the cultivation of its leaves. Pray for spiritual liberation; as yet very few Yemenis have ever heard the gospel. May they, like their illustrious ancestor, the Queen of Sheba, seek for wisdom — from the One greater than Solomon! (2) For 1,300 years the land was tightly closed to the gospel. The government invited Christian agencies to initiate health and educational projects in 1964. At one time a number of agencies were involved, but conditions have become more restrictive and only a few remain. Pray that, despite all present trends, this land may be opened wide for the gospel, and also for the calling and entry of intrepid pioneer workers with the right professional skills.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK TWO

—Monday—

The capacities of seeing — hearing — speaking — thinking — are all capacities of my spirit through my body. These are but the expression of your image. Give these words light and life!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Spirit — what a profound thought! You are an all powerful spirit being! Spirit is the real essence of being — for yourself or man. I am full of wonder as I try to contemplate just what this means. An all-pervasive intelligent divine being — as a spirit being you see, hear, speak, think. I know so much more about you in the Person of Jesus. Just now I want to pause before you in silent wonder, to praise and thank you for all you are, to sense — at least to some extent — your presence with me and in me. Out of my spirit — your likeness, I bless your holy name!

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Spirit to me. What I have said so far could be, and should be, said by all men who love you, but I want to be very personal in my acceptance of you as Spirit. As Spirit you are seeking or looking, searching for my worship of you — so said your Son (John 4:23). To know you are more eager to have my praise and joy than I am to give it moves me to tears — to true humility. Oh, Divine One, how can I ever love you enough? Dear Lord, I want to cultivate the habit of practicing your presence. This is far more than quietness — it is that — but it is *work*: to wrench, subdue my mind until it takes the track of your thoughts. To focus my total attention on your blessed self, or on one or two qualities of your Being. Dear God, help me. May I not lose the sense I now have of your presence with me and in me!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

That I should ever forget you or neglect your presence, or ignore your promptings in my conscience

to sin against your essential Being is to repeat surely the original sin of Adam. How can I forget you see me? How can I think and not think your thoughts? speak and not speak your words? work and ignore your work? Dear God, may I in you live and move and have my being. This seems but the illusive dream of the poet. Forgive me. It is the most gut-level reality. I am blind; open my eyes!

“*Greed.*” This is but the misdirected natural desire. This is “the lust for other things” which does indeed choke out the word. Forgive me! May my insatiable desire be 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

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

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

HIS WORD

²¹After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. “After I have been there,” he said, “I must visit Rome also.” ²²He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer. —Acts 19:21,22, NIV
⁵After I go to Macedonia, I will come to you . . .
—I Cor. 16:5a, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Just how was it that Paul made his decision to leave Ephesus? What caused him to delay his departure? No doubt the events just described related to his deci-

sion, but how? Why did Paul decide to go through Macedonia and Achaia? The love Paul had for each Christian is such a boon for me. I want to notice your wonderful influence in Paul's life: (1) He wanted to share again and again with those who had heard and those who had not. (2) The excitement of travel, new places and new people, was a part of Paul. (3) Paul had a dominant leadership motivation — others were "his helpers." (4) Paul was not at all hesitant to ask for help from those who knew him. (5) All of Paul's plans were subject to your change. (6) Paul took advantage of opportunities as they arose. (7) Paul was protective of the weak or inexperienced — such as Timothy with the Corinthians.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Indeed, indeed! I do like the use of names in this text! The names of places: (1) Macedonia, (2) Jerusalem, (3) Achaia, (4) Rome, (5) Corinth, (6) Asia, (7) Ephesus. The names of the people: (1) Timothy, (2) Erastus, (3) Apollos, (4) "the brothers." I want to think through and pray through each of these eleven names. Every one is saying something to me.

(1) Macedonia means Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea and all for which these churches stand. (2) Jerusalem — oh, how precious and beautiful where my Lord died, was buried and rose again! (3) Achaia — how many lessons can I learn from these Greeks? (4) Rome — the letter to these people has lifted me to heaven. (5) Corinth — I read the two letters as if they were mine! (6) Asia — the seven churches — Colossae, Ephesus — so full of memories. (7) Ephesus — the message of Paul to the elders — here is a message to 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 trails out of which a door opened. (2) Thank you for the dear human interest Paul had with the saints of Macedonia and Achaia. (3) Thank you that Paul was fascinated or captivated with the thought of seeing the imperial city of Rome. (4) Thank you that Paul needed helpers and loved and accepted helpers. (5) Thank you that plans can be changed and still be in your will. (6) Thank you for long winters we can spend with friends in mutual interests. (7) Thank you for timid Timothy — he represents many of us.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

(1) "Be on your guard; (2) stand firm in the faith; (3) be men of courage; (4) be strong; (5) do everything in love." What good words for all Christians everywhere! Our adversary is full of wily deceit, therefore, we must be on guard. When we know sin in clear

definition, we are forearmed against him. When we know what to believe, we can stand firm in it. Paul does not ask us to argue about it, but to stand firm in it. All of us are characterized by some term. There are men of timidity, men of change, men of complaint. With our Lord as example, we can be and want to be, men of courage! It is a remarkable fact that our strength comes both from him and from ourselves! Can we be as inclusive as Paul? *Everything* in love? Yes, everything!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

As Paul plans his future we can see reasons for prayer: (1) Help me to decide and know it is your decision. (2) May I have the same purpose as Paul for my plans. (3) Keep me aware that your work depends on many servants. (4) Give me the time and interest to write to some of your servants. (5) Keep me aware that nothing happens apart from your permission. (6) I want to be on guard against Satan. (7) Give me firmness in the faith.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Surely there is much to hear from you in these verses: (1) "Be a man of courage." (2) "Be a man with my strength." (3) "Do everything in love."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

North Yemen — Points for prayer: (1) *Several dozen Christian workers* in aid agencies live under discouraging restrictions. Earlier permission for them to share their faith and hand out literature to individuals has been withdrawn. Pray for the maintenance of their spiritual glow in the face of many attacks from the enemy of souls through discouragement, sickness, isolation from the wider Christian family and constant threats to their presence in the land. (2) *Yemeni believers* may number no more than a few dozen. The only little fellowship of believers was stopped by the authorities in 1974. Since then believers have been lonely and isolated, and some have suffered much. Pray that they may maintain their spiritual life and grow in grace and boldness. Pray that they might find adequate fellowship, and opportunities to share their faith. (3) *Christian radio programs* from FEBA-Seychelles are clearly received. Many listen. Pray for lasting fruit and fellowships of believers to result.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK TWO

—Tuesday—

Without this quality of yourself in me I shall not see you here or hereafter. Gladly do I worship you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Sanctifier. This is surely one of the essential qualities of yourself. Indeed it would seem to me your primary work among men was to set this one aside — to set aside a nation, to set aside a half-tent half-house for worship called a tabernacle, and to set aside or sanctify all the utensils of the tabernacle for use in worship. *The Separator* would be a good description of yourself. Bless your name — sanctify, set aside your name, your person from all else. To consider in wonder and praise, in absolute adoration, the Great Sanctifier or The Sanctified would be so appropriate designation! It is so good to know someone who is totally distinct from everyone else, from everything else, even yourself!

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Sanctifier for me and of me. It is great to contemplate and adore you as such a “set apart One,” but quite something else to realize I have been also “set apart” as a clearly distinct person to worship and serve you. “In any large house there are not only gold and silver dishes but also wooden and earthen ones, some for great occasions and some for ordinary uses. So if a man will cleanse himself from these things, he will be put to great uses, consecrated (sanctified) and used by the master of the house himself, and ready for any good use” (Goodspeed). How poignantly does this text speak to me of my part and your part in my sanctification. What a high honor and privilege to be used by the master of the house himself (even your blessed self).

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

That I have been unwilling to set myself apart

prevents the fulfillment of your intention to do so. It is so, so *good* to know that sanctification is like salvation: (1) I have been sanctified at Calvary. (2) I am being sanctified by my willingness and your power. (3) I will be eternally sanctified in heaven. Right now I want to cleanse myself and be cleansed. Dear God, dear God, forgive me and make me clean! “*Foolish talk.*” How very much of it I have heard and expressed — foolish in the sense that it has no sense and its ultimate purpose is empty and meaningless. Stop me, shock me, put a guard on my lips. 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

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

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

HIS WORD

²³About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. ²⁴A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in no little business for the craftsmen. ²⁵He called them together, along with the workmen in related trades, and said: “Men, you know we receive a good income from this business.” —Acts 19:23-25, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How good to meet Demetrius again! Was he ever

converted? Perhaps he was and I will meet him in heaven. You know, I do not. But I would like to think he reconsidered his motives and actions. I want to reconsider his motives and actions with you as my co-reader and silent guide. It was "the Way" in Ephesus. Not "a way," but "the Way." If Paul had only offered one more god among the many already there, Demetrius would not have been so upset. I was in Ephesus, I stood in the streets, I visited the theater. How near was I to the house of Demetrius? Income for his business more important than anything else. Had Demetrius heard Paul preach? He only heard one thing out of all Paul said: "my business is threatened"! How easy it is to filter all we hear through the sieve of our personal interests.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How soon is "a great disturbance" left behind. At the same time, how great was the disturbance? (1) Great in the number of people involved — somehow we can fit into the city of Diana and never cause a ripple. (2) Great in the issues involved — who is God? We are not willing to let the god of mammon go unchallenged. (3) Great in the results — many, many would never have seriously considered the one God if Paul had not challenged Diana or Artemis. We do not have these results because we do not offer a similar challenge.

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 adversaries who make us aware of the open door. (2) Thank you for the confirmation of archaeology in the city of Ephesus for the Acts record. (3) Thank you for the long record of the working principle for a gainful occupation. (4) Thank you for the ability of Paul to communicate to all men. What an example for me. (5) Thank you for the epistle to the Ephesians. It means so much more when I read it in the light of this account. (6) Thank you for the additional information of Phil. 2:19-24. (7) Thank you for your motivation within me to worship you amid every changing circumstance of my life.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... we receive a good income from this business." How often in human history has this been the motive for either opposing or pursuing religion? When our god becomes a source of income, when we are using him we are not worshiping him. Whatever becomes the focus of our interest is our source of worship. Dear God, deliver me from using you in any way to promote my own welfare. Whenever service to God becomes a lucrative business, or our motive is to make it so, we need to be on guard — our friend

Demetrius has come to life again!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In opposition there is always a place for prayer: (1) In all my relationships today may I seek for "the Way." (2) Give me the same bold humility as Paul in the face of men like Demetrius. (3) Keep me aware that today there are men who plot the overthrow of your cause. May I use the freedom we have for you. (4) Deliver me from the love of money. (5) It is so easy to mistake greed for zeal — help me. (6) Help me to know more fully than ever all who live godly will suffer persecution. (7) Deliver me from provoking persecution in order to parade my righteousness.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You can indeed speak to me through these verses: (1) "Never underestimate the power of the love of money." (2) "Never underestimate my power to overcome." (3) "The worship of Artemis is not dead."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

South Yemen — Points for prayer: (1) *All mission work in the country was terminated in 1972 with the nationalization of all mission and church property.* For years a few missionaries suffered and witnessed in this land but with very little fruit. Pray that the land may again be opened for the gospel. (2) *Communism is breaking down many traditional and Islamic barriers to the gospel.* Pray that Yemenis may seek the Prince of Peace in their ideological confusion. (3) *The literature distributed and witness given before 1972 and present radio broadcasts by FEBA-Seychelles will bear fruit as prayer is made.* There is a small, but steady response by letter to the broadcasts. Pray for secret listeners. (4) *The few national believers still meet where and when they can, though lack of a legal place in which to gather makes it hard to maintain fellowship.* They are under considerable pressure from both atheists and Muslims. Pray that they may not give way and compromise their faith or testimony. Pray that they may be used to win others to the Lord.

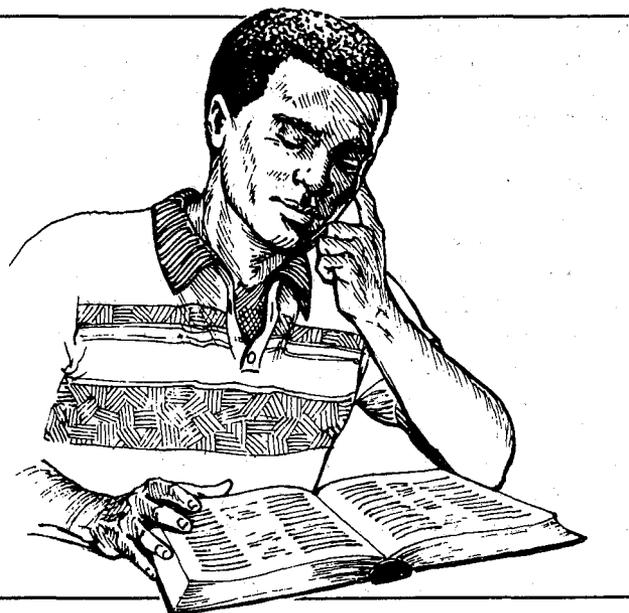
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK TWO

—Wednesday—

What a joy to be perfectly clean — to be cleansed from the inside out. This I find in worship with you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Cleanser. Surely this describes your work for mankind. The parallels in nature and in revelation are most interesting. You must constantly cleanse this earth to keep it alive. We must wash away impurities or our daily life would be unbearable. A very large function of the human body is cleansing itself. How glad I am you are the grand original source for all that is clean. Man and your other creation truly is “fouled up” when cleansing does not happen. It is more than good to be clean — it is absolutely essential! Bless your name for being so adequate in every area of life.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Cleanser for me. Dear God, I have a constant need of being renewed from within. I do not consider sin and failure inevitable, but I do know I must seek your forgiveness each day. I am neither intelligent enough nor morally strong enough to be saved any other way. I love to think of you as the Cleanser in the figures of speech (or literary devices) you have given in your word: (1) “A Fountain for sin and uncleanness” is my blessed Lord and his blood. (2) The laver of regeneration, or “the bath of the new birth” (Titus 3:5). (3) The burnt offering — fire is a great purifier — so all our sins are gone in the consuming fire of his love. Bless your name!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

All my praise has been for the forgiveness I have from confession of sin. Dear God, help me to hold back nothing in naming my sin that I might be wholly forgiven. How sad to learn that the very expression of

your self is to cleanse and then fail to recognize I am dirty. “There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel’s veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.” Oh, indeed, indeed I do!

“*Course jokes.*” Sin is no joke. Satan wants us to believe it is. Sin has the potential of a joke since humor is based on incongruity, but the sad tragic fact is such is but a testimony of man’s moral failure. His conduct is so far away from what God expected it appears ludicrous. Dear God, forgive.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

²⁶“And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that man-made gods are no gods at all. ²⁷There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited, and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty.”

²⁸When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”
—Acts 19:26-28, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How convincing was Paul! How very many people

were taught and led by him! This incident at Ephesus could be only representative of what he did in so many places. Dear Lord, I want to express my wonder and praise for what I see and hear before you. When the world begins to testify as to the power and influence of the good news we have reason to rejoice. I see here that Demetrius was worried not only about money, but status — “our trade will lose its good name.” Perhaps money and a good name are the same thing here. Thank you for showing me what one man could do — rather what you could do through one man.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Oh, how I want to hear these verses; burn them into my conscience: “large numbers of people here at Ephesus — practically the whole province of Asia”! “The temple of . . . Artemis will be discredited.” When I consider the dimension of the work here described, I am just nonplused! How could it happen that one of the seven wonders of the ancient world would be threatened by one man? But then it was no wonder to you or to Paul.

Why am I impressed with the works and claims and standing of men? Dear God, deliver me from such! Show me where I can influence as many men and women for you!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for Paul’s desire to convince all that there is just one God. (2) Thank you for the truth for today — we worship false gods if we worship anything but you. (3) Thank you for the lesson in the temporariness of earthly glory. (4) Thank you for the excitement of opposition — out of it can come eternal good. (5) Thank you for your divine majesty in a stark contrast to Artemis. (6) Thank you that I can read a record two thousand years old and feel the conflict and heart-beat of those in it. (7) Thank you for the multiple applications I see in this incident for my life today.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . robbed of her divine majesty.” Just how was this done? (1) By challenging the claims of Diana — what possible evidence could be presented for the claim that she fell down out of heaven? (2) By offering a far more meaningful explanation of the world and all in it. (3) By credentialing or supporting the claims of Jesus with miracles. (4) By the example of confidence and happiness as seen in the lives of the followers of the Way.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the words of Demetrius there is much occasion for prayer: (1) May I remember the zeal of those against you is as great or greater than those who are for you. (2) Thank you for the wide influence of Paul. May I follow his example. (3) How I need to remember and teach that “man-made gods are no gods at all.” (4) Keep me aware the temple of Artemis was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world — how empty is her glory! (5) Help me to discredit false gods of my day. (6) Impress upon me again that the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God. (7) Give me the zeal and wisdom to know how to reach my generation as Paul reached his.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I know you can speak to me in these verses: (1) “You can lead many away from false gods today.” (2) “Be careful when you touch men’s pocketbooks.” (3) “Great is Jesus, King of Glory.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Yugoslavia — Points for prayer: (1) *There has been considerable liberty for Christians since the '60s.* Pray for continued and greater freedom for the gospel. Yugoslavia is one of Europe’s most spiritually needy lands, and few Yugoslavs have ever heard a clear presentation of the good news in Jesus. It would be tragic if Christians do not use to the full present liberty to reach out to the uncovered; there is a definite increase in hunger after God. (2) *The Church is one of the most formal in Europe* — this includes Orthodox, Catholic and most Protestant denominations, though renewal movements among Romanian Orthodox and Catholics are significant. A recent increase in religious fervor is little more than a reinforcement of ethnic prejudices. Most denominations are restricted to one or two peoples. The renewal movement in the older churches is very small. Evangelical believers are variously estimated at between 10,000 and 20,000. Pray for an outpouring of the Spirit that will halt the decline, enliven formal congregations, replace liberal theology with fervent biblical preaching and bring unity to the body of Christ. (3) *Help from other lands.* It is not practicable for missionaries to enter as such. A number of Christians assist the Yugoslav Church in itinerant ministry, Bible teaching, etc. Pray for more assistance to be given. The Christians are so few and of limited means that any help is appreciated.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I will sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ who died for me,
How He left His home in glory
For the cross of Calvary.

Yes, I’ll sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ who died for me,
Sing it with the saints in glory,
Gathered by the crystal sea.

WEEK TWO

—Thursday—

Beauty is a relative term — but everyone will find you the total essence of beauty! I do so now in the closet!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Beautiful. I'm so glad to have this word to describe yourself! In every way you are beautiful! How many ways shall I describe your beauty? (1) Beautiful in your creative genius. I think of the bud of a red rose — words fail to describe the color, the fragile design, the lovely fragrance. Yet this is only one example of ten thousand that could be produced. (2) Beautiful in your management of history. If beauty is seen in purpose and design, if beauty is seen in infinite patience and unending love, then you are yourself the essence of beauty. (3) Beautiful in your plans for the future — “the land that is fairer than day” — even the brightest of days. Most of us live on the the promise of something better and are disappointed when it arrives — not so with you. What beauty I will find in the world to come! It will not be a comparison but a contrast with the anticipations of our wildest imaginations! Bless your name!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Beautiful to me. Your greatest expression of beauty is in your development of your own image in man — in myself. “We all with unveiled face behold in a mirror the character (glory) of yourself (in the Person of your Son) are changed into the same image — or likeness from character to character. This happens from yourself in the Person of the Holy Spirit.” (This is a paraphrase of II Cor. 3:18.) This is also a testimony of whatever change has happened in me. I believe the key or the power to this change is in the little word “behold.” It is a word of amazement or shock or wonder. It is only when I clear the veils from my face to stand face to face with your Beauty that I am changed. I need to stand mind-to-mind, spirit-to-spirit. I shall always fall down and cry with Isaiah or Peter “depart from me I am an unclean man” — but I will be changed!

How do you personally relate to the beauty of God, and God who is Beautiful?

CONFESSION OF SIN

To refuse to live in the presence of beauty — to prefer and choose to live in squalor and dirt. What a loss! Dear Lord, I have made such a tragic choice. But once I see your beautiful self, I shall never be the same. Forgive me for the sin of second best.

“Their glory is their shame.” This seems to have sensual overtones, i.e., what we take pleasure in of sexual excesses should really be an embarrassment to us. It could refer to all the money we spent to own this trinket or that, this possession or that. We are proud of it when we should be ashamed of our lust for things. It could refer to where we are on the top of the status pile of people in our little mad scramble. Dear God, in all these areas I repent. I now change my mind and goals. Forgive me and change me.

What personal sins do you want to confess? 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 into 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

²⁸Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia, and rushed as one man into the theater. ³⁰Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. ³¹Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater. —Acts 19:29-31, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What a record of man's vain efforts to defeat your work! I want to share the violence of the crowd with Gaius and Aristarchus. Can I hear them shout the name of Paul? What else are they shouting? I'm sure this incident did not happen in the past on your time table. There is no time with you. This incident is still clear and every man is identified — all of them are long gone from the earthly scene, but not from your mind or record. Dear Lord, I do gladly share the abuse of men if that will advance your cause. I say this with apprehension — for I know you hear it.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Paul was ready to give his life if necessary. He was not afraid of the mob. Paul wanted to defend the name of the body of your Son. Paul knew the officials of the province would stand behind his words. Paul had endeared himself to these important men. How? By life and words. Undoubtedly Paul had shared with them in conversation. He had captivated the minds and hearts of these Greeks. Dear Lord, I do want to follow his example. Whom can I influence for my Lord today? Lead me to some life where your light can shine through me! At the same time, help me to remember that sometimes it is not wise to address those who do not want to hear. In Paul's case it was not even safe.

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 Gaius and Aristarchus. I confidently expect to meet them and appreciate more fully all they did for our Lord. (2) Thank you for every Christian in Ephesus. What a jarring experience Paul's persecution must have been to them. (3) Thank you for the beautiful letter of Ephesians written to these people. (4) Thank you for the officials of the province who possibly saved Paul's life. (5) Thank you for your wonderful superintending providence that works something good out of this strange circumstance. (6) Thank you for the wonderful archaeological research done in Ephesus which serves to confirm this account by Dr. Luke. (7) Thank you for the confident joy of salvation which no persecution could stop.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

They "begged him not to venture into the theater." We can almost hear their voices as they pled with the apostle. We can, in our imagination, see them taking hold of Paul and gesturing wildly as they repeated their entreaties. Why did they do this? (1) Paul was a valuable man. His voice must not be silenced by a senseless mob. (2) They had not heard all they wanted to about the Way. Paul must be kept alive long

enough to tell them. (3) These men knew the men who opposed Paul, there was no reasoning or meaning to their actions. There was but one motive — *money*. The people were but pawns of these powerful leaders.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Two men were seized because they were friends of Paul. Did Paul and others pray for them? We are sure they did. We can find petitions in this incident: (1) How can I arouse the whole city in which I live? (2) May I remember when people are aroused all of them will not be friendly. (3) Keep me aware that men will do almost anything to keep their money. (4) Remind me again that public sentiment is usually wrong. (5) Speak to me in these words — even Paul was not always right in his personal decisions, or is this saying there are several *right* options? (6) Help me to make friends of those with influence. (7) May I remember that one leader is worth many followers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You were speaking in various ways in the middle of this confusion: (1) "The whole city can be wrong." (2) "To travel with me will produce a real adventure." (3) "Listen to your friends — they are sometimes right."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Yugoslavia — Points for prayer: (1) *Christian literature* is relatively freely available, especially in Croatia, Serbian and Slovenian, less so in other languages; There are Christian bookstores and presses in Zagreb and several other cities, with plans for bookstores in other centers too. There is a Bible Society depot in Belgrade. Censorship exists, but is not a major problem; but the availability of printing supplies and distribution are. Much remains to be done to provide an adequate range and quantity of tracts, books, Bibles, etc., in all languages. The greatest need is for Macedonian and Albanian literature. Both these have only a NT; the OT is in preparation. Between 1975 and 1980 about 150,000 Scripture portions in 9 languages were printed in the country. (2) *Christian radio programs* are broadcast daily by TWR and IBRA in Croatian, seven times a week in Albanian, and weekly in Macedonian, Slovenian and Serbian. Pray for additional staff and air time.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

A Friend I have, called Jesus,
Whose love is strong and true,
And never fails howe'er 'tis tried,
No matter what I do;
I've sinned against this love of His,
But when I knelt to pray,
Confessing all my guilt to Him,
The sin-clouds rolled away.

WEEK TWO

—Friday—

I have taught students for more than 40 years — it is not easy — but it is a most fulfilling task. Teach me in the depths of my being just now!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Teacher. I wonder why I did not think of this name earlier? It is the name often used of your dear Son. All that all men know is from you as their teacher. Oh, how well you do instruct us. Not all who sit in class learn the lesson. Not all who have passed through the classroom called life learn the sweet, dear, beautiful lessons you have to teach them. It is not that you are not teaching; it is but that they are so dull of hearing. What powerful visual aids you use. What an inexhaustible textbook you have given us in your word. In it are *all things* that relate to this life and the life to come. How long lasting are your lessons! Dear Lord, how I want to learn from you!

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Teacher to me! Speak into my deepest consciousness: “Take my yoke upon you and *learn* from me.” Only when my head is bowed, and I willingly receive your total Lordship can I really learn anything. Dear God, I am such a slow learner! But you are such a great teacher! I simply revel at the variety and depth of your instruction! Bless your name! I love to trace every word of your book. I see and absorb something new and fresh every day! I confidently expect to keep right on learning from you in the world (classroom?) to come. I am sure there are lessons to learn our poor minds could not even begin to appreciate. Glory, Hallelujah! I am eager to enroll!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

At the same time, I am eager to admit my unwillingness to learn. I know the meaning, but I do not want it! Some of your lessons are in discipline. I “*learn* obedience by the things that I suffer.” Am I

then different or above my Master “who with *strong cries and tears*” so learned from you? Dear Lord, forgive me! How often do you need to repeat some lessons? Just until you see the truth reproduced in my character. What an infinitely patient teacher you are! “*Hollow philosophy.*” How could we better choose a sin that relates to you as a teacher? The words of men are empty without nourishment, clouds without water. Forgive me, that I should at any time be impressed with their philosophy of empty pretense.

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!
O how sweet to be there!
Blessed hour of prayer,
Blessed hour of prayer;
What a balm for the weary!
O how sweet to be there!

HIS WORD

³²The assembly was in confusion. Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. ³³The Jews pushed Alexander to the front, and some of the crowd shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people. ³⁴But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” —Acts 19:32-34, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How the mob in the theater of Ephesus typifies all mankind in this theater of life. “The assembly was in

confusion: some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there." It is more than interesting that the term "*ecclesia*" is used of this crowd. We are either in your "assembly" or church or we are in the "assembly" or "church" of Demetrius. How true it is that the world is "in confusion." Why? Because one shouts and insists and supports and enforces "one thing" and someone else, something else. Most poor people are like sheep with no shepherd, or truth; with many shepherds who do not themselves know why they are here! Have I represented things as they are? Dear Lord, I want to!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

We all have at times felt like poor Alexander. He could have said something significant if he had ever been heard! How many men and women have been just like this man? How we would like to have heard them, but because he or she was this or that they were never heard. How more than sad that a confused mob can drown out the voice of one who can make sense out of confusion if he were only given a chance. Alexander only wanted to defend the Jews and exonerate them in the light of the opposition to Paul who was a Jew, but even in this he was never heard. Praise you, oh, praise you that some people are being heard today!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the use of the term "assembly" — translated many times "church" — it lets me know that the church is your "called out ones." (2) Thank you that we need not be in confusion — we *know* why we are here. (3) Thank you for the courage of Alexander. (4) Thank you for the "called out ones" of Ephesus and all they mean to you. (5) Thank you for the cry of the human heart that can never be satisfied with anything but yourself. (6) Thank you for the record which we can follow today. (7) Thank you for the desire to learn and know.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"*The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another.*" Isn't this typical of a religious meeting? How sad it is that the followers of Paul have become more like Demetrius than the apostle. Even someone who could offer an explanation is shouted down by the babble of confusion. Is there no answer? Perhaps the answer we want is not what we will get. It could be God has a town clerk in the form of international terrorism ready to tell us to settle it in the court of God with his word or prepare for destruction.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

The confusion of the assembly at Ephesus reminds me of some other times and places — at the same time there are areas for prayer: (1) Help me to be used of you to bring meaning out of confusion for a number of assemblies. (2) How tragic that upon this earth there are so many people who do not know why they are here. Help me to help them. (3) How sad are the efforts of men to explain the chaos in which man finds himself — help me to send the light! (4) May I appreciate the difficulties of other people to the extent of being patient with them. (5) Show me more than ever the greatness of my Lord. (6) Open my heart to the deeds of the darkened world in which I live. (7) Deliver me from the blindness of religious form.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I am glad to receive messages from Someone who knows the end from the beginning. (1) "The confused assembly represents the needs of men." (2) "There are times when men will not listen." (3) "Let everyone know of my greatness."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Zaire — Point for prayer: *The church of Christ in Zaire (ECZ)* came into being through both government edict and pressure from some unscrupulous church leaders, though many evangelical leaders are now in favor of their membership in the ECZ. There have been positive benefits; the divisiveness of tribalism has been diminished, unnecessary competition reduced, administration rationalized and cooperation in training schemes and media increased. However the negatives must be prayerfully counteracted. a) *The centralization of leadership* has harmed the development of effective lay leadership and congregational initiative. Hierarchical leadership structures have been encouraged — even to the extent of each community being encouraged to set up life-bishops. Christian leaders need wisdom and discernment in knowing where to draw the line on those who want authoritarian measures on doctrine, finance and leadership structures. b) *Worldly standards* among some leaders — power politics, pride of position, misuse of funds have frequently compromised the prophetic role of the Church.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK TWO

—Saturday—

You are my Father — yea more you are my papa — my daddy — as if you had only one child and I am that child! Gladly do I talk with you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Abba (Mark 14:36; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6). What a lovely, poignant, personal name this is! It is the name used by the Son and the Holy Spirit as they became intimate and very personal in their conversation with you. It is indeed the designation you would like all men to use when addressing you. The household term such as what we mean when we call our father “papa” or “daddy.” How humbling it is to think that you the Almighty Ruler wish to establish a very personal relationship with all men. And when I say “all men” I think of some who would be very poor close-up members of the family. Perhaps an appreciation of yourself would be essential to this expression. Surely a love for you would be an essential prerequisite to calling you “Abba.”

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

“Abba” for me. As I follow your dear Son and my Savior into the garden and see him there prostrate before you and hear him cry “Abba, Father,” I am overcome with amazement that you have sent forth the Holy Spirit into my heart to prompt the same cry from me! Oh, I do want to say this word, but I want to mean it. It must come from the warm depths of emotion, but it must come from the knowledgable grasp of your total Being — most of all it must come (and *does* come) from a spontaneous willingness to establish and hold this intimacy with you! I know you, I want you, I love you — “Abba,” Father!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Whereas the above expression is an open, happy expression of praise and adoration — there are times

(too many of them) when I am too involved with other things to sustain or maintain this nearness. Forgive me! I am the loser. I can think of times when I was totally immersed in a project and my earthly father dropped in all unexpected — I looked into his dear face — and all my childhood attachments flooded back and in a surprised and delighted tone, I said: “Daddy”! or “Dad”! Dear God, break through today — surprise me often!

“Tradition for truth.” Tradition is good and precious but when it contradicts truth it must be changed! A tradition is a habit repeated so often in a meaningful environment that it becomes a part of our emotional nature. We all have them — is our Savior a part of them? Does God have a place in them? Is the Holy Spirit welcome? Dear Lord, help me to establish new traditions for myself and my children.

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 trusting Thee, Lord Jesus!
Trusting only Thee!
Trusting Thee for full salvation,
Great and free.

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

HIS WORD

³⁵The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: “Men of Ephesus, doesn’t all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven?

³⁶Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to be quiet and not do anything rash. ³⁷You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess.

³⁸If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and

there are proconsuls. They can press charges. ³⁹If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly. ⁴⁰As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of today's events. In that case we would not be able to account for this commotion, since there is no reason for it." ⁴¹After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.

When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the **20** disciples and, after encouraging them, said goodbye and set out for Macedonia. ²He traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people. — *Acts 19:35-20:2a, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How gladly do I enter into this experience! We can hear the word of the city clerk all over again! Did he really believe what he said? Wasn't he only repeating what he knew men expected and wanted to hear? Do we do the same today with no more power with you than he had? The temple of Diana was indeed one of the wonders of the world of that day. How absurd that claim must have sounded to you!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

"The courts are open." Indeed they are! The courts of the world, as recorded in human history, are open. I want to be one of the "proconsuls" for the case of Paul and his friends. Let the record show that the "goodness from heaven" is in every way far superior to Artemis who supposedly fell from heaven. Indeed the myth of Artemis is but a distortion of the truth. Someone *did* come from heaven of his own choice — but it wasn't Artemis.

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

There is indeed so much in this text for which we can thank you. (1) Thank you for "law and order," i.e., the ministers of yourself in government. (2) Thank you for the strong desire of man to worship. (3) Thank you for the wisdom you gave to the city clerk. (4) Thank you for Gaius and Aristarchus — the released hostages. (5) Thank you for the honesty of this man — there really were no charges against Paul. (6) Thank you for the dedication of Paul who let nothing stop him from his purpose of preaching.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... speaking many words of encouragement to the people." I wonder just what thoughts were in these words. We can surely find an answer in Paul's letters to some of these very churches. He could have spoken as he wrote: "Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed — not only in my presence, but now

much more in my absence — continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Phil. 2:12,13). Or he could have said, "Be joyful always; pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (I Thess. 5:16ff.).

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the words of the city clerk, there are areas for prayer: (1) Move me to make it true that all the world knows who Jesus is — at least to do my part. (2) Grant me the wisdom I need to quiet the chaos in the hearts of those to whom I speak. (3) Keep me responsible as your spokesman. (4) May I be ready if today you call me to give an account before your judgment seat. (5) Protect me from the wrath of unreasonable men. (6) Dear Lord, help me to have words of encouragement — men need this so much. (7) Move me to Paul's kind of compassionate concern.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What a great work Paul did in Ephesus! Speak to me from it: (1) "I have persons through whom I work that you could not even imagine." (2) "There is a time to leave a field of service." (3) "Even Paul was so burdened he could not speak — read II Cor. 2:12,13."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Zaire — Points for prayer: (1) *Leadership training* at every level must be emphasized. a) *Lay leadership training* has not been given enough priority. It is hard to implement due to expense and the lack of both transport and personnel. b) *Bible Schools*. There are large numbers of primary local-language and trade-language Bible Schools, and a similar number of French ones. They often function with slender resources and inadequate staff. (2) *The problem of nominalism has become acute*. The Church could experience decline, division and heresies unless the problems are squarely faced. Cultures must be transformed by the power of the gospel. Many areas are Christianized, but most are little more than baptized heathen.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK THREE

—Sunday—

You are my separate Father as well as my "papa" — I respect you as well as love you. Gladly do I fall before you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Holy Father (John 17:11): I have worshiped you as both Holy and Father. But now I want as much as at all possible to approach you as your Son did (how presumptuous of me). For all men you want to be the heavenly Parent. Dear God, how can this be? It *could* happen in any generation. It could have happened in any past generation. The simple mathematics of each-one-win-one soon reaches every person on earth. It has been shown to me that in the same length of time your dear Son lived upon this earth all men could be told of your love for them.

You are not "holy" in the sense of being unapproachable — "holy" only in the sense of being gloriously different — but full of love and personal concern for every man.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

"Holy Father" for me. Jesus, my wonderful Lord, had such a concern for his "sent ones" and for all men through the twelve. He must have brought each of the apostles by name and need before you — each one was so important to him. I am not an apostle, but I am important to you. I believe if I were the sole resident of this earth, you would send your Son to save me! Dear Father, Holy Father, I cannot say with your Son, "I have accomplished the work you have sent me to do" — or can I? As much as my poor ignorance and weakness will permit I am trying to fulfill your work for me. Dear Lord, as much as in me is I want to set you apart in my heart as worthy of all praise and love.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, I have mixed up your two wonderful qualities — at times I have been drawn to you as my Father — at other times I am ashamed to speak

because you are holy. I never thought before of embarrassing you as "Holy Father" — what a soul-purifying experience! I feel so very often like the prodigal from the pig sty, full of the smell of the hog waller. "I am not worthy to be called your son," but I come for I do need you and love you.

"False humility." I need to read this sin every day. I honestly do not know when I am false or true. When I want to be humble I express it in pride of one form or another. I pause just now to get a good look at my own heart. I'm surely glad for the "best robe" in your house. The red robe of the righteousness of your Son! 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

Jesus, Savior, pilot me
Over life's tempestuous sea;
Unknown waves before me roll,
Hiding rock and treacherous shoal;
Chart and compass come from Thee;
Jesus, Savior, pilot me.

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

HIS WORD

²He traveled through the area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece, ³where he stayed three months. Because the Jews made a plot against him just as he was about to sail for Syria, he decided to go back through Macedonia. — Acts 20:2-3, NIV. Read also II Cor. 7:5-7; Rom. 1:7-11,15; Gal. 1:1-5.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How wonderfully good it is to worship you through your word! How glad I am to read that Paul's body was not Paul. He said, "... this body of ours," as if

it were an eternal possession — which indeed it is! Paul was not the body — it was his possession. You did not protect Paul from harassment. Indeed, he had *much* harassment! I wonder who gave Paul so much trouble, so much conflict? We know it was those in Macedonia — i.e., those of Thessalonica, Philippi and Berea. These are the cities of Macedonia mentioned by Luke. There could have been others. How is it that Paul had “fears” on the inside? Are we right in thinking that Paul was downcast? I thought he rejoiced all the time! I am so glad to be able to put these two factors together. Thank you. It was like this: The substrata of Paul’s heart was “joy in the Lord” — on the upper levels of life, he did indeed have fears, harassment — he was indeed downcast but underneath were the everlasting arms of an all-knowing and all-powerful God.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I read this word for my own heart! You can and do comfort me by other servants of yourself! In this case it was Titus — in my case it has been so many dear people. Titus had been to Corinth. What news he had to give to Paul: (1) “Your affection,” i.e., the deep emotional involvement of Paul had good results. (2) “Your deep sorrow,” i.e., over the sins Paul had rebuked in person and in his letter to the Corinthians was being received. (3) “Your ardent concern for me,” is not unnoticed. Why are we so afraid of emotional involvement with other people? The Corinthians (and they were people with names and faces) were weeping and praying and talking about Paul. In return Paul expressed great joy!

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for Paul’s three-month stay in Corinth — which was in the country of Greece. How sad that we have so little work among the Greeks today. (2) Thank you for the beautiful letter Paul wrote to the Romans — what a wonderful reputation the saints in Rome had. (3) Thank you for Paul’s personal concern over people he had never seen. (4) Thank you for Paul’s powerful example of prayer. (5) Thank you for my rescue from this present evil age. (6) Thank you for the One who gave himself for my sins. (7) Thank you for the eagerness of Paul to preach the gospel.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . speaking many words of encouragement to the people . . .” It should be noticed that this was the common practice of Paul. Paul knew as we need to remember that words of encouragement are what we look for more than any other expression. No wonder Luke says he spoke *many* words of encouragement. It is easy to find fault — it takes real love and creativity to find something good to say. In the hour of his great trial, just before our Lord went out to face

Gethsemane, he said, “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Reading the record of Paul’s troubles and travels is a real help to me. (1) Thank you for the example of someone who gave himself for your cause. (2) Teach me that being a Christian does not deliver me from harassment. (3) If Paul had conflicts and fears and overcame them — I can too. (4) Give me a fellow servant like Titus. (5) Help me to appreciate all over again the power of your word. (6) May I remember my relationship to you: (a) beloved; (b) called “a holy one”; (c) “an anointed one.” (7) Rescue me from this present evil age.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I know there is much you can say to me from these verses: (1) “I am the One who comforts the downcast.” (2) “Talk to others, I can comfort you through them.” (3) “You can be my comfort to someone today.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Zambia — Points for prayer: (1) *Praise God for the impact of the gospel in Zambia in recent years.* a) There has been a widespread moving of the Spirit with many coming to personal faith in Christ from a nominal or sectarian Christianity. b) Increased evangelization in urban areas of the copperbelt towns and Lusaka by Pentecostal, Baptist and Brethren believers. c) Outreach to rural areas that were once devoid of a clear gospel testimony. d) The multiplication of groups of believers among the Angolan refugees. They have fled their war-torn, desolated land to the west. (2) *The maturing of the Church in urban areas is encouraging.* Strong, well-led churches have developed over the last 10 years; although few older people are responding, many educated young people and professionals are coming to Christ. Pray that some of these may also be called into full-time work. There are insufficient Zambian church leaders from among the well-educated.

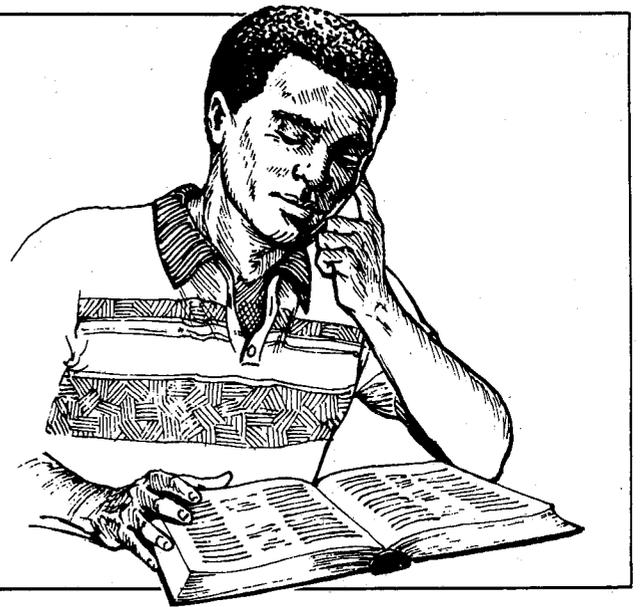
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK THREE

—Monday—

How I do look forward to the experience of entering into a full view of your total being. I praise just now in the closet to catch a hint of the reality!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

King of Glory (Psa. 24:7,10). A name for my Lord, but one applied also to yourself! I am so much drawn to this beautiful description of your very self! That you are king of all — the ruler of absolute dimension is without question, but to associate such a quality is without question, but to associate such a quality with the word “glory” is more than interesting. “Glory” refers to “character” or essential being, so this is tantamount to saying, “King of Character.” “Glory” does refer to brightness or light, but such is only the reflection of your essential being. You are the sum and substance of all beautiful, fulfilling character qualities. *The King of Love, The King of Mercy, The King of Grace, The King of Peace* — How delightful to worship and bow as a glad slave of the King of Glory! Hallowed be your name!

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

King of Glory to me! What I have just said could and should be said by all men — and I offer it up to you as representative of what I so fervently hope will one day be the expression of every man here on earth. Now, just now, I want to attempt to express some of the deep amazement I feel when I try to say with true meaning “King of Glory”! That you are the absolute of *kindness* — thoughtful consideration on a grand scale! I see this so often in the life of Your Dear Self in the Person of your Son. He took little children upon his lap to lay his hands upon them and to pray for them. He made them feel so important because to him they were! How kind!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

How could it be? We occupy the throne with him! We are co-regent kings of glory ourselves. This fact brings a confession of sad failure! I am hardly the example of patience or compassion. Dear Lord, I *want* to be! I

can be! I want to lay down my poor broken tools. Dear God, forgive. Grant grace to use the set of new ones. Blessed Lord, I do want to be a ruler in the realm of love and glory.

“*Worship of angels.*” I do not relate to this except when I think of angels or “messengers” and I have been guilty of giving far more credit to some of your messengers than they deserved. All adoration and adulation goes to you. “Why fasten you your eyes on us? As though we through our godliness or power had made him to walk?” Look to God not to us.

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Lead, kindly Light, amid th’encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home;
Lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.

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

HIS WORD

⁴He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and from the province of Asia Tychicus and Trophimus. ⁵These men went on ahead and waited for us at Troas. ⁶But we sailed from Philippi after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined the others at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

⁷On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. —Acts 20:4-7, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Gladly I do this! Why are there seven men with Paul? We learn from Romans 15:22-32 that the men were representatives from the churches who gave to the poverty stricken Christians in Judea. Perhaps the dear

men were carrying the money so as to protect Paul from robbers and disgruntled church members. Is this true, dear Father? I am probably wrong in even thinking it. Forgive me. How I do want to meet these seven men. I can add Luke for he joins the group in Macedonia. Why does Luke mention the number of days involved? Perhaps to help us to appreciate his reference to "the first day of the week." Was the "breaking of the bread" just the supper of your Son? Or did it include a larger meal along with the supper?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

There is much for me to learn here: Speak to me! (1) Paul wanted companionship and joint effort in his work. Do I want to "do it myself"? Why? There are: Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus, Trophimus and Luke who were eager to help — will I deny them this privilege? (2) Paul traveled much or "was in journeys often" because men live in many parts of this world — do I begrudge travel to reach men? (3) Paul "preached" to whom? Was this room full of people all non-Christians? Not if they met for the Lord's supper; but he *is* preaching. Is then preaching to sinners and teaching to Christians? *Answer!* (4) The "lamps" evidently had something to do with the drowsiness of Eutychus — also the long sermon of Paul! Even Paul did not hold everyone's attention forever.

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the first day of the week when we can come together to break bread — but help me to remember that this was in a home and could have included more than the Lord's (my Lord's) Supper. (2) Thank you for Paul's preaching — a grand example for me. (3) Thank you for "Lucky" or "Fortunate" or "Eutychus" — his "luck" was your blessing. (4) Thank you for the humanness of this record — real people in a real circumstance. (5) Thank you so much for the "ring of truth" in the account — it reads like what it is: an account of an eyewitness. (6) Thank you for everyone who gathered on that memorable day. I want to meet each one of them. (7) Thank you for the dedication of Paul in putting real importance on the spoken word.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Paul talked on and on." Indeed he did — how long was it? Perhaps it was supper time when they met. It would seem an appropriate time of the day to have the Lord's supper. Did they have a love feast with the table of the Lord? The honest answer is: "*We do not know.*" Even if they did perhaps Paul could begin speaking at 8 p.m. — if so he had now been speaking

for four hours. I'm sure there was much more to hear — and all of it very important, but then he was interrupted. Eutychus fell out of the window! Perhaps the stuffiness of the preacher produced this response. Luke is careful to tell us of the many lamps in that upstairs room.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the journeys and words of Paul there is much to pray about: (1) From my reading of Romans 15:22-32 I see the need to protect the investment of other people in your work. (2) Thank you for Luke, Paul's biographer — may I be like him. (3) Open my mind as to the real meaning of meeting on the first day of the week. (4) I am so glad I can read many of the words of Paul today — no doubt much of the same that he spoke that day in Troas. (5) Did they wait seven days for the special day of meeting? I want to follow their example. (6) The name "Eutychus" means "fortunate" — may I remember where all "good luck" comes from.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

No doubt Eutychus wanted to know what he missed in your message through Paul. (1) "Spiritual sleep is more dangerous than the sleep of 'Lucky.'" (2) "I still keep my promise to break the bread with you in my kingdom." (3) "Paul still speaks to us today — listen."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Zimbabwe — Points for prayer: (1) *The spiritual transformation* that has occurred in Zimbabwe is miraculous. The Holy Spirit is at work! a) Despite the devastation and hurt of the war of independence, there has been an unprecedented openness to the Word of God. Many involved in the fighting have come to Christ. b) Much evangelistic outreach in rural areas and replanting of churches. c) Evangelistic campaigns in the cities have drawn many thousands to Christ. d) Vigorous growth of some churches that have emphasized outreach — mainly smaller evangelical churches and indigenous and international Pentecostal groups. e) Massive distribution of literature and Bibles to an eager readership. (2) *The brutality and horror of modern guerilla warfare* brought death to 45,000, widespread destruction and moral collapse in many areas. There is continued warfare in Matabeland, and life there has not returned to normal.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK THREE

—Tuesday—

There are so many ways I can exalt you above the affairs of my daily life — I want to enlarge upon the ways in the closet of prayer.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Most high (Deut. 32:8). The words of Moses become my words, dear Father! In a thousand ways you are “most high” in this world that owes its total existence to you. You are exalted above the heaven of heavens in the physical world — “the third heaven” is associated with your presence or “dwelling place.” Dear Lord, I believe that just on the other side of my last heart beat I will discover just how small this little planet is — just how removed from this infinitesimal speck you truly are. But when I consider the works of your fingers in this world, you are held up on high before me! How exalted is your knowledge! How great is your strength! How incalculable your planning!

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

Most high for me! Blessed Lord, I will praise you in several areas of life: You are the most-high in personal care. How very much does my dear wife care for me. How concerned are our children. I receive concerned care from Christian friends. But none of them could or would do anything without you. You supply the means and the motive for all such care. Beyond people is the fact that my body is healthy, my mind is functional, my clothes are adequate. Dear God, I gladly acknowledge that you are the exalted source for all these things. Indeed, I want to hold you up before my eyes as the One in whom I live and move and have my very being.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

That you should be any less than the most-high God, the Exalted-One, is in itself the epitome of sin. How I

do want to see you in all I do — to worship you amid your creation, to commune with you within myself, to praise you in song with the rest of your children. That I should ever live as do the beasts of the field who cannot know you is the sin of all sins. Speak to me, awaken me that I might praise you!

“*Carnality.*” How can it be that we will take the senses you gave us to express our worship to you and use them to mock and deny you? When the instrument becomes the end instead of the means we are terribly deceived. I am guilty; forgive and wash me clean!

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 gave my life for thee,
My precious blood I shed,
That thou might’st ransomed be,
And quickened from the dead;
I gave, I gave My life for thee,
What hast thou giv’n for Me?
I gave, I gave My life for thee,
What hast thou giv’n for Me?

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

HIS WORD

⁹Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead. ¹⁰Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. “Don’t be alarmed,” he said, “He’s alive!” —Acts 20:9,10, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It does seem incongruous sometimes to read your word back to you. If, however, you caused this word

to be written and I believe you did, then such a practice would be welcome however poorly done. Such is my persuasion. Dear Lord, I shall only ask you to help me as I comment on each phrase of these two verses. How clearly does Luke describe this incident! I can see the young man totally relaxed and in a deep sleep. How often I have dreamed of falling only to find I was sleeping too close to the edge of the bed. I imagine you are thinking that so many young and old will one day fall into the bottomless pit. It will be a terrible dream and reality with no end. "He fell to the ground from the third story." Did Eutychus awaken on the way down? I can't imagine he did not. What terror must have filled his total being! Is hell like falling forever? Is hell like the darkness of the darkest night? Is hell the second death? I know it is! Dear God, how can I be so casual about it?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

"... and was picked up dead." Who picked him up? His mother and father? We do not know. Was he a Christian? If he wasn't we are sure he became one after this incident. Perhaps many others did too, although Luke says nothing about it. Paul interrupted his message to meet a real human need. Paul was very much involved — "he threw himself on the young man." This seems like a drastic way to act. But then the situation is drastic! What am I doing about those who have fallen to their death in trespasses and sins? Am I about to rush out and throw myself on these people? Oh, for the glad word! "Don't be alarmed." "He's alive." So many need first to awaken in the midst of their fall before they realize what is happening to 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 sleep — it is such a blessing. (2) Thank you for awakening me to the desperate needs of men. (3) Thank you for the record of love in action as seen with Paul and Eutychus. (4) Thank you for the concern of others who shared the shock of Eutychus' fall. (5) Thank you for the comforting words of Paul, backed up with the power of God. (6) Thank you for the strong confirmation this miracle gave to Paul's work. (7) Thank you that young men who fall to their spiritual death can be raised today by the same One who raised Eutychus.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Don't be alarmed, he's alive." I wonder what happened to Eutychus in the days and years that followed Paul's visit. Did he really appreciate his resurrection? We could answer this question in several possible ways. The more important question is what has hap-

pened to any one of us since we have been raised from death in trespasses and sins? (1) Did Eutychus explain away the miraculous element in his experience? No doubt someone in Troas told a similar story of someone else with no miracle connected. Any time we want to we can offer a humanistic explanation for the power of God. (2) Did Eutychus recognize the gift of life God gave him and use it for God's glory? We like to believe he did. We can know we should!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Could there be two more dramatic verses than those in 20:9,10? In them we can find prayer petitions: (1) Wake us up to the reality of the deadly danger of closing the eyes of our heart. (2) Move me away from a too-close-to-the-edge mentality on all issues of morality. (3) Help me to remember that hell is described as falling into a bottomless pit. (4) May I remember that all of us Christians should be called Eutychus or "Fortunate," i.e., considering our fall into sin and death. (5) Open my eyes on the way down that I might appreciate what power there is in my being raised from my own neglect. (6) Thank you for Paul's willingness to get involved in the lives of those who were hurting. (7) Thank you for the obvious supernatural power at work in the life of Paul.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

This is a desperate situation — speak to me through it: (1) "Even Paul did not hold everyone's attention." (2) "Paul was concerned personally with everyone." (3) "There are several things worse than physical death."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Audio-Visual Evangelism — Points for prayer: (1) *The Moody 'Fact and Faith' film series* has long had a ministry among those influenced by a presentation of science molded by a godless evolutionary materialism. (2) *The film 'Jesus' (CCC)* has been one of the most widely shown films in history. This moving rendering of the Gospel of Luke is, on average, being shown to 300,000 people nightly in over 85 languages. (3) *The whole ministry of Christian film and TV program production* is costly in time and finance but, if well done, it is a good investment. Pray for all involved in this type of work. (4) *Many national TV networks* are willing to show good Christian productions. Pray for this trend to continue.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK THREE

—Wednesday—

Isn't it a solid comfort to know we have a Father in heaven? It is to me! I pause before you to enjoy this relationship.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Heavenly Father (Matt. 6:26,32). This is a delightful designation: "Our Father who is in heaven" is the beginning of my Lord's prayer to you — it surely means more than just a designation of where you are. You are "of heaven, heavenly," i.e., all of heaven in essence. Heaven must be a wonderful place or shall we say "state" or "condition," — but your Son did say "I go to prepare a *place* for you." He did call it your house or "abiding place." I do want to as much as at all possible appreciate heaven — for I plan on being with you there — as Jesus said "where I am (and you are) there you will be also." How can I possibly enter fully into a real awareness of where you are? It is not that you are removed in time and space near as much as that you are "other than" in every area of my thinking — this causes me to praise you even more!

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

"Our Father who is in heaven" or "heavenly Father" for me. Perhaps you want me to apply all I know about heaven to my life today — yea, Lord, I gladly do this: (a) "He (you) have prepared for them a city" (Heb. 11:16) the new Jerusalem — you and your Son have been working on the preparation of this city for 2,000 years. Or is it even now all ready for me, and all the redeemed? (b) "I shall sit down at a banquet table — the marriage supper of your Lamb — with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" (Matt. 8:11). (c) I shall share in "a great multitude no man can number of all the nations, tribes, peoples, and languages." I shall stand with them before your throne and before your Son, I shall have on a white robe and I shall carry a palm branch in my hand (Rev. 7:9).

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

How often was my mind and heart in heaven yesterday? Or will it be today? Since I believe there is a most glorious experience just on the other side of my last heart beat, should not this thought enter and re-enter my consciousness during this day? Since my real citizenship is in heaven shouldn't I have more than idle curiosity about this country? In all the above ways I have sinned! I have *not* thought about heaven — my mind has *not* been on "the things above where my blessed Lord is seated at your right hand." Dear God, forgive me — I am the loser.

"Malice." What an awful sin this is! The cause of the first murder — it blinds us to the light. The cause for the plot against many who loved our Lord: Daniel, Mordecai, John the Baptist and our Lord himself. Dear God, remind me to what ends hatred can lead!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife?
When the strong tides lift and the cables strain,
Will your anchor hold, or firm remain?
We have an anchor that keeps the soul
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll,
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
Grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love.

HIS WORD

¹¹Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left. ¹²The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.

¹³We went on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos, where we were going to take Paul aboard. He had made this arrangement because he was going there on foot. ¹⁴When he met us at Assos, we took him aboard and went on to Mytelene. ¹⁵The next day we set sail from there and arrived off Chios. The day after that we crossed over to Samos, and on the following day arrived at Miletus. ¹⁶Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in the province of

Asia, for he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost. — *Acts 20:11-16, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How good to share again with yourself and Paul. Paul took "a break" in the middle of the night, i.e., sometime after twelve o'clock. I wonder what went through his mind as he broke the bread and ate it? Was he thinking of "the young man"? From the fact that he walked the eight or ten miles from Troas to Assos after talking all night, we believe he must have had much on his mind. He was gathering an offering and perhaps he was concerned over this. It was eight to twelve hours of talking. I know how exhausted he was.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How much of what Paul said in the all-night marathon of talking could be remembered by those gathered? Luke remembers that it happened. If it was not a help, it would not have been done. How greatly comforted were the friends of Eutychus! Are there friends and loved ones here in this town who would rejoice greatly if someone was raised up to live? Indeed they would! This record is all so accurate and believable!

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 unselfish attitude of Paul in teaching others. (2) Thank you for the "new day" Eutychus faced because of Paul — because of yourself! (3) Thank you for the caring, sharing fellowship of believers in Troas. (4) Thank you for the example of Paul in meditation and prayer. (5) Thank you for Dr. Luke and his devotion to writing — we would have nothing of this record without him.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost." Why all this urgency? We learn from Romans 15:22-32 that he was intent on helping the poor Christians in Judea — and especially Jerusalem. Paul had been appointed — by the need and his love and ability to be a one-man committee (the best kind) to gather funds from the churches to help these people. He was very, very concerned that his generosity be received and accomplish its purpose. But perhaps the largest concern he had was with those who would misunderstand his motives. Most of the "bounty" or money came from Gentiles. Was there ever such an act of unselfish love? But there were areas of this circumstance that Paul did not know how to interpret.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

On Paul's journey he must have prayed often — we can share in some of those prayers: (1) Help me to say something when I speak for you. (2) Comfort is such a large part of the experience of your servants. I want to communicate this today. (3) Paul's emphasis was teaching — not healing — so make it mine. (4) Thank you for Dr. Luke — give me such a fellow servant. (5) Why did Paul walk from Troas to Assos? Was it meditation and prayer on the promises of suffering at Jerusalem? (6) Keep me aware that you are present in the very physical action of moving from one port the next. (7) Give me the humble determination to spread your word that filled the life of Paul.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In this moving scene of life speak to me: (1) "Paul worked with people who did not always agree with him." (2) "Please keep your priorities in order — it is sometimes better to sail past than to stop."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Bible Correspondence Courses This ministry is only about 40 years old, but it has grown and become one of the most effective means for following up contacts from literature distribution and Christian radio programs. The relative ease in using the post in sensitive areas of the world and the emphasis on studying the word of God has had a great impact on BCC students — some being strengthened in their Christian life. This has proved the best single means of winning Muslims.

Points for prayer: (1) *There are reckoned to be over 300 centers sending out evangelical BCCs.* Pray for the workers involved in preparation of materials, and helping the students through the post. (2) *Pray for the publicizing of BCCs* through tracts, radio programs or through other students, in lands where there are few believers, and doors are closed to missionaries. (3) *Pray for the effective, personal follow-up of students* by local Christians, and for their integration into Christian fellowships.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

O Word of God incarnate,
O Wisdom from on high,
O truth unchanged, unchanging,
O light of our dark sky;
We praise Thee for the radiance
That from the hallowed page,
A lantern to our footsteps,
Shines on from age to age.

WEEK THREE

—Thursday—

Truth is that which perfectly matches reality. I look forward to a revelation of reality itself that I might adjust my thinking. I can begin in this time of worship.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

True (John 3:33, “God is Faithful”). How very good to approach you this day as the very essence of truth. Truth is that which is equal to reality — that which matches facts. How secure we can feel when we know we worship the original source of all truth — of all that is reality! All you say in the two books of which you are author, i.e., nature and the Bible — is totally equal to fact or it is truth. There are several obvious messages from the world all about us: (1) You have no problem with details — you produce millions, even trillions of them. (2) You speak in the same way at the same time under the same conditions each time. Uniformity is one constant message. (3) Check and balance — or plan and purpose are built into your handiwork.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

True for me! When you speak you speak truth — for “*Thy word is truth*” — indeed your name is *Truth*. How comforting and restful it is to open up and read a book with no error — “no shadow cast by turning,” you speak to me and dear Lord I want to hear. I open your book to read: “Now these things occurred as examples (or types), and keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did” (I Cor. 10:6). The whole panorama of your message in the five books of Moses was to show us — teach us — speak to us — by models that what gets our thought, will, affection, gets our hearts. Whatever it is that receives much of my time in the above areas is my god. Dear God, I want to think your thoughts — will your will — feel your emotions and thus give you my heart.

How do you personally relate to the truth of God, and God who is True?

CONFESSION OF SIN

You have been so true with me — you have always done what you said you would. How fickle I have been! Forgive me. I know you desire truth in the in-

ward man. I want this also! My basic struggle is to match my conduct with what I know is right — true — fact. How easily I am deceived — forgive me — cleanse me — but renew my mind.

“*Slander.*” This is lying about another with the intention of hurting them. Dear Lord, I have been tempted and I have sinned in this area — make me see how terrible this sin is! If you wanted to you could speak truth fully about the failures of my life — you forgive — may I love like you do and forgive as I have been forgiven.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Lord, speak to me, that I may speak
In living echoes of Thy tone;
As Thou hast sought, so let me seek
Thy erring children lost and lone.

HIS WORD

¹⁷From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. ¹⁸When they arrived, he said to them, “You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. ¹⁹I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews. ²⁰You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. ²¹I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

²²And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. —Acts 20:17-22, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It is indeed with joy I approach an attempt to empathize with you on this text. Perhaps I could become one of the elders. (I am asking questions because I

know you alone have the answers — perhaps somehow you will help me to know.) Do I have one or more of the supernatural gifts listed in Rom. 12:6-8 and I Cor. 12:9-11? I cannot see how I could function without them. If this is true why do I need instruction from Paul? There must be something I do not know about the operation of these gifts. Perhaps it is to learn from his example how best to use what I have. His example is one marvelous testimony: (1) He was the same every day. (2) He served with great humility — (How could he say it and still be humble?).

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I am very much attracted by the little phrase “with tears.” What made Paul cry? Here is a possible list: (a) The hard-hearted Jews. (b) The total ignorance of the Gentiles. (c) The misunderstanding of Christians. (d) His own weakness and sins. (e) The lack of spiritual-mindedness. What makes me cry? Or do I cry at all? Paul was severely tested by plots of the Jews. (What do I have to worry about compared with Paul?) It would seem there were two sets of Jews in the plotting business — the Jews who hated Paul and the Jews who loved Paul. The added element was yourself on the side of Paul.

Once again Paul is talking about preaching to Christians — the elders and others — his preaching consisted of helpful information for the Christian life — not the gospel of salvation. This is Paul the preacher — I’m glad to follow his example. When did Paul teach publicly and from house to house? Was this when he first came and declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God? Is Paul describing his work in Ephesus with both the saved and the lost? We believe he is.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the ability to constantly change my mind in relation to God and man. (2) Thank you for the faith, confidence, trust I can have and do have in my Lord Jesus. (3) Thank you for the element of surprise found in the leading of the Holy Spirit. (4) Thank you for the bold humility of Paul’s preaching. (5) Thank you for the example of house-to-house teaching. (6) Thank you for the example of public teaching. (7) Thank you for the ability to change my mind, to renew my mind, to cleanse my mind, to love with my mind.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there.” Compelled by the Spirit is such an intriguing thought! Wouldn’t we all like to have such a nearness and direction from the Spirit? There are several factors here to consider: (1) Paul was totally involved in the work of the Lord when the Spirit compelled him. The Holy Spirit worked amid the circumstances. (2) The Holy Spirit spoke through men to tell Paul some

of the things that awaited him — the Holy Spirit did not move in a vacuum. (3) In spite of the fact that Paul had the direct operation of the Holy Spirit on his spirit he did not know everything that would befall him. He was given a sense of foreboding, but no details of just what the bonds and afflictions would be.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How much there is about which we can pray in Paul’s words to the Ephesian elders: (1) May I have as much concern for the elders with whom I work. (2) Give me the compassion for the flock that leads me to help the shepherds. (3) Dear Lord, how I need humility. (4) How can I see you “with tears”? (5) Give me the same program of public and private teaching that characterized Paul. (6) Whom did Paul teach publicly and from house to house? I want to do the same. (7) Give me true repentance that I might share it with others.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me through the words of Paul: (1) “It is possible to live and work like Paul.” (2) “You need more humility and many more tears.” (3) “Even Paul did not know all the will of God all the time.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Bible Societies It is hard to overestimate the importance of the organizations that provide God’s Word for the peoples of the world. Most significant are the 70 national Bible Societies, and a further 30 national Bible Society offices, in a total of 100 countries working in over 180 territories, who are grouped under the United Bible Societies.

Points for prayer: (1) *The staffs* of the Bible Societies with their special skills for the many tasks. Pray for their walk with God, for guidance in what translation and printing projects to tackle, etc. (2) *Translation and revision work* — UBS staff workers give much encouragement and advice to missionaries and nationals in new language and modern speech translation programs. Much wisdom is needed in the many problems that arise. The UBS was engaged in 562 translation projects in 1984.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK THREE

—Friday—

If you are my husband — and I am your bride — the closet is where we find our deepest intimacy — gladly do I enter.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Ishi (salutary — Hosea 2:16,17). This is a strange name for yourself, but you yourself chose it. As contrasted with Baal is this name *Ishi*. The new name means “husband,” as compared with Baal, which means “master.” How wonderfully good it is to call you “husband” — indeed, indeed, I want to be married to you — all men should be, and could be your bride. I want to be as attractive as possible to please such a marvelous groom — without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. How comforting to know I can live with you and you with me. I consider myself as but representative of all men.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Ishi for me. I do not want to be allured by any other. Baal is but an ancient name for Satan — he operates in the three areas of man’s needs: flesh, eyes, and pride or body, things and status. You tell me to control, not indulge the flesh; to use “things,” not to be used by them; to find my importance or status in you. Dear Lord, wonderful husband, I want to obey you. Because I have found your word to match with reality and your competitor a liar!

How do you personally relate to being married to God, and God who is Ishi? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

That I so often say one thing and do another is a mystery to me. There is something strange — ethereal (i.e., of the spirit world). At the same time, I feel totally responsible for my sin — my seeking fulfillment in “an affair” with Satan. No satisfaction beyond the moment in flesh — eyes or pride. Dear God, forgive me!
“Harshness.” How well this does fit me! I am unhap-

py with myself and others suffer the harsh consequences — I am as hard and harsh with others as I feel toward myself. The answer is loving you — accepting your acceptance of me, and loving others. Forgive me, dear Lord!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

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

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

HIS WORD

²³“I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.

²⁴However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task that the Lord Jesus has given me — the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace.

²⁵“Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. ²⁶Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men. ²⁷For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.

²⁸Guard yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

²⁹I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. ³⁰Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. ³¹So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

³²“Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. ³³I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. ³⁴You

yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. ³⁵In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' " — *Acts 20:23-35, NIV*

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How shall I rid myself of the blood of all men in Joplin? I must go to every house and tell them of your rule in the heart! Have I ever hesitated in telling to some people some things from your word? You know I have — forgive me. I do not need boldness near as much as deep compassion! How I need to guard myself, protect myself — my only real protection is in your word, in your love, in your presence. I am *not* a shepherd. He substituted as one until God could raise up, through Paul's teaching and preaching, true "pastors" of the flock. Paul's task is mine — to teach and preach the gospel of the Kingdom! Dear God, I hear it — speak it again — I have obstructions. "The church of God, which he purchased with his own blood."

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

Oh, thank you — (1) For your warning that there are strange wolves who can hurt the flock. (2) For the warning that defection and distortion can happen anywhere. Jealousy and pride are such deceitful sins. (3) Men following me is a sin — thank you for saying it so plainly! (4) For the tremendous example of Paul — three years — night and day with tears — how could it be? I'm shocked! I'm rebuked! (5) Thank you that I never will know all the depth and power of your word — the word of your grace — but, oh, how it does build me up! (6) Thank you for my inheritance among the sanctified — what does that mean? Jesus is both my inheritance and my sanctification. (7) Thank you for the hard work in manual labor — it was commended and done by both my Lord and Paul.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus. It is more blessed to give than to receive." I wonder who "the weak" were in Ephesus? Is this reference to those who did not have the means to support Paul and therefore were weak financially? Was Paul saying that those who were destitute were helped financially by his labor? I.e., he bought their meals and clothes? This seems to be close to the thought since he applies the words of our Lord to the circumstance. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The facts are: Paul's companions did not have a gainful occupation they could use in Ephesus; they therefore lived from Paul's efforts. What an ex-

ample Paul is to all of us! Paul did his work without complaining.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How poignantly and personally do the words of Paul call me to prayer: (1) May I consider my life and its value by Paul's estimate. (2) Lord, may I finish the race of the Christian life. (3) May I complete the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace. (4) Free me from the blood of those among whom I live — open my mouth to make it so. (5) Awaken me that I might guard myself. (6) Dear Lord, help me to communicate Paul's words to today's shepherds and overseers. (7) Impress deeply upon my heart these words: "... the church of God, which he bought with his own blood." (8) May I in every way I can "be on guard." *Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!*

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in verses 31-35: (1) "Warn men night and day with tears." (2) "Supply your own needs if necessary to continue preaching." (3) "Remember, it is more blessed to give than to receive."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Bible Translation — Points for prayer: (1) *The unfinished task.* There are complete Bibles in 286 languages and NTs in 594. Of the 5,455 known languages in the world only 1,808 have any part of the Scriptures. The remaining 3,647 languages are spoken by only 3% of the world's population. SIL estimates that of the latter, 723 definitely need Bible translation work. (2) *Translators.* Pray for the calling of more missionaries, and also nationals for this ministry, and for their adequate training. This is a long and slow work — to reduce a language to writing, to learn to speak it fluently, and then to be able to translate the Scriptures both accurately and understandably. (3) *Wycliffe Bible Translators (SIL)* is a mission wholly committed to Bible translation. In 1983 there were 4,826 members and associates of this agency. SIL is praying for a staff of 8,000 translators and supportive workers to be able to tackle known needs. SIL translation teams are working in 694 languages worldwide, but at least 548 other translation projects must yet be started.

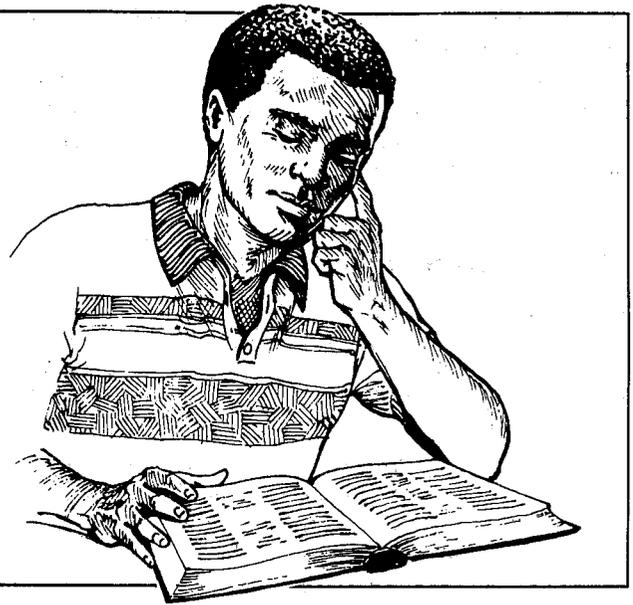
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK THREE

—Saturday—

*When I consider your almightiness
what is man that you are mindful of
him? I bow before you.*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Elohim — the plural form of “mighty.” Used when you are contrasted with men or things. How exceedingly interesting to worship you in the plural. But plural in the form of might! I am now looking at a photograph of the *Trifid Nebula* in Sagittarius as taken by an Australian astronomer, D.F. Malin. Millions and millions — hundreds of millions of miles from the infinitesimal speck called “earth.” What is all the opposition of man to an intelligent Spirit Being who has created the expanse of ten million galaxies? But there are three such Divine Beings — all sharing the same nature. I am indeed nonplused by the concept! I can only stand or fall in mute amazement!

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Elohim to me. Surely you are mighty beyond my poor human comprehension. At the same time, I am full of excitement in a desire to explore the ramifications of such worship. (1) Shall I think of you as three gigantic computers with equal infinite capacity? Of course the obvious question is: “Who is the programmer?” The simple answer is: You owe your programming to yourself. Man (myself) cannot understand such a concept. You would not be Elohim in intelligence if we could. (2) Shall I think of you as three great permeating, pervasive Spirit intelligences into which we can tune through faith and prayer? No, no. I shall think and worship you as three wonderful Persons found in your book, the Bible — Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

How do you personally relate to the mighty power of God, and God who is Elohim?

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, I have sinned against each of the three Divine Beings — the One true God. (1) I have sinned against my Savior for he has found me *in* my sin —

but because I have been unwilling he has not saved me “from” my sin. (2) I have grieved, quenched, resisted and insulted the blessed Holy Spirit. (3) Dear God, dear Elohim, forgive me!
“*Idleness*” — this does not refer to inactivity, but to apathy toward worship and service. For this sin, 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

More about Jesus would I know,
More of His grace to others show;
More of His saving fullness see,
More of His love who died for me.
More, more about Jesus,
More, more about Jesus;
More of His saving fullness see,
More of His love who died for me.

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

HIS WORD

³⁶When he had said this, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. ³⁷They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. ³⁸What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

21 After we had torn ourselves away from them, we put out to sea and sailed straight to Cos. The next day we went to Rhodes and from there to Patara. ²We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, went on board and set sail. ³After sighting Cyprus and passing to the south of it, we sailed on to Syria. We landed at Tyre, where our ship was to unload its cargo. — *Acts 20:36-21:3, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Luke is an eyewitness to what is happening here. I

want to be. I know you were and are! How did you see them as they knelt in prayer? As children in need of the Father's care and love? As sheep in the midst of wolves? How did you (how do you) react to the tears and embraces? Your own dear Son shed tears — and many more than we know — one inspired writer says, "with many tears" (Heb. 5:7). How very close — how very emotionally identified were these men with Paul and he with them. How open and honest he was with them! Oh, speak this into my hard heart! How did Paul know he would never see these dear leaders again? Did you tell him? Didn't he expect to see them in heaven? Didn't he visit Ephesus after his first Roman imprisonment (I Tim. 1:3)? I ask because I do not know.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How often do I kneel and pray with the leaders with whom I meet? There are surely times when I have no assurance that such men will see my face again or I theirs. The problem is (as far as comparison goes) I have not established with any set of elders such a close relationship that there would be such a spontaneous response of deep concern. Dear Lord, forgive me! There are elders with whom deep friendship exists, but not as deep as seen here! Let me not say that it is a cultural practice, or unnecessary. How will I learn if I do? It is so easy to use such rationalizing to eliminate anything that makes me uncomfortable because I judge others by my own motives. Forgive me and move me into the same tearful relationships my Lord had with his apostles.

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

Indeed I shall! (1) Thank you for the loving fellowship Paul established with those with whom he worked. (2) Thank you for prayer — individually and collectively — what a boon to the weary! What solace and strength and direction we receive! (3) Thank you for all the various expressions of love and concern we have for each other. (4) Thank you for the *strong* tie of mutual effort in your service. (5) Thank you that those we do not see here we shall see over there. (6) Thank you for the beautiful example of Paul's commitment to the larger service — not only at Ephesus but also to Jerusalem and Rome. (7) Thank you for the completely accurate record of Luke's treatise.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"After we had torn ourselves away from them."
What a tie of mutual interest and respect had developed between Paul and the elders from Ephesus! Indeed, such nearness and love was shared by Luke. We could think of the person or persons with whom

we have developed a mutual interest and respect. Think of one who has gone out of his way to help you; who has stayed up nights when you were sick; who took a real interest in those things that were of interest to you. Have we ever established such nearness with someone that we could hardly think of their not being with us? Such was the love Paul had with them. Somehow such love and fellowship has been lost in our impersonal society.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Paul's closing words to the elders move me to prayer: (1) I wonder just what the prayers were as they knelt upon the beach? Perhaps: "Give Paul and his company your grace in travel." (2) Perhaps: "Guard our hearts that we fulfill your purpose in us." (3) Perhaps: "Keep us faithful that we might see Paul in the Father's house." (4) Perhaps: "Deliver Paul from unreasonable men." (5) Help me to have as much personal involvement with those with whom I work as Paul did. (6) Teach me to love others as my Lord loved me. (7) Give me the grace to believe you are at work in *all* circumstances of life.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in these few verses: (1) "Prayer does help in every situation." (2) "Tears are the language of the heart." (3) "Close association is typical of my Son and his disciples — of Paul and his disciples."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Ministry to Children The importance of ministry to children and young people cannot be overestimated. They will be the Church of the next generation. Consider the following: (1) *Over one-third (35%) of the world's population is under 15.* Nearly half of Africa's population (45%) is under 15. (2) *Every year 130 million babies are born,* but 112 million of these are born in less developed countries. Many of the latter will grow up malnourished and with limited expectations of a viable economic future.

Points for prayer: (1) *Christian parents.* They face a difficult task in bringing up children in the fear of the Lord in today's world. (2) *The children themselves.* Only in a few lands can it be said that a reasonably adequate range of evangelistic and teaching ministries is widely available.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

We praise Thee, O God! for the Son of Thy love,
For Jesus who died and is now gone above.

Hallelujah! Thine the glory;

Hallelujah! Amen.

Hallelujah! Thine the glory;

Revive us again.

WEEK FOUR

—Sunday—

I have said when I wrote this expression of worship: "the concept of infinity simply steps beyond the powers of our poor minds." But I want to worship you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

From everlasting to everlasting (Gen. 21:33; Psa. 90:2). How beautiful a description this is of yourself! There never has been a time when you did not exist. The concept of infinity simply steps beyond the powers of our poor minds. In the eons of eternity, before this world existed, before there was an Adam and Eve, before there was one angel, you were even as you are now and even as you will ever be. Dear Father, this quality of yourself says several things to me. (1) You have the experience of millennia of time to prepare you (is that the right word?) for any and all experiences I will have.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Everlasting to everlasting for me. (2) There never will be a time when you are not there. You will be present for every emergency — for every hard question — for every personal need, you are “always there” as perfect Person. (3) One day I will graduate from this school into the eternal realm where you have lived and are living and will live. I will live there with you and your dear Son and the blessed Holy Spirit. There I will understand so much more of what is now only seen dimly. (4) Praise somehow seems inadequate in your presence. But it is essentially all I have. I raise my whole heart to you!

How do you personally relate to the timelessness of God, and God who is from “Everlasting to Everlasting”?

CONFESSION OF SIN

To fail to recognize your greatness is a sin of gigantic proportion. How sad it is for me to limit your eternal value to the time-frame of my own understanding. Dear everlasting Father: forgive me for not truly knowing you! Dear God, open my eyes. Cleanse my heart. Somehow I want to stand with Isaiah and see your total character fill the whole house of the world in which we live!
“Wrong for wrong.” Who gave us this concept? The

law — the principle of equalness. Do you return wrong (i.e., punishment or hurt) for wrong? No, no, no, we would all be in torment this minute if you did. Can we not give to others what you have given to us?

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

“Finding the disciples there, we stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. ⁵But when our time was up, we left and continued on our way. All the disciples and their wives and children accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray. ⁶After saying good-bye to each other, we went aboard the ship, and they returned home. —Acts 21:4-6, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How good to find learners at Tyre! Who were they? You know them — every one. How many other disciples have been at Tyre? Are there any there today? I ask these questions only to identify with the text. Seven days is enough time to know people rather well. How was it that “the disciples” “through the Spirit” urged Paul “not to go to Jerusalem” and the same Spirit “compelled” him to go? Thank you — I know the answer: It was the disciples’ reaction to the “bonds and afflictions” that awaited Paul in Jerusalem. Paul’s reaction to “prison and hardships” was;

“I consider my life worth nothing” as compared to the value of his work of teaching and preaching your rule among men. How wonderfully poignant is the scene on the beach! How I would like to hear the prayers! You have and do. Is not the record of all good kept? Perhaps I can one day hear them!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Yes, yes — where is the spontaneous personal interest in your Son and his work? How good to see the spread of your word over the length and breadth of the land of promise. How do I react to negative messages from the Holy Spirit? He has spoken very bluntly in his word: “Let nothing be done through envy or strife.” “Count each one better than yourself.” “Speak not evil of one another.” The reaction of Paul to personal harm needs to be my reaction to an assault on my ego! My life is of no value as compared to the value of your rule in the hearts of men beginning with my heart!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the beautiful oneness described in the association of Paul and the Christians at Tyre. (2) Thank you for the whole families who are involved in Paul’s visit — all Paul said related to the whole family. (3) Thank you for the kneeling in prayer — perhaps they learned this from our blessed Lord. (4) Thank you for the tearful parting — so encouraging to see such love. (5) Thank you for Luke’s poignant words, “. . . and they returned home.” (6) Thank you for the preservation of this record even until our day. (7) Thank you that I can find and have found people with the same unselfish love and interest.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“All the disciples and their wives and children accompanied us out of the city.” The personalness of this record convinces us of its reality — especially when we know we are reading something nineteen hundred years old! The manuscripts of 350 A.D. give us a document over 1600 years old. What are the possibilities that men of the second or the third century fictionalized such an account? The details are too many and too accurate and too casual to be anything but the account of an eyewitness! There are other lines of evidence, but this needs to be said. I’m glad to say it! The whole family was reached for our Lord. How many disciples were there in Tyre? Perhaps we should ask, “How many family units were reached for our Lord?” The Holy Spirit lived in each member and spoke through some of them. The supernatural knowledge that Paul was to endure imprisonment and mistreatment at Jerusalem made them want to be with

him as long as at all possible. I confidently expect to meet each one of these disciples and ask more details than we have here.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Paul’s journey to Jerusalem was beset with warnings. He must have been often in prayer: (1) In the seven days at Tyre I wonder what was discussed? Perhaps: “Use Paul’s witness to change hearts.” (2) Grant me the same commitment to your will amid those who unwittingly wish to deter me. (3) May the tender love of family sharing be a part of my service. (4) Teach me how to share in personal public prayer. (5) Dr. Luke knew it was “through the Holy Spirit” that Paul was warned. How did Luke know this? (6) Help me to be willing to prefer traveling to “home” if others can know of my Lord. (7) May prayer mean more to me than ever before.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these three verses are three things you want to say to me: (1) “Disciples are ‘learners’ — are you a disciple?” (2) “The Holy Spirit is still directing the body of my Son.” (3) “Pray with others — all of you will be blessed.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Missionaries’ Children (MKs) The education of missionaries’ children is one of the major causes for suspending or terminating the cross-cultural ministry of missionaries at the very time when they are at the peak of their usefulness.

Points for prayer: (1) *The children themselves.* MKs often live under unusual conditions; many have an identity crisis as they grow up in two worlds, and some become resentful or rebellious. Pray that both parents and children may be a united team for the spread of the gospel, and for a right balance between ministry and family. (2) *Primary education* is often provided locally or through correspondence courses with parental guidance. It is hard for mothers and fathers to play the dual role of parent and teacher, and stresses in this area can impair the ministry. (3) *Secondary education* is the major problem. In some cases MK schools on the field are possible. In other cases the only possibility for further education is in the home country.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK FOUR

—Monday—

There are times I feel exceedingly weak — then I can rejoice in your strength — when I am weak your strength is so meaningful. Teach me as I worship you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

El — The Strong One. Our Lord used such a name on the cross when he said, “My God, my God,” and Eloi, Eloi — “*My Strength, My Strength*” is a part of the same name. Dear Father, how glad I am to honor you as “the *strength* of my life.” But you are “the *strength*” of the life of the whole world — and all that in it is. Is this the same as saying you are the sum source of “energy” or the “dynamic” of all life? I believe it is! Wonder of all wonders! Oh, *praise and amazement* does not at all adequately express my deep appreciation of your Person. How I need such inward reinforcements.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

The Strong One for me. Oh, that all the energy you have given to me for every task over all these many years might be attributed to the right source — it is not my strength or cleverness, not my inventive genius, but you, you are the true *Source* — the real power to will and to do. Praise your name forever! How profound is the thought that you are in truth the Intelligent Power or energy behind all that lives — indeed behind all that is animate or inanimate! Why should I *ever* doubt that *you are able to do* far abundantly *above everything* that I ask or think! *Not* for my glory — Dear God, deliver me from this, but for recognition of “El” — the Strong One!

How do you personally relate to the strength of God, and God who is “El” — the Strong One?

CONFESSION OF SIN

How sad to say I have leaned upon the strength of “the flesh” which is so totally undependable. One day my body is rested and strong, the next weak and dull. Does this relate to you? Have you lost your strength? I act and speak and even think as if you have. Oh, it is sin, sin! Forgive me! Dear Lord, I need so very much to be able to pause in the midst of discouragement and identify the Source of my strength. Will you please help me to do it?

“*Grieving the Holy Spirit.*” How unique! What greater sin against the Holy One than to try to lift the weight of life in our own strength when *The Strength* of all the world awaits? He is grieved by my trusting in the arm of the flesh. Forgive me!

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

⁷We continued our voyage from Tyre and landed at Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for a day. ⁸Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven. ⁹He had four unmarried daughters who had the gift of prophecy. — *Acts 21:7-9, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What a beautiful visit! To stay a whole day at Ptolemais — on what day of the week was it? How many brothers were there? From whom did these men hear the good news? Once again, I’m only asking to get the flavor of the text as you already see the whole. I’m only looking into a very small part of the whole. What was discussed during the day with “the brothers” of Ptolemais? I can make up answers for each question, but I will await your full revelation. Oh, to be in Caesarea in 56 A.D.! How I long to accompany Luke and all the others as a visitor in the house of Philip the evangelist! Wouldn’t it be wonderful to be

introduced to Philip's gifted daughters? Indeed it would! Philip was one who heralded forth the glad tidings. But where did he get his information? Did he depend on "hearsay," i.e., what others could remember and told him? I think not! He shared the gift his daughters possessed. The Holy Spirit equipped him with information and miracles for accreditation. Have I read it right? Dear Lord, you know.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How many people did Philip reach as he lived and labored at Caesarea? It has been a long time since we read in Acts 8:40 "Philip . . . preached the gospel in all the towns (of the plain of Sharon) until he reached Caesarea." It has been several years. How many? 10? 15? 20? 25? It has been at least 15 years. What has he been doing in the important seaport since he arrived? If his name is an indication of his work — and we believe it is — he has been preaching to the residents of the city and through Christians to others in the district. How did Philip, the evangelist, acquire a home? To whom did his daughters prophesy? Why were they unmarried? How intriguing are all these questions! How much I wish I knew the answers to them. We *can* say with confidence: (1) Philip did own a home — "the house of Philip." (2) His daughters did express their gift to those for whom it was intended.

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 unknown brother and sister who love you as I do. (2) Thank you for the accuracy of the Luke account that can be checked even today. (3) Thank you for Philip — such a faithful, consistent man. (4) Thank you for the warm, unqualified hospitality extended to Paul wherever he went. (5) Thank you for each of the daughters of Philip — I wish I knew their names — such a good testimony. (6) Thank you for Philip's unnamed wife — a real essential part of this team. (7) Thank you for the Spiritual gifts that equipped the church at Caesarea.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

" . . . four unmarried daughters who had the gift of prophecy." How we would like to know more about these girls. Here are some things we *can* know about them: (1) They were sorely needed inasmuch as there was no New Testament. The church was built upon "the apostles and prophets" (prophetess), Eph. 2:20. The sum total of divine direction through teaching came from this source. (2) They were the literal fulfillment of prophecy. When Peter predicted through Joel "your sons and daughters shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17-19), these are some of those who fulfilled the

prophecy of these last days. (3) They were very likely not alone — in many congregations of the Roman empire there were other young women — or older women who had this ability.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Tyre, Ptolemais and Caesarea are all such interesting places. Are there prayer requests in these verses? (1) May my first interest in any place be the salvation of the lost. (2) Teach me from the total lack of Christians in these places just how important it is to teach your word to every generation. (3) Dear Lord, help all who believe to be One. (4) How I would like to know just how Philip's daughters obtained the gift of prophecy. (5) Just whom did these daughters teach? (6) May I follow the example of Philip the evangelist — just where did he evangelize? (7) Why had Philip stayed in Caesarea for such a long time (Acts 8:40)? I confidently expect an answer to these requests in the study of your word.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me: (1) "If Paul could be friendly to those who were unfriendly, so can you." (2) "Many labor for me that you do not know or appreciate." (3) "Women have much to teach us in so many ways."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Christian Literature More than half the born-again Christians in the world testify that literature played a part in their conversion. Its role in strengthening Christians is incalculable. The Communists appreciate the importance of literature and spent over \$5 billion on propaganda in one year.

Points for prayer: (1) *Crash literacy programs* in many parts of the world create an immense desire for *any* literature among newly literates. Pray for a greater interest among churches in this ministry. (2) *Very few languages have an adequate range of Christian literature.* Literature translated from English can be good, but can never be a substitute for that written by nationals. Yet there is a critical lack of spiritual and mature Christian writers in nearly every language.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK FOUR

—Tuesday—

I have found hidden qualities of yourself — and every one is full of beauty! Just now I enter your closet for a fresh look!



PRaise GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Elah or Eloah — The Adorable One (Ezra 4:24). You are not only the One God wholly worthy of our adoration, but you have such attractive attributes that adoring you is a spontaneous response of our hearts. Since all men and all women are but a faint reflection of yourself, we can find the most attractive person we could imagine and multiply their beauty ten thousand times and we would have but a hazy representation of your adorable self! If we would imagine a super generous benefactor who would give us gift after gift of both practical and divine value, and then enlarge immeasurably the generosity and thoughtfulness of such a Giver, it would be yourself! Surely you have merited all the love of all men!

PRaise GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Elah or Eloah — “Adorable One” for me! Dear Father, I have indeed found you more than worthy of all my adoration. How can I say I love you? What I have told those I love I can express to you in total abandonment. There is nothing in my mind or experience in what I know of you that would in any way hinder me from absolute adoration! My wife never tires of hearing me say, “I love you” — surely I never tire of the same words from her. I try each time to demonstrate by action and thoughtfulness the truth of those precious words. So it is immeasurably more true in my worship at least in words, when I say “I love you.” For today I do want to demonstrate in life just how true are those words.

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

CONFESSiON OF SIN

It is easier now to see why our blessed Lord spoke so often of loving God with all our hearts — of loving him, of loving one another — even of loving ourselves as we love our neighbor — for love is of yourself. Sin in its essence is failing to return love. Dear Lord,

that I should ever be so involved with the gifts that I forget the Giver! Forgive me!

“Quenching the Spirit” — how do I do this? Is the Holy Spirit a fire? He is so symbolized. A fire gives warmth — when I choose to be cold or cool I quench the Spirit. A fire gives light — when I choose to live in darkness, I quench him. A fire is fascinatingly interesting — when I am fascinated by someone else or something else, I quench him who lives in me. Dear God, on all these counts I plead guilty. Forgive me.

What personal sins do you want to confess? There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

¹⁰After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. ¹¹Coming over to us, he took Paul’s belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, “The Holy Spirit says, ‘In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.’”

¹²When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. ¹³Then Paul answered, “Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”

¹⁴When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, “The Lord’s will be done.” —Acts 21:10-14, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

While in Caesarea a remarkable incident took place. How differently you look at it than I do. Agabus is so well known to you — so little do I know about him. He seems a strange man to me — indeed he is, but to you his mother, father, family and house are all known. Did you speak to him directly or did you communicate through someone else? Why this instance on the persecution of Paul? Were you trying to give Paul a choice or a test? I want to enter into this text in a deep appreciation of all you have said. Is Agabus saying anything Paul has not already heard? I am struggling over just why you sent this prophet with his dramatic warning. I am persuaded you are trying to show all of us just what real dedication to you and your Son means.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Is there a pattern here for my imitation? We could say: "It was easy enough for Paul to endure hardships — he had the constant directions from the Holy Spirit. We do not know why things befall us — we do not hear the Holy Spirit speak to us today." Such is a pathetic expression of not only lack of faith, but of Biblical ignorance. Does the Holy Spirit now live in our bodies as his temple or not? Of course he does (Rom. 8:9-12; I Cor. 6:19)! Has the Holy Spirit given to us through his prophets and apostles "all things that relate to this life — and the life of faith" or not (II Pet. 1:3)? Of course he has!

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 extended visit to Caesarea — even when Paul was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem he took time to visit and teach. (2) Thank you for the personal love and concern so many had in the life and welfare of Paul. (3) Thank you for the dramatic, exciting action the Holy Spirit took in communicating his message — nothing dull or stodgy here. (4) Thank you for your warnings — which are as much a part of your love as your blessings. (5) Thank you for tears and entreaties — all of which must be evaluated for meaning. (6) Thank you for your will which is indicated as much by man's choices as direction of circumstance. (7) Thank you for "the name (or authority) of the Lord Jesus" — by this Paul lived and was ready to die!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... we gave up and said, *The Lord's will be done.*" How could we "give up" and still be in "the will of the Lord"? This is perhaps the one thing that indicates the presence of his will more than anything else. This indicates a real pattern for us. The disciples

thought it reasonable to be concerned for Paul's safety. When they knew he was in danger, they thought it God's will to warn him — even to dissuade him from entering the place of danger.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

It will be easy to pray for Paul, and ourselves, from this text: (1) Dear Lord, may I know how to separate conflicting messages from those who know our Lord. (2) Give me wisdom in reading aright Paul's intention in this incident. (3) It is sometimes necessary to suffer for your name — let me know when and why. (4) If you do not choose to tell me when or why, may I be willing yet to suffer for you. (5) Why did Luke plead with Paul not to go to Jerusalem — wasn't Luke inspired? (6) Why wouldn't Paul be dissuaded? (7) What was "the Lord's will" in this circumstance? As always I confidently expect your answer to these questions.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

There are so many messages for me in this text: (1) "Opposition does not necessarily mean you should change your plans." (2) "Sometimes all of your best friends are wrong." (3) "The only one who has all the answers is myself."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Christian Literature — Points for prayer: (1) *The rapidly increasing cost of printing* and the poverty of the people most needing the literature hinder this ministry. Pray for needed funds to launch programs. Pray that profitable areas for selling Christian literature may be used to finance production in poorer areas and where there are few Christians. (2) *There is a worldwide shortage of Christian printers.* Pray for all those engaged in printing, and also for the smooth running of expensive machinery — breakdown in under-developed lands can be disastrous. (3) *Literature missionaries are too few.* Pray for the calling of those with the right qualities and qualifications for this ministry — in journalism, printing, publishing, writing, distribution, etc. Few Bible schools give adequate attention to the training of literature missionaries.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

The name of Jesus is so sweet,
I love its music to repeat;
It makes my joys full and complete,
The precious name of Jesus.
"Jesus," oh, how sweet the name!
"Jesus," ev'ry day the same;
"Jesus," let all saints proclaim
Its worthy praise forever.

WEEK FOUR

—Wednesday—

You are the "God most high" whether I admit it, accept it or not. I want to enter a very positive relationship in this time of prayer.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

God Most High (Gen. 14: 18-22; Num. 24:16). Exalted — lifted up, ascended. Dear Father, you are all this to me, but it is your position before men — before all men with which I am concerned. One day — when all days will end — “Every tongue” will offer you the praise and full recognition you now deserve. “Every knee shall bow” and look up to see your exalted position — nay, more — your character. It is only because of a little salt you have not already destroyed this world. The unnamed poet has said it so well:

Lord of all! enthroned afar,
Thy glory flames from sun and star;
Center and Soul of my sphere,
Yet to each loving heart how near.

We bow before you now and gladly acknowledge your greatness.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

God Most-High to me. I am a child — a citizen, a soldier — a slave of this God Most-High. Dear Lord, I want you to be “the most high God” in the nitty gritty relationships of life. Is your word exalted as the “most high” book I have in my library? Am I constantly searching every word you have said? Or am I interested in what men have said you have said? Are you most high God to me when I find a contradiction in my conduct or thought process? I.e., am I willing to change my mind or am I ready to accept a lower place for you? Dear God, I do want to mean just what these terms mean. You are above all — “before all.”

How do you personally relate to the exaltation of God, and God who is Most-High?

CONFESSION OF SIN

I have already begun to acknowledge my need — my sin. There is little need of seeing you “exalted” — “lifted up” before all men if you are not exalted in my life. I am seeking for more practical applications

of this relationship. To exalt you is to exalt your character as seen in your Son. With my wife, will I exalt your kindness? With my students, will I exalt your patience? With other teachers, will I exalt your appreciation? Forgive me, Lord, I have sinned in all these areas. “*Shepherds who feed only themselves.*” Could it be that they fail to exalt the Great Shepherd?

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

¹⁵After this, we got ready and went up to Jerusalem.
¹⁶Some of the disciples from Caesarea accompanied us and brought us to the home of Mnason, where we were to stay. He was a man from Cyprus and one of the early disciples.
¹⁷When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers received us warmly. ¹⁸The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present.
¹⁹Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.
²⁰When they heard this, they praised God. — *Acts 21:15-20a, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I want to get ready and go with the disciples up to Jerusalem. It could not have been without some real

apprehension they approached the gates of the holy city. But there was a warm welcome and a spacious home awaiting them. *Mnason* is one more of the little known disciples. Only little known to me. Not with you. Did *Mnason* know *Barnabas*? Both were men of Cyprus, both were early disciples, both were open-hearted in sharing with others. Perhaps *Mnason* was just as generous with his words of love and encouragement as he was with room and board. What great expectations were present in this house! To hear of all God (yourself) had done through Paul's ministry — to anticipate the renewed meaning of the feast of Pentecost.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How very good to look on others as your brothers! The dear close associations and remembrances of a family is what is involved here. To look into the faces of men you haven't met before and know that these are long unknown brothers — each of you want to hear what the mutual Father has been doing in your lives. How I would love to look into the face of James our Lord's brother! At the same time we ask, "Where are Judas, Simeon, and Joseph? And what of our Lord's sisters?" (Matt. 13:54-56). We can assume that the letter of Jude was written by Judas, but what happened to the others? Were they "the brothers" in the upper room (Acts 1:14ff.)? We want to believe they were! How many elders were there to hear Paul?

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 generous hospitality of many in Jerusalem — *Mnason* in particular. (2) Thank you for the personal note of Luke about *Mnason* so we may appreciate his long time faithfulness. (3) Thank you for some Jews in Jerusalem who were not bigoted — who were willing to be open-minded and warm-hearted. (4) Thank you for James who came to accept and honor his divine brother. (5) Thank you for every elder — none of whom I know, but all are known to you. (6) Thank you for every detail of Paul's account, some of which we can read in this book of Acts. (7) Thank you for the willingness of the elders and apostles to praise God for the conversion of Gentiles.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"When they heard this they praised God." This is a statement of a tremendous breakthrough in human history. It is an amazing account! Jewish leaders in the holy city rejoicing over the conversion to a new religion of a group of unclean Gentiles! We really cannot appreciate or approximate the kind of hatred and prejudice present in the hearts of the Jews. Surely two wonderful things had happened: (1) The authority

and love of our Lord and his message for all the world had penetrated their hearts. The example of the house of *Cornelius* no doubt helped. (2) The law-system of salvation had totally failed in their lives and was an obvious failure with the whole Jewish nation. We try to get the depth of the praise here lifted, but I'm sure we do not.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Jerusalem at last! How Paul wanted to be there — and yet there was much about which to pray: (1) No mention is made here of the distribution of the money Paul collected on this journey (Cf. I Cor. 16:1-4). Read Romans 15:31 for Paul's prayer request. (2) Give me the unselfish, humble attitude that characterized Paul in this incident. (3) Thank you for the hospitality seen so often in the life of the apostolic church. (4) There seem to be "brothers" or "disciples" in almost every city — why? (5) I want to read the epistle of James to absorb his wisdom. (6) What were the elders in Jerusalem doing in the direction of the church there? (7) How could the elders rejoice at the conversion of the Gentiles when other Jews didn't?

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In this prelude before the storm what do you say to me? (1) "There are many disciples today who would welcome you into their house — appreciate it!" (2) "I have placed elders in the body for a purpose." (3) "Tell others of my blessings upon your work — it will help them and you."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Christian Tentmakers Since the time of tentmaker Paul it has often been expedient or essential to use a secular skill or profession as a platform for sharing the gospel (Acts 18:3).

Points for prayer: (1) *Pray for the specific calling of Christians* with the necessary qualifications and spirituality to serve in "closed" lands — specifically the Muslim heartlands, Central Asia and Communist ruled lands. (2) *Adequate cultural and spiritual preparation* is hard to obtain while retaining the necessary expertise, yet it is essential. Pray for good, appropriate training and screening of this special type of worker.

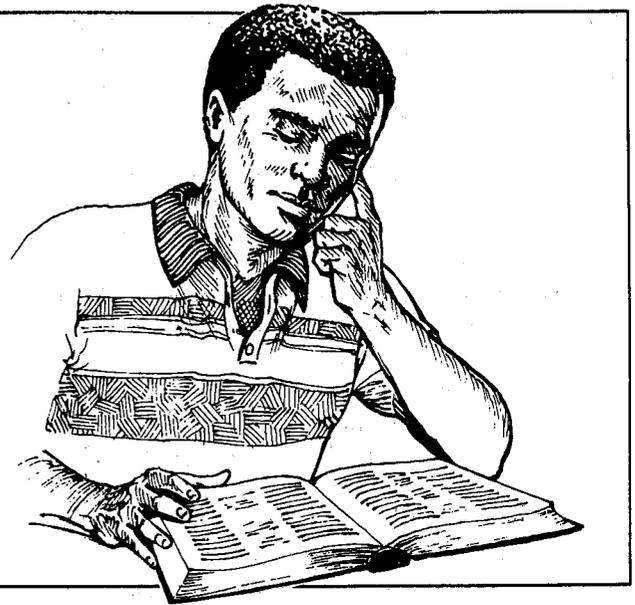
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK FOUR

—Thursday—

You, my dear Lord see me. Right now right here you see me. I lay my whole heart out before you. Thus do I enter this worship time.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

El-Roi — The Lord That Seeth (Gen. 16:13,14). Only once did you associate yourself with this quality, and at such an unexpected time. How I wish I knew more about Hagar. Dear Lord, I know you know all about her. You supplied her need for water for herself and her son. She even named her son after this incident, Ishmael — “the God who hears.” Praise your many-faceted name! How wonderfully good to know Someone who sees with compassion and understanding like no one else. “Thou, O Lord, seest me.” In the midst of family quarrels and sharp, deep misunderstanding, you see and understand like no one else.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

“*The Lord that seeth me.*” You have not caught me as a spy, for nothing has been hidden from you. You see me as no one else ever could — for no one else can read and know my heart. Dear God, I do not even know my heart. I do know that a negative introspection becomes totally fruitless. I do want to repent of my sin, but I have found no help in lacerating my spirit; it has become a form of pride. I am glad to turn my deceitful heart over to the only One who truly knows it. Cleanse and heal and change me. Do you see a million lost persons saved through me? You saw a great nation in Hagar. Dear God, make it so!

How do you personally relate to the omnipresence of God, and God who is El-Roi?

CONFESSION OF SIN

How often have I acted as if you did not see me! “Hidden sin” is only hidden from men. But bless your name! hidden virtue is only hidden from men. You see it, appreciate it, acknowledge it, reward it. I confess openly that I am far too interested in what men see and say than what you see and have said (and through this prayer time are now saying to me). Forgive me! I am afraid and try to hide myself — it is

only a meaningless act of shame. Forgive me; lead me out into your light.

“*Grumbling*” — of all people who should not sin in this way, it is Americans. But as you hear the sound of grumbling when it is the most intense? I know you hear our groanings and cries — you said you do. Dear God, for one day you will not hear it from me!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Jesus, keep me near the cross,
There a precious fountain,
Free to all — a healing stream,
Flows from Calv'ry's mountain.
In the cross, in the cross,
Be my glory ever;
Till my raptured soul shall find
Rest beyond the river.

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

HIS WORD

²⁰When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: “You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law. ²¹They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs. ²²What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you have come, ²³so do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a vow. ²⁴Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everybody will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law. ²⁵As for the Gentile believers, we have written to them our decision that they should abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality.”

²⁶The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple

to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them. — *Acts 21:20-26, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How sadly do I enter this portion of worship! I know you were present when this conversation first took place. There is always joy and sorrow mingled in the same cup. Thousands of Jews in Jerusalem have become Christians — what a testimony to the power of the good news! At the same time, these same people are jealous of their supposed advantage over the Gentiles. It looks to me — correct me (and I *mean* it) if I am wrong — that these men are really asking all men to become as they are “Christian Jews” or Jewish Christians. To adopt all the traditional outlook of their background. How easy it is for me to do the same thing!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Do I really know what others teach or am I willing to repeat “hearsay” or gossip! Do others really know what I teach? Does love prevail in either case? Just how much of the law and customs did Paul teach the Gentiles? Fortunately we have his letters to the Gentiles. We can answer this question best by reading Romans or Galatians.

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 thousands and thousands that could be converted today if we had the same zeal and love. (2) Thank you for the record of misunderstanding in the early church — it helps us in today’s church. (3) Thank you for the example of the influence of one man — it helps me to appreciate the same thing today. (4) Thank you for efforts to reach out to those who violently disagree with us. (5) Thank you that we can hold very different views on matters of opinion and still both be Christians. (6) Thank you for the clear regulations for the Gentiles which obtain even today. (7) Thank you for Paul’s humility, zeal, love, unselfishness, courage.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“You yourself are living in obedience to the law.” Even such obedience would not provide salvation but it was hoped it would provide a bridge over which communication between the extreme right and Paul could flow. Several things need to be noticed: (1) The Jews in Jerusalem were trying to do something about the problem. They did not hide from it or ignore it. (2) Paul was willing to allow the temple worship with all its ceremony if it was not made a test of fellowship. (3) The predictions of our Lord concerning the

soon coming destruction of the temple could have been a factor in the hatred of some for the Christians.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the advice of the elders there is surely room for prayer: (1) Lead me into a circumstance where I could influence a whole ethnic group as Paul did with the Jews. (2) Open our hearts to love the Jewish people and tell them of their Messiah. (3) Give me grace to do all I can to accommodate and not compromise. (4) May I respect and keep the laws of the land that I might better be able to speak to all. (5) Thank you that it is possible to be purified by the sacrifice of Calvary. (6) Paul invested time, money and energy into a ritual that was not necessary to help those who hated him — I need your grace to be like him. (7) May I share some of the pathos of Romans 9:1,2.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As Paul hoped against hope, speak to me: (1) “Your very best intentions can be misinterpreted.” (2) “It is not wrong to try to help even if you are rejected.” (3) “I can work out something good from every circumstance.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Outreach to Cultists The worldwide growth and spread of missionary cults of western and eastern origin has been a striking phenomenon in the twentieth century.

Points for prayer: (1) *Jehovah’s Witnesses* have grown worldwide from 916,000 members in 1960 to 2,842,000 in 1984. There are over 7,500,000 adherents today. Many give sacrificial hours in door-to-door work to proclaim a false message in 202 nations. (2) *The Mormons* (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints) have similarly grown from 1,408,000 adherents in 1960 to 5,300,000 in 1985. The short-term missionary work of the Mormons puts many Protestant churches to shame. (3) The multiplication of many *Hindu-Buddhist cults* among disillusioned young people in the West has brought many into bondage and distress. (4) The high profile activities of *the Unification Church* (Moonies) and *Scientology* are well known.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Christ has for sin atonement made.

What a wonderful Savior!

We are redeemed! the price is paid!

What a wonderful Savior!

What a wonderful Savior is Jesus, my Jesus!

What a wonderful Savior is Jesus, my Lord!

WEEK FOUR

—Friday—

You call me "the new Israel" but I feel like the old Jacob. You know me better than I know myself — I trust you. Teach me as I worship you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

The God of Israel (Gen. 33:18-20). You gave Jacob the new name — now he gives it back to you. As Jacob's claim to identity with you is in his new name, so is our identity in the new name you have given for all men: "Christians" — the new "Israel." Dear God, we have indeed struggled — or simply "hung on" to you — out of your grace you have given us this wonderful new name. We are so glad to be "the anointed ones." We reign with him a thousand years. How I do want to keep ever before me the astounding fact that you want *all* men to be Christians. The new Israel of yourself includes all men of all nations.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

I am the Israel of yourself! I surely can identify with Jacob — in so many ways his experiences parallel mine. What Jacob found in the physical land of Canaan I want to find in my sojourn here. There must be a day when I present my body as a living sacrifice and build a "Bethel" — or house of God — "gate to heaven." The wonder and beauty of that place (or commitment) must be so precious that I will simply not be influenced to conform to this world in which I live. I will be transformed by the daily renewal of my mind. Such renewal is largely a review of my relationship established at Bethel. I must "go back to Bethel" real often. When I do then I shall *know* your good and perfect and acceptable daily will for my life. Praise your holy name!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear God, you have been speaking to me most clearly through my praise to you, and for you. I do right

now renew my mind — I see Jesus lifted up for my sins — I see him raised from the dead. I want to imagine the glory he has with you as intercessor for me at your right hand. I remember I am not my own; my whole body has already been given you as a "thank offering." Dear Lord, forgive me for sacrilege, i.e., of using for myself what belongs to you. Dear God, deepen my commitment.

"Faultfinders" — since you find no fault in me, why should I be looking for fault in others?

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

²⁷When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him, ²⁸shouting, "Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against our people and our law and this place. And besides, he has brought Greeks into the temple area and defiled this holy place." ²⁹(They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple area.) — *Acts 21:27-29, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

(I am trying to get behind these words and see this record as you see it.) How silly and pointless must the action of your children seem to you. You are not defiled by the presence of Gentiles in a special

building. Dear Lord, that we can be satisfied with the form and not the substance — what a loss when we settle for the shadow and not the substance. Why are men so willing to believe a lie? Satan is the answer — he is very much alive and very subtle too. Yea, even *now*. But I rebuke him in the name of my Lord! Out! Out! How much havoc among your people has been caused by gossip! When, oh, when will we check out what is said!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I do not want to take Paul's place — at least to begin the meditation and worship through this text. Have I ever believed an evil report of a brother because of what I have seen or others have said without investigating the facts? Yes, yes. Dear God, help me to guard my eyes, to open my heart and to do to others what I want done to me. How impossible it is to break away from tradition without persecution! In the area of devotion and evangelism this is even more true. Am I ready to make a break when I see it is needed? Dear Lord, I say, "yes," but how will I truly know until it happens with me as it happened with Paul?

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 Paul's courage in not withdrawing from the Gentiles when he arrived in Jerusalem. (2) Thank you for the previous warnings that encouraged Paul in the knowledge that you were aware of all that happened. (3) Thank you for zeal that *can* be directed toward truth and love — as well as toward error and hatred. (4) Thank you that the former "holy place" has been replaced with our bodies as his temple. (5) Thank you that we really know what defiles "the holy place," anything that hinders the full capacity of our mind or body. (6) Thank you for Paul's wide influence — all done in just a few years. (7) Thank you for the new Jerusalem where nothing that defiles will enter.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... and assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple area." How very much both good and bad are built on assumption! We believe man is guilty until proven innocent. Such a sad assumption. Paul assumed certain Jews could be influenced to accept him as not opposed to the law of God, or the temple of God. How sad it is when we depend upon our fertile imagination for what we believe about men and about yourself. These Jews lived in the realm of the senses and not of truth. Paul was more than willing to discuss all the points of "speaking against the law, against the Jews and against the temple." But there

was no way Paul could speak against the mob spirit of prejudiced hatred!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In spite of the turmoil we believe Paul was often lifting his heart in prayer — so do we: (1) When people lie about me, help me to be just as ready to give myself to them and you as was Paul. (2) Help me to resist in the same way as Paul. (3) Remind me again to see just how deep-seated is prejudice. (4) I want to always remember that lying is self-destructive as well as hurtful to others. (5) Help me to risk all as Paul did for friendship with someone other people despised. (6) Deliver me from religious bigots. (7) Guard me lest I become what I despise.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I wonder what messages Paul found in his experience of betrayal — speak to me through these words: (1) "There are men today who will lie for their cause." (2) "Aggressive teaching will produce enemies." (3) "Lo, I am with you always."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Development Ministries Christian workers have gained credibility for the gospel, and economic viability for local churches, through development programs. In many poverty-stricken areas preaching the gospel without meeting the felt needs of the community would be counterproductive. Dealing with the basic root causes of famine, disease and economic deprivation is not as glamorous as emergency aid in a major crisis or disaster, but far more effective.

Points for prayer: (1) *Christian churches, agencies and missions* with development projects. Many agencies have been specifically set up to fund and initiate such schemes. Pray that all projects selected may be those most beneficial to local communities, and pray for a wise selection of appropriate technology that can be continued and expanded locally without foreign input. (2) *The planting and strengthening of local churches* through these projects. The whole ministry should be geared to bring the gospel to the people helped, and to plant churches, or, where churches already exist, to enable them to raise the finances to support local and missionary work and workers.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK FOUR

—Saturday—

Since I wrote what is found below another nine years have come and gone — I have not missed one day with you except in sickness. I need you today more than ever!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

El Olam — God of Eternity or God the Everlasting. The older I become the more fleeting this life becomes. How soon most of life has come and gone. Perhaps I shall be given more than the three score and ten. The three score has already disappeared, only eight years on the ten are left. Will there be four score? Even if you in your mercy grant me these many days, my eightieth birthday will be the consummation of a vapor. I am so glad to worship before One who is “from everlasting to everlasting.” It surely seems to me that all men are looking for the security — the stability of One who never changes. One who is always full of love and knowledge and care and personal concern — One who has not altered at all from yesterday — will be just the same Eternal, loving Father tomorrow! Blessed be thy holy name!

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

My Everlasting Father is also my eternal Savior. I honestly do not know how to relate to infinity. The limitations of time, the infirmities and physical presence of the body all tend to hinder my understanding or participation in this quality of your nature. I only want to pause here at your feet as a little child before his father. I am full of wonder and unknowing amazement! At the same time I am taken up in praise that I have found a rock — a solid rock — a solid everlasting dwelling place — a lodestar that never moves. Dear Father, I love you!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

I am sure I could become more lucid if I were to open any number of books I have on my shelf, but this is

another form of sin — pride. I am only opening my heart to you — not men. How is it that I know time is fleeting and death is sure and yet I live like there was no time and death but a word? I am glad for time and I do not fear death — I welcome it! But I want to live in the light of truth not sensual thoughtlessness. Forgive me. There are so many sins that have their roots in this attitude. Forgive me, I can and do name them.

“Flattering” — the most often and the most obvious expression of this sin in on myself. Oh, to see myself as you do! I then would not either think more nor less of myself than what is true. I could then also think the truth about others.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

³⁰The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut. ³¹While they were trying to kill him, news reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar. —Acts 21:30,31, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, how I do want to see these words from your perspective! This is what the Holy Spirit had

said would happen. But in it you have your child. Are some of those who were beating and mistreating Paul also some of your children? How sad! How very sad! Most of those who ran and cried and joined in the beating really did not know what they were doing — and so it has been for centuries of time! Here is a repeat performance of the treatment of your Son. In the same place he suffered and for the same charge. How strange! To bring order out of chaos by those who do not believe. The Roman soldiers act with more meaning than your own children!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

What possible purpose did Paul have for doggedly determining that he would go to Jerusalem? Here is the fulfillment of the Spirit's words. What has Paul obtained to the advantage of our Lord? Here are some possible answers that at least speak to my heart. (1) Paul demonstrated for all who had eyes to see and hearts to believe that he was unselfishly interested in his own people. (2) Paul exemplified total trust in yourself — indeed he did not count his life as dear unto himself! (3) Paul called national attention to the cause of Jesus of Nazareth who was indeed the long sought for Messiah! (4) In all these ways and others Paul set before me an example of dedication.

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 so much for the stirring up of a general interest — no one was unmoved. (2) Thank you for the focus of interest — Paul was well able (by your help) to turn this to your advantage. (3) Thank you for the destruction of one temple so we can identify the real temple of the living God. (4) Thank you for "law and order" ordained of yourself! (5) Thank you for every Roman soldier who helped — no doubt some of them looked beyond the effect to the cause. (6) Thank you that this happened at Pentecost — no doubt some thought of another year and another Pentecost. (7) Thank you again that this record has been kept all these years.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar." How wonderful that the cause of our Lord was given this same thought from the ministry of our Lord. Whatever else happened people were not going to be able to ignore our Lord. Why is it we do not have today the same effect upon our community? There are several reasons: (1) We do not get out into the mainstream of the community in which we live. We are not involved with these matters that touch the lives and pocketbooks of the people. (2) We somehow do not believe this is our arena of work. We are content to live and move among our own people where we feel comfortable. (3) We do not have a product

that wears well, i.e., by the example of our lives. When people see what we have do they want it? In some cases and places the answer is a resounding "yes," but in many others it is greeted and answered by a cold shoulder.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In just two verses so much happens about which we can pray: (1) There are various ways of polarizing interest — in my city how can I do it for you? (2) How did Paul relate what was happening to the prophecy of Agabus? (3) How did Paul relate this beating with the Holy Spirit's message to go to Jerusalem? (4) Dear Lord, give me wisdom in attempting an answer to the two previous requests. (5) Why drag Paul out of the temple? Open my heart to see just how wrong sincere people can be! (6) May I appreciate more than ever your ministries in the form of civil authorities. (7) Keep me aware that those to whom Paul was delivered, i.e., "the Gentiles" also saved Paul from the Jews. Thank you for your wonderful check and balance.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Was Paul aware of your presence in the midst of this chaos? We believe he was. (1) "I am never confused." (2) "Religious opposition does not mean I am against you." (3) "If I do not want a man to die, he will not die."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

International Conferences — Points for prayer: (1) *The Lausanne Movement*, which inaugurated great conferences in Berlin (1966), Lausanne (1974), Thailand (1980) had another major conference in 1989 in Lausanne. The constituency being Evangelicals in all Protestant churches and agencies. (2) *The World Evangelical Fellowship*, representing national and regional Evangelical Fellowships around the world, has held a number of regional and international conferences, the last being in Wheaton (1983). (3) *The Explo Mission Congresses*, which were organized by Campus Crusade in 1972 and 1974, culminated in 1985 in a worldwide satellite link-up of 300,000 believers in 53 countries.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK FIVE

—Sunday—

All things are mine — because I worship One who himself is the source and sum of sufficiency. What a privilege to worship him!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

El Shaddai — All-mighty, all-sufficient God (Exod. 3:15; 6:3). It is one thing to have and exercise total might; it is quite another thing to be absolute in sufficiency, i.e., to be able, to be willing to meet every need of every man. But this is just what this name implies. Praise and adoration surely arise from my heart to you for being the all-sufficient one for the entire world population. All men are in need in three areas: (1) The desires of the flesh. I believe there is more than enough food for all men if it were adequately distributed. I know thousands starve to death every day — possibly every hour — and I am shocked and frustrated. This is not your fault. Sex is another gigantic desire of the flesh. Marriage is your answer — it has a track record of success far ahead of anything else. Thank you!

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Praise you for myself, i.e., to you! (2) You are *all* sufficient in the area of “the strong desire for things.” How many “things” did our Lord accumulate during his lifetime? How many houses did he have? How much land did he own? What kind of wardrobe did Jesus leave? Do I *really* believe his words? He said: “A man’s *real* life, *real* happiness, *real* fulfillment, does not consist in the abundance of things.” How can I better make these words a part of my life? (3) You are the all-sufficient One in the area of the “pride of life,” i.e., status and acceptance among men. Am I ready to accept your value system?

How do you personally relate to the all-sufficiency of God, and God who is El Shaddai?

CONFESSION OF SIN

How easy it is to admit my lack — my sin in this relationship. It seems I have always been too much self-sufficient. When will I truly learn my sufficiency is

not in myself, but in you alone? Any accomplishments are not mine, but yours. Any possessions are your gifts — to be used to bring honor to you, not myself. Dear God, that men might see whatever good work you have helped me do and glorify you! Forgive me for the sin of pride.

“*Scoffing*” — I am guilty. Whatever seems to lack purpose, or quality, becomes a source of disdain to me. I have scoffed and lashed out at those involved. Dear God, how do my very best efforts look to you? You judge desire and motive not accomplishments. Oh, oh, may I leave such judgment with you! Forgive.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

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

HIS WORD

³²He at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd. When the rioters saw the commander and his soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

³³The commander came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. Then he asked who he was and what he had done. ³⁴Some in the crowd shouted one thing and some another, and since the commander could not get at the truth because of the uproar, he ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks. —Acts 21:32-34, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

We want to run with the commander to where Paul is being beaten by the crowd of Jews. Before he arrives

you are there! What did you see? I'm sure it was much different than the troops or their leader. Yea, much different than we do now. Let me meditate upon what you could have seen: (1) You saw a reenactment of the mistreatment of your dear Son — the same men, the same hatred, the same willful ignorance. (2) You saw the wounds willingly received by Paul, who was completing or accepting in his body the suffering of our Lord — such an example of unselfish giving of His life. (3) You saw a group of Roman soldiers who knew not that there was a God in heaven. Any one of them and each one of them was the object of your love and concern. How unspeakably sad that the one thing that was intended to unite all men (your Son) has now divided them and prevented your expression of love for all.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I am much too glib and judgmental. How we have divided — how easily we fight and separate from each other! How confused is the lost world in which I live! The world in which I live knows about you less than the Roman soldiers. Dear Lord, we have less promise of the progress of your word, i.e., in some areas, than Paul had in Jerusalem. On the other hand, there are your dear children being treated today as Paul was treated then. I think of Christians in China and many other places where persecution is a reality! I think also of the marvelous results Paul's living sacrifice produced in the city who crucified our Lord. Paul was catapulted by this experience to the ends of the earth in a proclamation of your word!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Indeed, indeed! (1) Thank you for the immediate response of the commander — as we have said before: without this Paul would have been dead. (2) Thank you for the fear of reprisal that filled the hearts of the Jews. (3) Thank you for the strange and wonderful ways you have of protecting your children. (4) Thank you that Paul was never bound in his spirit — even if this was the beginning of a long imprisonment. (5) Thank you for the sense of justice prevailing in the handling of the prisoner. (6) Thank you for the fair reporting done by Dr. Luke. (7) Thank you that we are given liberty to speak your word openly today.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Some in the crowd shouted one thing and some another." How typical of some crowds I have been in! As you view the body of your dear Son is this the circumstance you see? (1) Most are led and not leaders. This is both good and bad. When the purpose of following is clearly communicated and that purpose

is your purpose, it is good. But when hatred and excitement are the leading factors, it is very bad. (2) When men are unhappy with themselves they become easy prey for those who can show them who to blame. A scapegoat is gladly welcomed. All the griping and complaining in our present world is because we are unhappy with ourselves.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What was Paul praying in the midst of his suffering? Here are points for prayer: (1) Keep me aware of proper perspective — "This too will pass." (2) Help me to even rejoice inasmuch as my Lord was so persecuted. (3) May I remember that you are always at work. (4) Use the misguided zeal of the religious to attract the unbeliever to at least listen. (5) Give me the deep determination that filled the heart of Paul. (6) How precisely did the prophecy of Agabus come to pass! Keep me aware that you are always aware. (7) I want to remember: we are confused and do not know — you are never confused and know all.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Above the din of the voices of men speak to me in these verses: (1) "Paul was beaten often and did not die from the beatings." (2) "Where is your unselfishness when compared to Paul?" (3) "Paul balanced his part and my part in my will for his life — you can too."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Medical Mission Work — Points for prayer: (1) *Adaptability.* Governments demand higher standards, and in some lands, are taking over all non-government health services. Medical missionary work must constantly be assessed as to its usefulness in changing circumstances. The present trend is for fewer but better equipped and staffed mission hospitals, and an emphasis on preventive medicine. (2) *Supply of needs in funds and personnel* — that the mission boards and national churches may know how best to apportion them in accordance with the spiritual benefits to be reaped. Such programs can too often become the master rather than the servant! (3) *Usefulness in winning people to the Lord and for the churches.* The primary aim of medical missionary work can sometimes be forgotten in the busyness of a large institution. Yet many can be and are won by this means. Pray for the right balance between medical and spiritual needs.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK FIVE

—Monday—

Rule in my emotions — take captive of my will — take possession of my mind. These requests are serious — I know you can do it — make me willing.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Adonai — Our Ruler, Master, Lord, Owner. (Hab. 3:19; Ezek. 8:1; Psa. 35:23; 38:15). How exceedingly good it is to worship before you this day! I gladly take my place as a servant ready to hear what my master wants to ask of me. I am here to acknowledge you as the ruler and Lord and owner of all men. More and more I am disturbed that so few know you! Dear Master, how can I help to spread the glory and beauty of your name over all the earth? Oh, oh, if we can publish your word in the Pictorial form in 10 languages, I can at least speak to 400,000 to 500,000 people. Thank you for speaking this into my heart.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

My ruler or owner. Oh, my Father, if I am owned by you, then I must express this relationship in fact, in truth, in deed. I am not my own; I belong to you. Dear Lord, I do want to express in a most practical sense my responsibility — open my mind to see just where this can be directed. I praise you for the amazing fact that your answers to my prayers take the form of what men would call coincidences, i.e., such things just “happen.” Many, many answers are so subtle that they must be seen through the eyes of faith before they can be identified as your work in us both willing and doing your good pleasure! Bless your Holy name!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

The words of my Savior and Lord surely take on new meaning as I begin to relate to you as Lord, or owner. The parable of the talents, of the vineyard, of the virgins — how often did my Lord speak of this

relationship — indeed it seems to be the *one* basic expression of our living for you. Forgive me and move me into a glad willingness to spend and be spent for you.

“Pride of possessions.” How shall I discover this sin? Whenever anything, or anyone becomes more important than, or of equal importance to me as yourself, I have sinned. Time, energy, money, ability, thoughts — how are these entities used? For you? For *things*?

What personal sins do you want to confess? 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 greatly 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

³⁴Some in the crowd shouted one thing and some another, and since the commander could not get at the truth because of the uproar, he ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks. ³⁵When Paul reached the steps, the violence of the mob was so great he had to be carried by the soldiers. ³⁶The crowd that followed kept shouting, “Away with him!”

³⁷As the soldiers were about to take Paul into the barracks, he asked the commander, “May I say something to you?”

“Do you speak Greek?” he replied. ³⁸“Aren’t you the Egyptian who started a revolt and led four thousand terrorists out into the desert some time ago?”

³⁹Paul answered, “I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. Please let me speak to the people.” —Acts 21:34-39, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

We cannot but admire the commander Claudius

Lysias. He has a most difficult task. How did you view the scene unfolding before us? Does the reasonable, helpful ministry of such men go unnoticed? No, no! We can read of another army officer and know that you had a great interest in his daily conduct (Acts 10:1ff.). The two areas of your particular interest were prayer and giving, but the whole effort to be responsible was not forgotten or ignored. How good to affirm that in you, of you and before you all men live and move and have their being. How many men have come and gone on the scene of life! All the crowd, all the Roman army is gone and millions of others like them are gone, but not from your memory.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How concerned Paul was for your name — to speak for your Son. To tell his own people the real meaning of their scriptures, but most of all, how God had spoken to him. Do I have such an overwhelming desire to let all men know of you? Particularly, do I have such a desire to let all men know that there need not be this terrible religious confusion in which we live? Paul was looking for and sensitive to the opportunities. Men do and will misunderstand and misrepresent — no bother — the word *must* get out! I am ready to gladly give my life for this goal. Paul's body must have been crying out in pain, but his heart was crying out in love. The voice of love was louder than the voice of pain.

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

Thank you, oh, thank you: (1) For a commander in the Roman army who wanted "the truth" on any subject. I do verily believe there are commanders in the U.S. army who look for the same thing. (2) For the fact that the cry and desire of the crowd does not always prevail. (3) For Paul's dedicated knowledge — all he knew was dedicated to the One he knew. (4) For law and order that has overcome unnumbered terrorist attacks. (5) For Paul's citizenship — it saved his life here and hereafter. (6) For the hope that "springs eternal" in the human heart — that in spite of many futile efforts this one will succeed. (7) For the Aramaic language we can study today and read as Paul read.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... a citizen of no ordinary city." To Paul and the commander (although it appears the commander was not listening — or maybe he did not know) this meant Paul was a Roman citizen for this was the privilege of some cities in the Roman empire. To us it means we "are free born" too. Our city is in heaven.

It has eternal foundations — its builder and planner (architect) is God. We are just strangers and sojourners in this earth. Anyone from another country talks about it to anyone who will listen to him. Everything is compared with "the old country." Should not this be our interest and attitude? Nothing here can compare with the beauty and wonder we will see and experience "over there." What excitement and anticipation wells up within us to be "at home with the Lord."

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

No doubt Paul had much about which to pray — so do we: (1) Keep me listening to your voice of truth from your word. (2) In the face of the rejection of men let me read again of your acceptance of me. (3) I want to appreciate more fully Paul's willingness to suffer for you. (4) Give me the creative courage in the face of opposition I see here. (5) Open my eyes to the influence of one well placed testimony. (6) How often is mistaken identity a real problem — may men always know who you are! (7) May my heavenly citizenship be as important to me as it should.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

There is much you can say to me in these verses: (1) "The voices of men will always hinder the reception of the truth." (2) "Help can and does come from very unexpected sources." (3) "You will often be mistaken for someone or something other than you are."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Medical Workers. The evangelizing and discipling of medical workers. Because more people pass through the hospitals of the world than through its churches, the IHCF seeks to win for Christ and train medical personnel — doctors, dentists, nurses, para-medicals, etc. — to share their faith with those whom they serve medically. Pray for: (1) *The conversion to Christ* of many members of the healing team. (2) *The witness of Christians* in the healing team to be both wise and bold to patients and colleagues. (3) *Christian medical workers serving in hazardous circumstances.* Communist takeovers mean the closing of churches, but not of hospitals — hence the strategic value of this work.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK FIVE

—Tuesday—

My sufficiency is in you. I am glad to enter this relationship and renew my sufficiency.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Jah — The Independent One (Exodus 15:2; Isa. 12:2; 38:11; Psa. 46:1) — the eternal One, the self-existing One — the same as “I am that I am.” How awesome a thought to know One who is totally apart from all else and everyone else. One who is sufficient unto himself. Man attempts this in attitude and action, but really never achieves it. Man must have fellowship with his fellow creatures to be complete — most of all man must have fellowship with you to find rest unto his soul. Man was not created because you had a need, but once man was created he met a need. Man was created for companionship and fellowship with you. It is a solace to our inward being to worship Someone who needs nothing and yet finds joy in my fellowship.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

The Independent One for me. He is an everlasting refuge and defense. “He himself is not tempted with evil” for he has no need that is not already supplied. This is *only one* aspect of his nature. If such were the only quality I would find you quite foreboding and so separate from me that I could only hide in despair. Your separateness and independence is for my protection and defense. Here is One whom Satan cannot tempt — One whom the devil must fear. I rush to this Rock of Ages to hide myself in him. You love me and understand me and only long to comfort and help me.

How do you personally relate to the independence of God, and God who is Jah — The Independent One? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is easy to say that I have often played God and found myself woefully lacking. I am not at all sufficient unto myself. In any area of life I come up very short: (1) My intelligence is like a little child, and not a very bright little child. (2) My moral strength is as water in consistency — the track record is so spotty it

beggars description. (3) My social conduct is not at all perfect. In all these areas and several others I need forgiveness and how I want to hurry into the arms of One who will make up my lack! It is a sin to “*despise authority.*” When I want my own way and insist on doing it myself, I have sinned in a serious manner. Dear God, I plead guilty and want to truly repent.

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

HIS WORD

⁴⁰Having received the commander’s permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the crowd. When they were all silent, he said to them in Aramaic:

22 “Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense.”

²When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet.

Then Paul said: ³“I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. ⁴I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, ⁵as also the high priest and all the council can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.

⁶“About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. ⁷I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, ‘Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?’

⁸“ ‘Who are you, Lord?’ I asked.

“‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,’ he replied. ‘My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me.’ — *Acts 21:40-22:9, NIV*”

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I know you have no problem in understanding what to us are “foreign” languages. The commander understood Greek — we do not know that he followed the words of Paul in the Aramaic language. It was the language of the Old Testament scriptures — one that these zealous Jews so much appreciated. I want to hear him all over again — with you I want to listen: Paul is reaching out to the crowd — nay, you are reaching out through him. Paul is sincere as he addresses them as “brothers and fathers” — (your sons).

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

What has changed me? It has been — and continues to be — a personal encounter with the living Christ! Such an encounter is *not* without the word — indeed all I know of you issues from what you have said through the nine writers of the New Testament, and the several more of the Old Testament. But it is apart from the word — for the application is apart, i.e., does not automatically happen to all who read or hear this blessed story. It is the Spirit who gives life to the letter — it is the Holy Spirit who through the word enlivens the word to bring conviction of sin — righteousness — (his righteousness and my lack of it) and judgment — there is no automatic result.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Thank you for: (1) Paul’s defense — in it I see myself! (2) The wonderful education of Paul — which both helped and hindered him. (3) The total zeal of Paul — even to death. (4) The use of the precious term “brothers” — to each other and to our blessed Lord. (5) The interesting time you chose to reveal yourself at high noon — not hidden — out where all could see and know.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me.” It would be most instructive if we knew in what tone of voice Paul said this. Was he sad? Was he regretting this fact? Was he disappointed? To his companions something had happened but they could not define it. We could ask these men with Saul and they would tell you of the unusual light. If the light continued as long as the voice, it must have been for two or three minutes. (Please read all the words our Lord spoke to Saul as in 9:1ff.; 22:9,10; 26:12ff.) Why did the Lord arrange it this way? So we could exercise faith in his power. Either we believe Saul as a reliable witness or we do

not.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

As Paul speaks to the crowd from the steps of the tower of Antonia he moves me to pray: (1) May I be as ready to speak on any and all occasions as was Paul. (2) How I want to know the heart language of those to whom I speak. (3) Humble my spirit until I can love those who hate me. (4) Give me admiration for the capacity of dedication since this is what you can use. (5) Keep me aware that it is very possible to be sincerely wrong. (6) May I see my Lord in the bright light of his power and love as I read your word. (7) I want to believe in my heart of hearts that to serve men is to serve you — to hurt men is to hurt you.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Having ears to hear let me hear! (1) “All men are potential brothers and sisters.” (2) “The new birth is the one most important preparation for service.” (3) “I am alive and sensitive in the lives and bodies of men and women.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Missionary Aviation What an essential means for evangelism and church growth the Christian “air force” has become! In many areas access is difficult by any other means. There are about 476 aircraft in 48 lands that are used to transport Christian workers, supplies, hospital patients and aid. Without this service, ministries would be slowed or stopped. Many mission agencies have their own aircraft, but others exist solely for the purpose of serving churches and missions.

Points for prayer: (1) *Missionary Aviation Fellowship*, which is unique and deserving of special prayer as the pioneer of this ministry and the largest agency, with four branches operating in over 22 countries, flying over 30,000 hours per year. JAARS (Jungle Aviation and Radio Service), is a vital component of SIL’s Bible translation ministry in 11 lands. (2) *The supply of all needs*. Although the overall savings in time and finance are enormous, this is high-tech ministry and costly for both the operators and users.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Come Thou Fount of ev’ry blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above;
Praise the mount—I’m fixed upon it—
Mount of Thy redeeming love.

WEEK FIVE

—Wednesday—

There will never be a time when you do not love me. I gladly renew this truth in worship before you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Jehovah — the Eternal, Ever-Loving One. This is the name most often used concerning yourself in the Old Testament. I do want to try to lift up my heart to you as the Great Eternal One! You who inhabit eternity! You have no beginning and no end — the self-existent One! How many men upon the earth realize just who you are? Less than half — of those who do, how many know of the reality of your Being? So very few! This does not change your Being. There never will be a day or a night when you do not love all men with a love that cannot stop. For just one man, I want to fall down before you in praise and deep gratitude!

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Jehovah — *Eternal* — *Ever-Loving One* for me! I take great strength from your strength — I find everlasting value in my life because of your Eternal Life. I want to be much more loving — and much more longsuffering in my love because of the exhaustless ever-loving attitude you have toward me. There are so many times, places and people where I acted as if there was no eternal heaven or eternal hell — as if there was no wonderfully loving God who cared enough to send his Son to die for my sins. Dear God, you did not change because I did. I came back to you and found you just as I left you. The Eternal, Ever-Loving One. Praise your name!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

What I have just prayed is part of my confession of sin. How many hundreds of times have I confessed my sin to you? Does it not get monotonous? Not if my sin is fresh — not if my sin is new — not if my guilt is current! Indeed it is. Oh, eternal One I shall be so glad to one day inhabit eternity with you where I shall be removed from sin, where Satan has been taken out of the environment of man. Right now I

want to open up my heart and fully, freely confess my sin and need. Forgive me. I am so glad your forgiveness is like yourself — eternal.

“Haughty eyes” — It is almost humorous to see puny man looking down on one another, or worse yet, looking down upon what you have done or said or are. Forgive us — forgive me.

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.
God will take care of you,
Through every day,
O’er all the way;
He will take care of you,
God will take care of you.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁰“ ‘What shall I do, Lord,’ I asked.
“ ‘Get up,’ the Lord said, ‘and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.’ ¹¹My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me.

¹²“A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. ¹³He stood beside me and said ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very moment I was able to see him.

¹⁴“Then he said, ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. ¹⁵You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. ¹⁶And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’

¹⁷“When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance ¹⁸and saw the Lord speaking. ‘Quick!’ he said to me. ‘Leave Jerusalem

immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.'

¹⁹“ ‘Lord,’ I replied, ‘these men know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. ²⁰And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.’

²¹“Then the Lord said to me, ‘Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’”

²²The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, “Rid the earth of him! He’s not fit to live!” —Acts 22:10-22, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It is good to remember what you *didn't* say to Saul as well as what you did say. Surely the most remarkable fact is that you did not tell him what to do to be saved. This wonderful task was given to a disciple — not a preacher — not an elder — not even an apostle, but to just a humble, unknown learner of our Lord. It surely seems here that Jesus is speaking with demanding authority. “What it has been assigned for you to do.” I hear you Lord! I hear you! We do know some things about the disciple who spoke to Saul: (1) He was a devout observer of the law. (2) He was highly respected by all the Jews living in Damascus.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

What a message Ananias had for Saul! Here is Saul’s assignment: (1) God has chosen you to know his will. Evidently for salvation and service. (2) To see the Righteous One. I place myself — as much as possible — in the place of Saul. I have received my inward spiritual sight. I believe you have chosen me through the good news, as you have all others who will respond to your voice through the preaching. I have seen the only one who is righteous. I am delighted that he has decided to give me his righteousness.

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 Saul’s wonderful question: “What shall I do, Lord?” (2) Thank you that we tell men what to do to be saved. (3) Thank you that each of us are in a different sense — but nonetheless real — “a chosen vessel.” (4) Thank you for the wonder and meaning of Christian baptism. (5) Thank you for Paul’s prayer life — what an example and pattern for me. (6) Thank you for Stephen and his testimony — it was God’s goad in Saul’s heart. (7) Thank you for the courage of Paul in telling the truth even when he knew it meant rejection and imprisonment.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... the blood of your martyr Stephen.” The term

martyr could also be translated “witness.” Our Lord told the apostles they would be his witnesses — and each one of them was called upon to give their lives for their testimony. Stephen’s blood — like that of Abel, cries from the ground. What does it say? (1) I loved the truth of salvation more than my life. We can say that and not die a violent death. We all give our lives for something. (2) I did not run from a difficult situation. I did not ask for it, but once I was in it, I did not run from it.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What a great effort Paul put forth to reach his beloved fellow kinsmen — in what he said there are many petitions: (1) I want to remember you do not tell men what to do to be saved — I do! (2) Keep my eyes closed to this world — but open to your world. (3) May I remember that I am chosen to do a work no one else can do. (4) Thank you that I can see your blessed “Righteous One” any time I am willing to look. (5) Make me a witness of what I have seen and heard from you. (6) I know some men will not hear your word — show me who they are. (7) Remind me of all the associations in my past that can become your goad to my conscience.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these several verses there are several messages to me: (1) “Day by day it will be told you from my word what I want you to do.” (2) “You are the only witness I have in several places.” (3) “Some men will never understand, but many will.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Missionary Navy A number of missions use ships for a wide variety of Christian ministries. Among these are: (1) *Operation Mobilisation's MV Doulos and MV Logos* with up to 450 crew and personnel at any one time involved in evangelism, ministry to Christians and literature distribution in ports around the world. (2) *YWAM's MV Anastasis* with up to 600 serving the Lord at any one time. A wide variety of ministries are based on the ship — schools of evangelism, discipleship training, evangelism, a university, and an aid ministry in areas of disaster or need. (3) *Small boat outreach* which is vital for many small island and coastal communities in the Pacific, Caribbean and Indonesia.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK FIVE

—Thursday—

We are “your workmanship” — but you are not finished with us. Fashion me just today as you want me.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“O come, let us worship and kneel before *Jehovah Our Maker*” (Psa. 95:6; Eph. 2:22). There is so much in this word: This is a reference to your work after creation. As Paul says in Eph. 2:10 “We are his *workmanship*.” It is common knowledge that the Greek term here is the one from whom we have the English word “poem.” How wonderful to know you are at work composing poems of each life. You are in the business of making something beautiful out of each person. Poetry has such an appeal — it touches us more deeply than any other form of expression. What if man refuses to yield to you? Paul’s expression has reference to all Christians not all men.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Dear God, I want to be so pliable in your hand that you can fashion a poem in the clay that is me. This surely gives a new reason for loving poetry. “Could my heart but see Creation as God sees it — from within: See His grace behind its beauty, see his will behind its force; see the flame of life shoot upward when the April days begin; see the wane of life rush outward from its pure eternal source” (*Edmond G.A. Holms*). What is here said so beautifully of physical creation is far more meaningfully said of the new creation. My loving, all-wise, all-powerful Potter, Artist, Poet, I yield myself gladly to you. Write another stanza of my life.

How do you personally relate to the poetry of God, and God who is “Jehovah Our Maker”? Speak it out or write it out.

CONFESSION OF SIN

We have such a strong aversion to poor poetry — what is sometimes called “doggerel.” Why is this true? Because such is a reflection on the Great Poet. All our efforts to wax poetic are but the yapping of a mongrel compared to the beauty of your heart expressed in life. Dear God, forgive my stupid expression! Help me to quietly yield to your use in what you

want to say through me today.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

²³As they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, ²⁴the commander ordered Paul to be taken into the barracks. He directed that he be flogged and questioned in order to find out why the people were shouting like this. ²⁵As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, “Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn’t even been found guilty?” ²⁶When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and reported it. “What are you going to do?” he asked. “This man is a Roman citizen.” ²⁷The commander went to Paul and asked, “Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?” “Yes, I am,” he answered. ²⁸Then the commander said, “I had to pay a big price for my citizenship.” “But I was born a citizen,” Paul replied. ²⁹Those who were about to question him withdrew immediately. The commander himself was alarmed when he realized that he had put Paul, a Roman citizen, in chains. —Acts 22:23-29, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What impact will the cries of the mob make upon you? I’m sure you can hear them yet. No doubt there

have been many since who cried out equal blasphemy! How loud are some men in their blatant rejection of eternal life. Then there is the larger group represented by the army commander. He is more confused than ever. He thought Paul was an Egyptian. He turns out to be a Greek-speaking Jew. When he lets him speak he talks Aramaic. Now he finds a man of influence on his hands whom all men seem to hate. When he proceeds to do the one thing he believes will loosen his tongue, he finds he is a Roman citizen. He, like a multitude today, is confused.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How easy this is to do: (1) When it is right — and when is it not right to “claim your rights”? How I have struggled with this principle — I’m sure that in Paul we have an example of what should be done. (2) How open and honest is Paul under any and all conditions. So must I be regardless of the price. (3) Honesty and openness always honor the one we serve and ultimately it honors all. (4) I believe there are officials in our own government who could be strongly influenced for you if there were only someone like Paul to tell them. Dear Lord, if you want me for this task, here am I.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for even an army barracks (the Tower of Antonia) where protection and rest can be found. (2) Thank you that Paul was willing, but not anxious, to receive a flogging — he had had several. (3) Thank you for all the rights of a Roman citizen — many of them transferred into rights as American citizens. (4) Thank you that a sense of justice does prevail in the most unlikely places. (5) Thank you that I can be a prisoner to King Jesus. (6) Thank you for all the rights of a citizen of the heavenly country. (7) Thank you that one day *all* injustice will be put into balance.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . I was born a citizen.” I was born a citizen of America. What a priceless privilege! I have also been to 28 countries and I have seen how much more Americans have of everything. Of everything but gratitude. I found many people in India or Burma who have much more appreciation of what God has given them than the average American has for the hundred-fold God has given him. All of which demonstrates in loving example the truth of our Lord’s words: “A man’s life (or happiness) does not consist in the abundance of what he has.” At the same time, neither does a man’s life consist in forgetting or ignoring what he has. A man’s real happiness is found in living on this earth in whatever country we are a citizen in just the same way my Lord did who was a citizen of the eternal country called heaven. Our Lord could have said He also represented “no ordi-

nary city” — it is called the new Jerusalem — the city four square!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Paul had been beaten many times — but if he could avoid it he did. I find requests in his action: (1) How tame are all my efforts to serve you when compared with Paul — move me to more meaningful effort. (2) Move me to ask questions that probe motives. (3) How glad I am to claim the rights of my heavenly citizenship. (4) Etch upon my heart these words: “There is therefore *now* no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1). (5) Do I know what it means to be “born free” by the new birth? Help me! (6) My Lord said of Lazarus, and the commander must have said of Paul, “loose him and let him go” — speak these words to my heart. (7) Even though Paul was still in jail he was the most liberated man there.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me through these verses: (1) “Four walls and iron bars is not the only prison.” (2) “Use whatever means possible to give the gospel a hearing.” (3) “A very large price has been paid for your eternal citizenship.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Christian Radio and Television — Points for prayer: (1) *Agencies specializing in programming and broadcasting.* There were 1,450 Christian radio and TV stations worldwide in 1980; the number is now larger. There are over 13 major Protestant interdenominational agencies with international outreach — the largest being FEBC in the Far East, TWR with 750 missionaries in five continents and broadcasting in 75 languages, WRMF (Voice of the Andes, and missionary radio pioneer) in Ecuador, FEBA in Seychelles, ELWA (SIM) in Liberia, IBRA in Europe, etc. The USSR is the major nation for international broadcasting, with 310 hours of broadcasting Communist propaganda daily, but the 893 hours transmitted daily by Christian stations exceeds it by far — though with less transmitting power. (2) *The listeners.* There are 1,200 radio receivers in the world and, potentially, most of the world’s population could have access to a set. It is estimated that there were 960 million regular listeners to Christian broadcasts in 1980.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK FIVE

—Friday—

It is such a blessing to be able to renew my relationship with you every day. It is your very nature to renew me — I do so need it!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Jehovah-Jireh — “The Lord will provide, or the Lord will see” (Gen. 22:14). “. . . His *pre-vision* means His *provision*” (Lockyer). Bless your name which includes so very, very much! How well does this name describe my relationship to you! Surely this would be my testimony for the past 71 years. You saw my need and moved to meet it. Let me try to list the ways — I shall only mention those which have as much application to others as they do to myself: (1) Parents who loved me and provided food, shelter and clothes. They also gave me love. You provided through them. (2) A school system — teachers who no doubt were under paid and gave unselfishly of themselves — but actually it was your pre-vision that worked through this provision. We would have no such free school system without faith moving our founding fathers.

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

Jehovah-Jireh to me. I have combined the two concepts for this day and this name How glad I am to express my praise and thanksgiving to you. (3) You provided me companions of a moral upright kind — the simple joys of childhood were surely mine. I did not mingle with thieves or drug users, or immoral people. I was not religious — I had little or no faith in you — but your dearest prevision gave me this provision. (4) You gave me associations that led to my salvation — for which I shall never cease to thank you and shout for joy — hallelujah! You did indeed show me the lamb slain from the foundation of the world — just for me!

How do you personally relate to the provisions of God, and God who is Jehovah-Jireh for me?

CONFESSION OF SIN

That I should ever forget or become indifferent to your wonderful provision would be — and is, the sin

of all sins! Forgive me. How gloriously you have provided in the work you have given me to do! Dear God, I have taken the credit when it all belonged to you. Forgive me! I have been, and am now delighted to teach, preach, write, but most of all to evangelize and make learners of your wonderful self! Too much emphasis has been placed on physical appearance of books — buildings — etc., forgive me! Standing and status among men has at times been my sin — forgive! Dear God, I freely confess that all I am and have is from you and that not of myself — it is your gift!

“*Insult on insult.*” Have I ever thought injury or hurt or disappointment came from you and returned in kind? Yes. Oh, what blindness — what total selfishness. 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

“Give me thy heart,” says the Father above,
No gift so precious to Him as our love,
Softly He whispers wherever thou art,
“Gratefully trust me, and give me thy heart.”

“Give me thy heart,
Give me thy heart.”
Hear the soft whisper, wherever thou art;
From this dark world He would draw thee apart,
Speaking so tenderly,
“Give me thy heart.”

HIS WORD

³⁰The next day, since the commander wanted to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the Sanhedrin to assemble. Then he brought Paul and had him stand before them.

Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, **23** “My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day.” ²⁴At this the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth. ²⁵Then Paul said to him,

“God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! You sit there to judge me according to the law, yet you yourself violate the law by commanding that I be struck!”

“Those who were standing near Paul said, “You dare to insult God’s high priest?””

“Paul replied, “Brothers, I did not realize that he was the high priest; for it is written: ‘Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.’ ” —Acts 22:30-23:5, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How shall we go into the meeting of Paul with the Sanhedrin Council? You have known every man there since he was a small boy. Paul was sincere and child-like. He had indeed turned around and had become as transparent as a child in his faith. But there is another issue involved here: Paul is saying he contrasts with these men. His conscience is clear and theirs has festered, rotted and died. They are even as our Savior described them, white-washed tombs full of all manner of corruption. I hope I have represented the circumstance as it truly was. Forgive me where I am wrong.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How would I react to this same type of treatment? Surely I would need the wisdom that comes down from above. But there would not be time to ask for such wisdom in such a circumstance. In many such times the wisdom we need comes from within as a spontaneous response of the Holy Spirit to the human spirit. Paul was seeking understanding and acceptance on behalf of our Lord. Was Paul struck on the mouth? The text does not say if he was or wasn't. Paul's instant reaction is as if he were struck. The command of the high priest was a slap in the face. We believe Paul. He simply did not know the man who spoke was the high priest. His words of description were accurate. Dear Lord, I do not know how I would have reacted. I am too weak and selfish.

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 gladly do this: (1) Thank you for the sincere concern of Claudius Lysias to find out just who Paul was and what he had done. (2) Thank you for Paul's straightforward expression of honesty and sincerity. (3) Thank you that the encounter was out in the open where the issues could be defined. (4) Thank you that both participants appealed to the law — it only points up the total inadequacy of law to settle any dispute. (5) Thank you for Paul's humility in admitting he was wrong. (6) Thank you that above it all and through it all the great judge of all men was a very interested participant. (7) Thank you for Luke's inspired account that includes all details.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.” If this was a regulation of ancient Israel (and it was), how much more could it relate to a nation, a large share of which professes acceptance of our Lord? Speaking evil we take in the sense in which it is used here. No good is accompanied by accusation against leaders. A constant effort of this type of action can erode confidence and end in anarchy.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

If ever prayer was appropriate it was as Paul spoke to the Sanhedrin. (1) May I be as ready to stand before the judgment seat of my Lord. (2) How could I ever say, “I have fulfilled my duty to God”? (3) Dear Lord, I want to educate my conscience by your word. (4) Why did the high priest want Paul struck on the mouth? (5) Open my heart to be able to answer everyone as I should. (6) I know how destructive criticism can be — guard my mouth!

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Your word speaks to me today: (1) “Speak the truth in love, but speak the truth.” (2) “Expect misunderstanding, but do not seek it.” (3) “Give honor to whom honor is due.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Christian Radio and Television — Points for prayer:
(1) *Effective cooperation* between radio agencies; there has often been too much competitiveness in the past. Three of the major agencies have committed themselves to cooperate in research and broadcasting to make the gospel available to every person on earth in a language they can understand by the year 2000. Christian programs are now broadcast in 103 or more languages, but there are 271 languages with over one million speakers. Pray that this goal may be reached.
(2) *Good reception in target areas.* The wave bands are increasingly crowded. More and more powerful transmitters are needed to shout down competing stations. Much technical skill is needed to transmit effectively. Jamming by Communist states is an ever-present problem. Short programs in minority languages of closed countries are hard to publicize.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Praise ye the Father! for His loving kindness,
Tenderly cares He for His erring children;
Praise Him, ye angels, praise Him in the heavens,
Praise ye Jehovah!

WEEK FIVE

—Saturday—

“Lead on O King eternal, the day of march has come.” Make it so in me!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Lord of hosts (Isa. 1:24). There are many hosts of whom you are Lord. All the angels are your hosts. I cannot imagine what commands are given to and carried out by these angelic beings. Surely this is indeed another whole world. May your will be done today in my life as it is done by those hosts of heaven who obey you there.

You are Lord of the hosts of demons — Satan and all his servants know that one day (in man's terms) they will all be cast into the eternal lake of fire. If we can read such a promise in your word, then such information is not unknown to our adversary and his host. How wonderfully encouraging this is to every one of your present children.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Lord of hosts for me. Dear God, how poorly I do sometimes express my praise! Forgive me for being so terribly inadequate. At the same time I am determined to praise you. I need to, I want to, I will! You are Lord of the host of the spirits of just men made perfect. All those who have departed the body are presently under your Lordship. It must be an exhilarating experience to worship you and serve you in the world of the spirit. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are not dead — you are *not* the God of the dead but of the living. What an immense host of individual living beings inhabit eternity with you.

You are the Lord of the host of your people alive on this earth today! How good it would be to see all of them at the same time — and to know each one as individuals.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Are you the Lord of the host of thoughts that course through my mind in just one day? Every thought

should be, can be brought under your Lordship. What of the host of choices I must make for this day? How can you be Lord of them? If my will is submitted to your will then my choices will be yours. It is so easy to say, Dear God, forgive me. I am not hiding anything from you. I do want my thoughts and decisions to be yours.

“Immodesty” — This is usually associated with women. But men can also be very immodest. In so many ways we are full of self and pride. Immodest in words — immodest in dress — immodest in not preferring others before self. Dear Lord of hosts, forgive me.

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.”
Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him!
How I've proved Him o'er and o'er!
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus!
O for grace to trust Him more!

HIS WORD

“Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, “My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead.” ⁷When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. ⁸(The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.)

⁹There was a great uproar, and some of the teachers of the law who were Pharisees stood up and argued vigorously. “We find nothing wrong with this man,” they said. “What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?” ¹⁰The dispute became so violent that the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them. He ordered the troops to go down and take him

away from them by force and bring him into the barracks. — *Acts 23:6-10, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, what was the purpose of Paul's actions and words in this text? It is so obvious to you — so elementary — but with me — I struggle over it! Dear Lord, I know you were present when the examination took place. Was Paul using a ruse; a foil to escape what could have been at the best another beating? So it seems to me. Am I right? These men were capable of murder — as we shall see later. Did Paul know this and use this ancient controversy between Pharisees and Sadducees to protect himself from their wrath?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I read this text for myself — as your sword to divide the thoughts and intents of my own heart! I have felt often like a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee. I have felt this way — why? Because I have prayed more, taught more, preached more, because I have written more, traveled more or given more than other men — or especially than those I see and know about me. So what? So you Pharisee! You hypocrite! You worst of sinners! To be seen of men is to lose your eternal reward! Dear God, I love you and want to know you!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

This is a most pleasant task: (1) Thank you for Paul's daring wisdom in setting the Pharisees against the Sadducees. (2) Thank you for Paul's heritage, all of which he used for the advantage of the gospel. (3) Thank you for the wonderful hope of the resurrection of the dead. (4) Thank you that the only dead thing about me is my body — when I separate from this body it will be dead — I won't. (5) Thank you for the presence of ministering angels — present right now — right here helping me in ways best known to them and you. (6) Thank you that the spirit world is the real world — into which world I will move right on the other side of my last heart beat!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"We find nothing wrong with this man." Dear Lord, that this could always be our reputation! It was what those who examined him said of my Lord. The words of the governor of Judea are so poignant: "I find no fault in Him." The comparison between Paul's examination and that of our Savior is most striking. (1) There was nothing wrong in either's understanding of the scriptures and in perfect agreement with each other. (2) There was nothing wrong with their relationship to the fading glory of temple worship — both worship in spirit and truth. (3) There was nothing

wrong with their understanding of the place of the law — one came to fulfill it and Paul proclaimed such was fulfilled.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Paul set two groups against each other and escaped, but he needed prayer: (1) Give me the wisdom to be as wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove. (2) I want to be known as just a Christian — separate me from all party spirit. (3) Keep my hope of the resurrection burning brightly. (4) Send your ministering spirits to aid me today. (5) I want to be totally in submission to you as the Father of my spirit. (6) Deliver me from violent men.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I know you have much to tell me from this text: (1) "There are Pharisees and Sadducees today — beware." (2) "Let the dead bury the dead — publish the good news." (3) "There are lessons I am teaching in all opposition."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Relief and Aid Ministries — Points for prayer: (1) *That the generous giving by Christians to aid programs be wisely used.* Prestige projects, lack of long-term strategy, inefficient communications, self-seeking bureaucracies, etc., can gobble up vast sums of money with little material or spiritual benefit to the sufferers. (2) *For those who administer the aid and resettlement programs.* Many agencies have sprung up to channel the giving of Evangelicals — there are over 100 such in North America. Pray for the provision of the right personnel, a balance between physical and spiritual needs, and for evangelism and church planting to be furthered. Praise the Lord that where care and tact has been exercised, and a loving Christian testimony shared, there has been a harvest of souls in a number of countries. (3) *For the right balance in giving.* Christian donors need to be guided by the Lord rather than by their emotional response to physical suffering. The famine of the Word of God is a far more serious problem than that of food in Africa today.

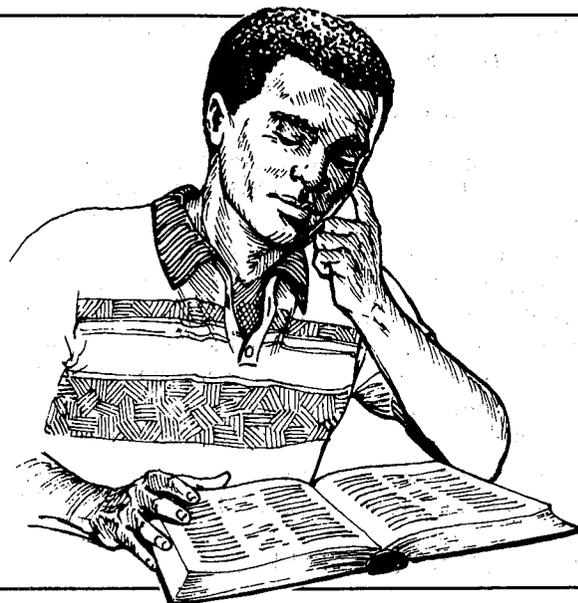
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

To God be the glory — great things He hath done,
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin
And opened the Life-gate that all may go in.
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear His voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father through Jesus the Son,
And give Him the glory — great things He hath done.

WEEK SIX

—Sunday—

Every day we need — long for — look for a hiding place. I have found it in you. I enter to worship you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

My fortress (Psa. 144:2). How attractive is the thought of a large protective building of some type — a castle or some other sort of hiding place. No building can stand today against a nuclear attack. But our fortress is not a building but the divine Person of your very self! I am so glad to worship and bow before you in full recognition of those qualities of your character that match this metaphor. (1) A fortress is immediately identified by those who are in its vicinity. Oh, that all men would see you and know you for who you are and what you are! You can and want to be such a refuge and strength for all men. (2) A fortress is commodious — at least when we think of you in this regard, it is true. How many millions — yea, billions of men have found you such a place? No one has ever been disappointed in the adequacy of provisions for them in this fortress.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

My fortress — personally. Dear, dear God, I have so found you — and so I find you today! (3) A fortress reaches up high and impressive as a giant building against the sky — and yet has an immense foundation deep in the earth. This is what I have found and now find in you. All the way to the throne of heaven and yet you reach down to the deepest of human need. So strong and impressive, but fulfilling, you more than fulfill all my imagination conjures up. Higher than the highest — wider than ten million galaxies — deeper than the abyss. “A mighty fortress is my God — a bulwark never failing.” (4) We think a fortress is for another age — it was meaningful for the past generations, but is only a museum reference today. Not so with you. I never felt my need more than now. In no time in human experience have we needed a shelter — a hiding place more than now. I securely rest and view the panorama of today’s activities from my fortress.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Have I always sought your protection? Have I withdrawn into my fortress and pulled up the gate? Have I rather found myself out in the open country attacked and wounded by the enemy? To ask is to answer. What was it that drew me away? “Every man is drawn away by his own desires” (Jas. 1:13-15). I need not, I do not blame you. Can I live always in a fortress? Where the fortress is in my own mind I can. It is when you dominate my mind that you become my “bulwark never failing.” The walls of this building are my own will — when my will is your will, Satan cannot and will not enter. Dear God, forgive me for not willing to do your will. My strength is in your will for me!

“*Retaliation.*” We retaliate evil for evil when we believe that somehow our rights are being threatened. When we have no rights there is no retaliation. When all our rights are given to you then all vengeance also belongs with you. Dear God, I believe, help my unbelief.

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Walking in sunlight, all of my journey;
Over the mountain, through the deep vale;
Jesus has said, “I’ll never forsake thee,”
Promise divine that never can fail.
Heavenly sunlight, heavenly sunlight,
Flooding my soul with glory divine;
Hallelujah, I am rejoicing,
Singing His praises, Jesus is mine.

HIS WORD

¹¹The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, “Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.”

¹²The next morning the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. ¹³More than forty men were involved in this plot. ¹⁴They went to the chief priests and elders and said, “We have taken a solemn oath

not to eat anything until we have killed Paul. ¹⁵Now then, you and the Sanhedrin petition the commander to bring him before you on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about his case. We are ready to kill him before he gets here."

¹⁶But when the son of Paul's sister heard of this plot, he went into the barracks and told Paul.

¹⁷Then Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the commander; he has something to tell him." ¹⁸So he took him to the commander.

The centurion said, "Paul, the prisoner, sent for me and asked me to bring this young man to you because he has something to tell you." —*Acts 23:11-18, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How remarkable you only need one small boy to overcome the power of forty men! Thank you, oh, thank you for speaking to Paul in the Jerusalem jail! Courage was to be found in your presence and promise. Your promise was not one of protection — although you provided that. It is enough to know we can speak for you. The word we speak is "a testimony." The personalness of our relationship to you can never be separated from what we speak on your behalf. A fast of death! What are you saying to me about fasting? You have a plot or plan for life and fasting is a part of it! How could the chief priests and elders of your people agree to such a plot?

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Lord, I know you are always standing near me — according to your blessed promise you are with me always. The Lord is at hand! Blessed be your sweet presence. I know too, that the one word you give to me at all times and in every circumstance is to "Take courage." I also know the one thing you want most from me is a personal testimony to others of my relationship to you as saved sinner. This is not all I will tell but if I do not tell this there will be little reality to the rest of my words. From how many plots of Satan have you delivered me? How many dear loved ones have spoken a word to my great heavenly commander on my behalf and saved me from death? My Lord, you know, but I am most grateful!

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for our Lord's personal concern in Paul's outlook on life. (2) Thank you for the promise of travel mercies. (3) Thank you for the multiple ways you have of frustrating the evil plans of men. (4) Thank you for the courage and wisdom of Paul's nephew. (5) Thank you for the measure of justice, fairness found in the Roman army. (6) Thank you for Paul's willingness to be helped in whatever way you led. (7) Thank you for the believable details of this record.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... this young man . . . has something to tell you." Indeed he does! He could tell us of the respect and

honor which his parents and himself had for his uncle. Evidently Paul was able to communicate his new found faith to at least a part of his family. This young man could tell us of how his faith delivered him from the confusion of the practices of the ritual and traditions of religion. The whole city of Jerusalem was full of conspiracy and unrest — this would have been so confusing to such a young man.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Help comes from unexpected sources — it must have moved Paul to prayer — it does me: (1) Keep me aware my basic task is to be a witness for you. (2) I am aware that evil men even now plot to defeat your work — defeat their counsel. (3) Give me the dedication to the spread of your word these men had to stop it. (4) Thank you that young men are important in your work. (5) Teach me how important it is to include the whole family in your work. (6) Give me good and honest men in the government under which I live. (7) Open my mouth on all occasions to say something for you.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I am listening — what do you want me to hear from this text? (1) "Take courage, I am with you as I was with Paul." (2) "Men's conspiracy cannot overcome my conspiracy of love." (3) "I have many ways of protecting you."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Saturation Evangelism (The total mobilization of the active membership of a church or group of churches to cover an entire area with the gospel)— Points for prayer: (1) *Mass evangelism crusades* have been much criticized, but they have played an important role in post-war evangelical growth in not only winning individuals to the Lord (many converts of Billy Graham's crusades are pastors or missionaries today!), but also in making many non-believers aware of the claims of Christ and uniting believers of many denominations in outreach. Pray for the successful integration of both mass and local church evangelism into the program for world evangelization. (2) *Pray for a continued development of the scriptural principles of SE.* The ideal is correct, but many mistakes have been made in the past — too grandiose schemes, involvement of the unconverted in trying to win the unconverted, too hasty a preparation time, lack of spiritual local leaders to mobilize the ordinary believers, etc.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing,
He chastens and hastens His will to make known;
The wicked oppressing cease them from distressing,
Sing praises to His name, He forgets not His own.

WEEK SIX

—Monday—

Every day brings its cares — nothing is just as we planned it. I lay them all at your feet — I cast them upon your heart. What a time of relief!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you” (Psa. 55:22). You are the one who truly cares and can and does hold us up. How good to have one upon whom I can cast all my anxiety! What kind of a divine person are you that this is true? (1) A living sympathetic person. You listen with real understanding. You know much more about every problem than anyone else. You look into the face of every man and woman with kindly eyes of sympathetic interest. (2) You are never too busy or too occupied with “other things” to give your total interest for as long as we want to talk. (3) You say things and move things so we can get through the circumstance. You have promised to make it possible for us to solve our problems.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

For me. I do indeed gladly welcome this invitation. I do want to open my heart and share not only my mistakes but my plans and projects. Dear Lord, I have unsolved problems on the job. People make mistakes and some of them are very difficult to unravel. In ways that are only known by yourself help me to help those with whom I work. I have plans for spreading your word and helping your children to serve you. How I do need your wisdom in each and every part of these plans. Please help me to pause long enough to hear you speak. My strength and ability are all in you. Dear God, carry me through! What a wonderful quality of your character — bless you forever!

How do you personally relate to the concern of God, and God who is totally interested?

CONFESSION OF SIN

Shall I admit that I carry my cares when your invitation is always open for me to cast them on you? Yes, this points up my blindness and insensitivity. But I am becoming more aware of your personal interest! If I only really knew just how much you truly care I

would be much more than ready to lay down my burden at your feet. Much of my sin is a direct result of frustration, tension, anxiety. Dear Lord, if I could learn to relax in your presence and “cast all my care on you” — cast it away from me — inwardly, truly, deeply — I could live and move and decide and speak in a relaxed atmosphere and I would not sin so often. Help me! Open my willingness!

“Homosexuality.” I am repulsed by this sin. I have no sexual desire whatsoever for my own kind. This is repugnant to me. But I *must* try to understand and help those who do.

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

The name of Jesus is so sweet,
I love its music to repeat;
It makes my joys full and complete,
The precious name of Jesus.
“Jesus,” oh, how sweet the name!
“Jesus,” ev’ry day the same;
“Jesus,” let all saints proclaim
Its worthy praise forever.

HIS WORD

¹⁹The commander took the young man by the hand, drew him aside and asked, “What is it you want to tell me?”

²⁰He said: “The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul before the Sanhedrin tomorrow on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about him.

²¹Don’t give in to them, because more than forty of them are waiting in ambush for him. They have taken an oath not to eat or drink until they have killed him. They are ready now, waiting for your consent to their request.”

²²The commander dismissed the young man and cautioned him, “Don’t tell anyone that you have reported this to me.”

²³Then he called two of his centurions and ordered them, “Get ready a detachment of two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at nine tonight. ²⁴Provide mounts for Paul so that he may be taken safely to

Governor Felix.’’

²⁵He wrote a letter as follows:

²⁶Claudius Lysias,

To His Excellency, Governor Felix:
Greetings.

²⁷This man was seized by the Jews and they were about to kill him, but I came with my troops and rescued him, for I had learned that he is a Roman citizen. ²⁸I wanted to know why they were accusing him, so I brought him to their Sanhedrin. ²⁹I found that the accusation had to do with questions about their law, but there was no charge against him that deserved death or imprisonment. ³⁰When I was informed of a plot to be carried out against the man, I sent him to you at once. I also ordered his accusers to present to you their case against him. — *Acts 23:19-30, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How good it is to identify yourself with the incident before us — since you have a particular interest in the innocency and sincerity of young people. How sad to think that such a good man as Claudius Lysias was not saved. Perhaps he was at some time not here indicated. How did you look on the forty men? I could venture some opinions, but I do not really know. Did you place the decision in the mind of the commander to assemble such a large detachment to protect Paul? You have done this before in other cases. Is there a lie in the letter of Lysias?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Paul had a long horseback ride to begin at nine o'clock at night. Paul must have been past fifty years old — it would not be easy for him — he had already been through so much, and now this. What was Paul's attitude? He had already told us: "I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." "I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord has given me." Do you hear these words? Do you accept them for yourself? (I am speaking this to myself.)

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the respect of personal privacy on the part of the army commander. (2) Thank you for the negative response Lysias was receiving from his association with the Jews — and the positive one he had with Paul. (3) Thank you for the importance of Paul (or the Roman law) in the mind of the commander. (4) Thank you for the wide influence given to the gospel through Paul. (5) Thank you for the example of how all things are working together for good. (6) Thank you for Paul's deliverance from the center of hatred and controversy.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... for I learned that he is a Roman citizen.” The

order of events is conveniently slanted so as to leave the commander in the best light. It would give him credit for rescuing a Roman citizen from death at the hands of a Jewish mob, when the facts are Lysias thought he was apprehending an Egyptian terrorist. How easy it is to arrange events on paper for our advantage.

In a Roman army officer we can understand the motives. In a Christian leader we have a much more serious problem. Pride and position become more important than truth.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Uncle Paul was really in trouble. We wonder what requests this young man had for Paul. We can lift our hearts with him in prayer: (1) Give us young men today with the same courage and boldness. (2) Warn me, through whatever means you have, of impending danger. (3) Give me the care and courtesy of the commander. (4) Thank you for the protective escort of Paul — give me protection on my many journeys. (5) Did Claudius Lysias lie to cover up his mistakes? Deliver me from such a temptation. (6) Help me to claim my rights as a citizen of heaven.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me through these verses: (1) "I still have young men who will risk all to help my cause." (2) "There are good and honest men in positions of authority." (3) "Be always prepared to move to the third heaven."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Short Term Workers More and more young people (and some older ones too!) have been serving the Lord in a cross-cultural situation for periods of a few weeks to three years. This is a significant worldwide development. It is impossible to reckon the numbers of believers all over the world who give some or all of their time during one year to missionary work, for this may equal the world's entire full-time missionary force!

Points for prayer: (1) *Usefulness* in these short spells of service. Such short-term 'blitzes' can do much to revolutionize the spiritual situation in a hard field, and also inspire local believers to get out in direct evangelism. (2) *Avoidance of blunders* — through inexperience, lack of understanding of different cultures and languages, etc.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK SIX

—Tuesday—

*Your Son called himself “the truth” —
i.e. the essence of reality! Gladly do I
enter and bow before you!*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“His truth endureth to all generations” (Psa. 100:5). How strong is this word! All you have said — which is written truth — all you have done, which is created truth — all you are, which is living truth — or the source of truth, shall never end. Every generation shall find it even as I have found it. If a generation is considered as forty years I shall live into two generations. My father and grandfather found all you said and all you created and all you are the same as I have. Two thousand generations from today truth (that which is equal with reality) will be the same! Praise your wonderful eternal self!

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Your truth endureth for me! Dear God, I have forgotten your truth — but it did not change. I have ignored your truth, but it was the same. I have substituted for your truth, but it remained the same. How comforting to move in the context of truth! How I want our children, the next generation, to know the security and solidness of such a faith. The meaning of what you have made — the description of yourself depends entirely on the written word, therefore the truth written is the most important entity we have. May I do all I can to preserve and spread your word.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Since it is the responsibility of each generation to let every other generation know your truth, and since living it is the best means of showing the truth, I ask forgiveness! You desire truth (or reality) in the inward man — I do too. Why do I find myself hedging and vacillating when I know what is right? Forgive me! Dear Savior, you are living truth. How I want to

follow you. Cleanse my motives! I take your gracious offer of freedom!

“Arrogance.” Dear God, why should I ever entertain such an idea? But I have, I do, it will take a long time and many repetitions, but I want to kneel again with the One who washed feet. Arrogance begins and ends in the mind.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

³¹So the soldiers, carrying out their orders, took Paul with them during the night and brought him as far as Antipatris. ³²The next day they let the cavalry go on with him, while they returned to the barracks. ³³When the cavalry arrived in Caesarea, they delivered the letter to the governor and handed Paul over to him.

³⁴The governor read the letter and asked what province he was from. Learning that he was from Cilicia, ³⁵he said, “I will hear your case when your accusers get here.” Then he ordered that Paul be kept under guard in Herod’s palace. —Acts 23:31-35, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How very good to relate this text to yourself! It does seem like a very large contingent of men to march most of the night in protection of one man. But then Paul was only representative of the value Rome placed on every citizen of the empire. I am sure it

occurred to you (please excuse my presumption) that this is but a poor representation of the value you place on every one of your citizens. There is a rather remarkable comparison possible here. I do believe Satan can do nothing with me or to me that you (and myself) do not permit him to. What far, far superior power we have in you and your angels and in the present person of the Holy Spirit than the forty men of Satan's force. Praise you for this assurance.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

An all-night ride — Paul must have been totally worn out when he was shown to his room in Herod's palace. Did Paul talk to the soldiers on the journey? Did he question God's strange directions in his life? He would have been less than human if he didn't. I wonder what Paul did in Herod's palace? I am sure he prayed. Did he have anything to read? Did he influence his guards here as he did in Rome? Did he write letters we do not have? Perhaps these are all idle questions, but they represent my own relationship to this text. Dear Lord, may I rejoice all over again that I have liberty of movement and choice of residence.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the well developed sense of duty that direction in the right area can accomplish. (2) Thank you for Paul's humble submission to your will in his life. (3) Thank you that Paul did not understand the immediate purpose for all things — since I do not this encourages me. (4) Thank you for the influence of the gospel in high places — even the governor. (5) Thank you for the reasonable care given to Paul. (6) Thank you for Paul's persistence in waiting out a solution to his imprisonment. (7) Thank you for your ultimate purpose which was being worked out through all man's actions for and against your servant.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . kept under guard in Herod's palace.” What thoughts filled the mind and heart of Paul in Herod's palace? Here are a few possibilities: (1) Why is Herod so prosperous when we all know what type of life he lives? God's answer: Physical prosperity is *not* always an indication of my blessing. My dear Son had nowhere to lay his head. (2) How can my confinement advance the gospel? God's answer: You be faithful where you are and I'll handle the larger purposes of promoting the good news. (3) Why does truth always come out second best? God's answer: It doesn't — 2,000 years of reading Luke's record has told over and over again who was true.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Paul's journey and arrival at Caesarea no doubt moved him to pray. We can also find here petitions:

(1) I want to be as willing to carry out some inconvenient tasks as the soldiers who traveled with Paul. (2) Help me to be as uncomplaining as Paul in my service for my Lord. (3) Is there a governor in one of our states to whom we could deliver a message from you? (4) Deliver me from the great “accuser of the brethren.” (5) Thank you for the treatment Paul received from civil authority. (6) How can we reach the leaders of our country with the message of your Son? (7) Grant me wisdom to interpret your answer to the two above questions — which are really requests for help.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me through Paul's experience: (1) “I am able to work through all circumstances.” (2) “Every one of the soldiers is spending all eternity in heaven or hell.” (3) “Paul did all he could to be my witness.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Student Ministries This is often one of the most neglected, yet strategic, fields of Christian witness (there are about 20 million university students in the world). A number of interdenominational organizations have been raised up by God to fill this need — to mention a few worthy of much prayer: (1) *Scripture Union* has an outreach to secondary schools round the world, with remarkable fruit among educated young people in Africa, Europe and parts of Asia. SU is working in 67 countries of the world. (2) *Campus Crusade for Christ* maintains a vigorous ministry in North America which also fans out to 70 other countries all over the world. CCC emphasizes mass evangelism by mobilization of believers and discipleship training, largely among university students. (3) *The Navigators* with their unique personal discipleship programs have made a deep impact on many. Their work began among the military in the USA, but they now minister among university students in 298 locations in 34 countries. Their emphasis is upon multiplying spiritual laborers through disciplined study and application of God's Word. They are moving out increasingly into local church-related ministries.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

All creatures of our God and King,
Lift up your voice and with us sing
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Thou silver moon with softer gleam!
O praise Him, O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

WEEK SIX —Wednesday—

Great is my Lord, and greatly to be praised. Just here and now I wish to renew this thought. In my personal worship!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“His greatness is unsearchable” (Psa. 145:3). Bless your wonderful name — beyond the keenest minds of this earth are the laws of yourself. This is just one example of how your greatness is beyond man’s ken. Like a search for hidden treasure, we find a large vein of gold — but the more we search the more we find. There is no end of the search, and there is no end of the discovery! Man will always be in search of the greatness of the complexities of this world in which he is physically but a small part. Man will be and is in search of the written revelation. We shall never fully appreciate the greatness of what you have said until we see you.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Your greatness is indeed unsearchable to me! I have been in search of your mercy. I have found that indeed “it endureth forever” — it is beyond my search. Dear God, I do not want to presume on your goodness — I want to be truly yielded to your word — to obey you. I have found your “renewing of my mind” has no end — no terminus — Bless your dear self! I want to continue this search. I want to find out just how complete, how full, how rich is your power of renewal. Right now I rethink and re-evaluate my relationship to the world: (1) I am dead unto sin — I am crucified to the world — my relationship to those with whom I live and work: (2) I count them better than myself. (3) I love them as you love me. In truth your greatness is unsearchable!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

“Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable!” Has this always been true for me? To whom has credit been given for projects completed? Dear God, forgive me! There is no need of saying I intended to give you the praise, but did

not — the plain facts of the matter are that you did not receive the praise. You are great, not me — you are to be praised, not me. Men *are* to see our good works, but in such a way that you receive the credit. Forgive me for this terrible sin of pride.

“Disobeying parents.” Surely I have been guilty of this. Surely this is rampant as a sin in our society.

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

Five days later the high priest Ananias went down **24** to Caesarea with some of the elders and a lawyer named Tertullus, and they brought their charges against Paul before the governor. ²When Paul was called in, Tertullus presented his case before Felix: “We have enjoyed a long period of peace under you, and your foresight has brought about reforms in this nation. ³Everywhere and in every way, most excellent Felix, we acknowledge this with profound gratitude. ⁴But in order not to weary you further, I would request that you be kind enough to hear us briefly.”
—Acts 24:1-4, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How pompous and ridiculous men must look to one who has all knowledge and all power (strength). Who is Ananias the high priest? You know him better than he knows himself! Who were the elders he had with him? How many were there? Dear Lord, it is good to remember that there never has been a trial held

without your presence! What did you know — what do you know of Tertullus? How inadequate is his understanding of the one against whom he speaks! In your sight how incomplete is the man himself! What of this man Felix — the governor of this little province? What a sham this all must seem to you! At the same time with what infinite compassion do you view the whole proceeding. If only your servant Paul could communicate to all your love and purpose!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Paul knew he would face trial. How did he prepare? He had no lawyer but himself! Oh, but he did! He had two advocates: (1) Your Son at your right hand to plead his innocence. (2) The blessed Holy Spirit to intercede through his prayers. Each day I awake I face the trial of the day. I must stand before men — and on some days the men are not unlike those in the text. How I need the same divine lawyers to plead my case. Paul could almost — but not quite — predict the outcome. At the same time he must give the test his best effort. Does today call for less? Most especially when I face a friendly amiable circumstance. Bless your name, you yet rule in the affairs of 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 our wonderful high priest who can and does plead our case before you. (2) Thank you for elders in the “called out” body of your Son — they are such good men. (3) Thank you for my wonderful lawyer who can defend me before your throne. (4) Thank you for yourself — it is indeed because of you that I have peace and reform. (5) Thank you that I feel thankful and I know whom to thank. (6) Thank you that you never tire of hearing me. (7) Thank you for the marvelous contrast I have found in the above comparison.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . Tertullus presented his case before Felix.” It was just another job for the lawyer Tertullus. It did pay well, and it gave him further opportunity to find out more about these strange people called “Jews.” He was to be introduced to another man who undoubtedly made some impression upon him: Saul of Tarsus. Did Paul’s defense impress Tertullus? Luke does not tell us. But he did hear the governor before whom he spoke. How did the lawyer estimate Felix’s response to the trial? All such questions are interesting because they make us look at the participants as real people who lived before and after the incident described in the Acts record. Somehow I believe we will one day be introduced to the whole story of the

lives of these men we have known so long in this text.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

As Paul faced trial before Felix he must have appeared often before your throne of grace. (1) Deliver me from the political maneuvers of selfish men. (2) How shall I reach a man like Ananias? (3) How could I possibly speak the good news to elders like those with Ananias? (4) There are lawyers today like Tertullus — how can I help them? (5) Even Felix is not immune from the power of the gospel — how can I reach him? (6) Grant me heaven’s wisdom in responding to your answers to the above questions. (7) The period of peace to which Tertullus referred was a result of the slaughter of all who disagreed with Felix — deliver our land from such rulers. (8) Give me grace to be kind even to those I know are enemies.

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) “All will one day present their case before me.” (2) “Some evil men became worse not better.” (3) “Your love for me can overcome in every situation.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Tape, Record and Cassette Ministries — The arrival of cheap cassette tape recorders has made it possible to distribute Christian tapes widely and fairly cheaply to both Christians and the unconverted. This has become a valuable tool for evangelism, teaching and the encouragement of believers.

Points for prayer: (1) *Skilled laborers* are needed who can handle the expensive equipment necessary to make good recordings, maintain cassette playback machines, and effectively distribute the tapes. Few mission agencies have grasped the significance of this ministry or exploited its potential. (2) *Bible tapes*. Many new translations of the Scriptures are first circulated on tape with great blessing. This is particularly useful for illiterate people and for those who have no written Scriptures, and where there is a real threat that political events may prevent the printing and distribution of the Word of God. (3) *Teaching and church growth through tapes*. In many spiritually hard areas of the world, the few Christians are isolated and have little opportunity to learn new hymns and choruses, or receive adequate teaching. Messages on tape can fill that void.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

All hail the pow’r of Jesus’ name!

Let angels prostrate fall:
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all,
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all!

WEEK SIX

—Thursday—

In the most personal and practical of ways you can and do deliver me. I pause for your further direction!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“My deliverer” (Psa. 144:2). How appropriate is this name! You are the deliverer of all men — for all time in all circumstances. These words are but words until turned into reality. But such has indeed happened! (1) You have and can and do deliver from death. Man brought death upon himself — but you opened the door to life. “By man came death” — deliverance from death and the grave all from you. (2) You have delivered us from hatred and separation by uniting us in your Son. (3) Most of all you have delivered us from our own self destruction. You save us from ourselves! When we lose our lives in you we find ourselves all over again.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

My deliverer. Dear Father, I want you to be my deliverer today from the fear of not doing an adequate job of teaching. I have prepared adequately and believe deeply in what I am about to teach. Why am I fearful? Because of what man might or might not think or say. Dear God, deliver me from such an obvious sin of pride. Am I teaching to please and honor you or not? Dear God, you know I am! Deliver me from nervousness that hinders the free flow of thoughts I want to express. Give me the confidence of your presence and your approval. This is enough. Praise your name!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

How easy it is to confess my total inadequacy in being a true humble servant! The prayer of Watchman Nee I want to make mine: “Let me love but not be thanked. Let me serve but not be recompensed. Let me spend my strength but not be noted. Let me suffer much but not be seen. Let me pour my wine without drinking. Let me break my bread without reaping.” Dear God, in all these areas I am so woefully short. Forgive me!

“Faithless.” If faith is taking you at your word, then many times I have been without faith. Dear God I do want to press on in action.

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, like a shepherd lead us,
 Much we need Thy tender 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 hast bought us, Thine we are.

HIS WORD

⁵“We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect ⁶and even tried to desecrate the temple; so we seized him. ⁸By examining him yourself you will be able to learn the truth about all these charges we are bringing against him.”

⁹The Jews joined in the accusation, asserting that these things were true.

¹⁰When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied: “I know that for a number of years you have been a judge over this nation; so I gladly make my defense. ¹¹You can easily verify that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship.

¹²My accusers did not find me arguing with anyone at the temple, or stirring up a crowd in the synagogues or anywhere else in the city. ¹³And they cannot prove to you the charges they are now making against me.

¹⁴However, I admit that I worship the God of our fathers, as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets, ¹⁵and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. ¹⁶So I

strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.

¹⁷“After an absence of several years, I came to Jerusalem to bring my people gifts for the poor and to present offerings. ¹⁸I was ceremonially clean when they found me in the temple courts doing this. There was no crowd with me, nor was I involved in any disturbance. ¹⁹But there are some Jews from the province of Asia, who ought to be here before you and bring charges if they have anything against me. ²⁰Or these who are here should state what crime they found in me when I stood before the Sanhedrin — ²¹unless it was this one thing I shouted as I stood in their presence: ‘It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.’” — *Acts 24:5-21, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I want to enter the court of Felix — as I know you did in that far off day. It is only removed from me — it is as if it were happening now with you. I want it to be that way with me! There were four charges laid against Paul. I want to turn each of them over and see them as you do. (1) “We have found this man a *troublemaker*.” Oh, blessed trouble! That men should be startled out of their tradition and sin and made to take a fresh look on their lives. (2) “Stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world.” Yea, verily! What Tertullus calls a riot we would call a revival! It is a fulfillment of the marching orders of his commander. Oh, that men would be so stirred today! (3) “He is a ring leader of the Nazarene sect.” When the Nazarene is also “Immanuel” who wouldn’t want to lead men to know Him? (4) “Tried to desecrate the temple.” Paul was supporting and worshipping in the temple.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Lord, I do so want to see these words through your eyes — set them on fire — let them burn and light up my heart and life! I want the same polite respect for those who rule over me as Paul had with Felix. It would seem that Paul knew of the governor’s background and realized he appreciated more than the Jews knew the teaching of the good news. This could also be true today for men in authority. One by one Paul answers the charges. I want to read more than Paul’s answers; I want some answers for myself!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

How full of possibilities is this text! (1) Thank you for such a wonderful troublemaker as Paul. We have not seen his kind before or since. (2) Thank you for the world-wide outreach of this indomitable apostle. (3) Thank you for our blessed Nazarene who died and rose again. (4) Thank you for the monumental effort of Paul to be conciliatory toward those who hated him. (5) Thank you for the thousand promises and prophecies fulfilled in our Lord. (6) Thank you for

that plain promise “that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.”

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . I shouted as I stood in their presence.” “It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.” No wonder Paul shouted; he had something to shout about. Notice a couple of startling facts: (1) “All that are in the graves” — or all that are presently dead — or all that will be dead when Jesus comes will hear his voice and come forth! There will be a recreation much, much greater than the creation of Adam and Eve. At the resurrection God begins with nothing and recreates the whole human race. (2) This will be the eternal body in which we will live for eternity in heaven or in hell. No wonder Paul shouted.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In Paul’s defense before Felix there is much to prompt prayer: (1) Dear Lord, help me to be the same kind of troublemaker as Paul. (2) How little effect does our witness have on the world as compared with Paul. (3) I am glad to belong to the same so-called sect as Paul. Make me worthy of the name. (4) What a wonder to consider my body the temple of your very self. May I be holy through my Lord. (5) May I be able to speak so clearly to those who question me. (6) I want the same clear conscience before God and man. (7) May the hope of the resurrection be ever before me.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Surely there is much to be heard from you in this text: (1) “All good actions can be misconstrued to evil.” (2) “There will be indeed a resurrection of both righteous and wicked.” (3) “Charges not proven will not always be dismissed”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Recording Ministries — Point for prayer: *Evangelism through tapes*. *Gospel Recordings (GRI)* pioneered the use of simple messages on phonograph records for evangelizing minority people groups and more inaccessible populations. These messages are now commonly produced on tapes as well. Often these records and tapes are the *only* means available to communicate the gospel to them. Recordings can be made far more speedily than sending in a missionary to learn the language or translate portions of God’s Word. This is a vital tool for evangelism among unreached peoples.

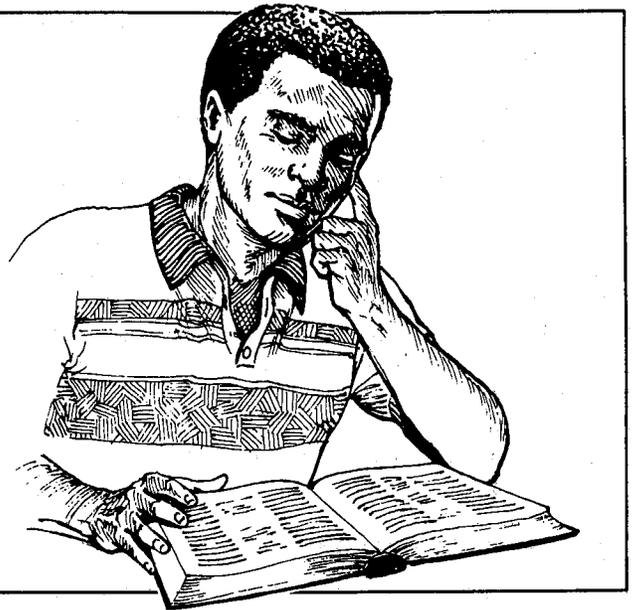
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK SIX

—Friday—

Strength, song, and salvation! You are all these to me. I want to renew these relationships.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The Lord is *my strength, and song, and is become my salvation*” (Psa. 118:14). Because I have discussed strength and salvation, I should like to praise you for being the song of all men.

Men do not have a song to sing if you do not give it to them. Indeed men would not sing at all without you. I am thinking of songs of hope, joy and purpose. (1) Songs of hope. How totally hopeful is life with you! There is hope for every day — each of our days are ordered by you. We can say with the psalmist, “This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it” (Psa. 118:24). (2) Songs of joy — “Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go into them; I will praise the Lord” (Psa. 118:19). What a song of joy every man *could* sing if he would.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

The Lord is my song! Amen! Out of my heart I am glad to acknowledge you as the only source of my *strength — my salvation and my song*. There are so many songs that will express my gratitude to you! John Kendrick Bangs, 1862-1922, said it so well — it is what I offer you today:

For summer rain, and winter’s sun,
For autumn breezes crisp and sweet;
For labors doing, to be done, and labors all complete;
For April, May, and lovely June,
For bud, and bird, and berried vine;
For joys of morning, night and noon,
My thanks, dear Lord, are Thine!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, that I should not always be singing your praise is a sin. “Rejoice, in the Lord always” — is not only a truism, it is a glorious fact! I know that both my mental and physical health relate to my

praise or lack of it. But such being true, it is also true that cause for joy and happiness is always present! That I should even complain and gripe about anything seems totally out of character, i.e., not true or real or right. Forgive me. You are helping me in so many areas of my life. Thank you!

“*Judgment of others.*” This is impugning motives, i.e., deciding why men act or speak the way they do. Dear God, I have done this. Please forgive me. How absurd that I should do this. I *know* this is your job.

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Savior, more than life to me,
I am clinging, clinging close to Thee;
Let Thy precious blood applied,
Keep me ever, ever near Thy side.
Ev’ry day, ev’ry hour,
Let me feel Thy cleansing pow’r;
Let Thy precious blood applied,
Keep me ever, ever near Thy side.

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

HIS WORD

²²Then Felix, who was well acquainted with the Way, adjourned the proceedings. “When Lysias the commander comes,” he said, “I will decide your case.”

²³He ordered the centurion to keep Paul under guard but to give him some freedom and permit his friends to take care of his needs.

²⁴Several days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess. He sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus. —Acts 24:22-24, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

For how long is your servant Paul going to be confined to the four walls of imprisonment? Paul could not predict the response of Felix to the message of Paul, but you could! He was “well acquainted with the Way,” yet he did not want to walk in it. Why?

Our Lord answered this question (Dear Lord, help me as I think your thoughts): (1) "The deceitfulness of riches" — riches promise what they cannot fulfill — riches offer what they cannot give — riches give answers that are lies! (2) "The cares of this life" — how full of care and deceit was the life of Felix! Just to take up and be caught up in the duties of his office silenced your voice. (3) "The lust for other things" — the strong desires of sex, food, and status did it!

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I am not at all immune to temptations of Felix and Drusilla. There was something wonderfully fascinating about this new prisoner. Felix had not totally forgotten what he heard the first time, or what he had heard earlier. He wanted his Jewish wife to hear it. The scandal of his immoral life had spread over the whole countryside. How did he hear? Surely with some real interest. But how do *I* hear? Indulgence in sex — food or money dulls the hearing, paralyzes the senses, sears the conscience. I speak this not of Felix and Drusilla alone, but to my own heart. Faith does indeed come by hearing — of your word — clean out my inner ears that I might hear!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

How good to do this! (1) Thank you for Felix's generous attitude toward Paul. (2) Thank you for all of Paul's friends who came to see him in the prison in Caesarea — was one of them Philip with his daughters? (3) Thank you for Paul's courage and transparent sincerity in speaking before these important people. (4) Thank you for the reasons for our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (5) Thank you for these evidences that demand a verdict from all who hear and understand. (6) Dear Lord, I want to hear Paul — again and again — thank you that I can do so. (7) Thank you for yourself who are the ultimate judge of us all.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus." This would be so important — so full of purpose and meaning for both of these listeners. The evidences of our Lord's deity in his miracles. The obvious divine origin of his teaching. His wonderful death for our sins. His glorious resurrection. All such truths could be accepted by these two. Felix had for a long time known these facts. He now had someone to reinforce their meaning. How hard it is for a rich man (and woman) to allow God to rule their lives! Paul is yet speaking to me about faith in Christ Jesus my Lord! Will I allow him to rule in every area of my life? What about my personal relationship with him?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What an opportunity Paul had to witness for you! In

his actions and attitudes petitions arise: (1) Dear Lord, forgive me for not praying more consistently for men in high places. (2) I do right now lift the governor of our state before your throne — guide his decisions. (3) For the chief of police in our city I pray — protect and use him today in his work. (4) Give me opportunity to emphasize the sacredness of marriage. (5) Thank you for the wonderful freedom we enjoy in America. (6) Dear Lord, give me the courage and wisdom Paul had as he spoke to Felix and Drusilla. (7) How I need grace to speak effectively this weekend about faith in Christ Jesus.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

(1) "When the King of kings comes he will decide all cases of all men." (2) "There are those who are curious about faith in our Lord — use such an opportunity." (3) "Be as winsome and bold as Paul."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Theological Education By Extension (TEE) This is one of the exciting new tools in the hands of the Church for the training of church leaders. For years the churches of the West have used seminaries and Bible colleges for the training of full-time workers, but in the rest of the world this system has its weaknesses — too few of the right candidates; lack of funds; the poverty of the students; and those trained are often not the actual leaders in the churches. The rate of multiplication of churches in many parts of the world is so great that no residential training scheme could ever provide the workers needed. TEE is a system of training the actual leaders as they lead their congregations, by helping them to study in their homes using specially prepared teaching materials (programmed instruction) and frequent contacts with travelling lectures. TEE is cheap, practical, adaptable, and can be tailored to fit the individual student and his needs. TEE has spread to every continent. In 1980 there were at least 250 evangelical centers with over 27,000 students all over the world.

Points for prayer: (1) *Trained workers* to prepare teaching materials and maintain contact with the students. (2) *The students* — often studying under difficult conditions in simple homes, and in the midst of a very busy life. (3) *The enrichment of the churches* through a better teaching and pastoral ministry.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His spirit, washed in His blood.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long;
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.

WEEK SIX

—Saturday—

In every battle of today I want to pause long enough to know "the Lord is on my side." Help me with humility as I worship you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

"The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do unto me?" (Psa. 118:6). Oh, that all men would be able to say this! If you are defending, protecting, providing for us how rich is our relationship! If you were not on man's side, then what? What a tragedy! There seems to me to be two ways you are for man, i.e., in his defense: (1) You are always on our side in provision — physically, morally, emotionally, in you we live and move and have our being or wholeness. The only one against us is Satan and ourselves. Bless your wonderful name! [Point 2 in next section.]

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Personally — (2) You are on our side because we are (gladly) on your side. In the face of old age — "I will not fear." In the presence of economical problems — "I will not fear." When problems loom up in domestic relationships — "I will not fear." If you are on our side what can man do to us? Man can do much to us, but nothing, not one thing he can do that defeats your purpose. The words of that blessed hymn express this thought so well:

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.
Lord, I would clasp thy hand in mine,
Nor ever murmur nor repine,
Content, whatever lot I see,
Since 'tis my God that leadeth me.
—Joseph H. Gilmore (1834-1918)

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Shall I confess that you have always been with me, but I have not at all always been with you? What a

sad loss! Dear Father, I do want to practice your presence — to pause and bow my head and heart and wait for my mind to focus on you. Oh, that my mind should be so occupied with many things — so many things that I cannot — I will not — do not set it on you! Forgive me! How I wish my repentance were deeper — more wholly given to you! What does it mean to be a supplicant? To be pliable? I want to be clay in your hands. I do. Help me!

"Seared conscience" — as with a hot iron. Oh, Father, I do want a tender conscience. I do not want to expose my eyes, ears to the fire of sin. I will close my eyes, stop my ears.

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

²⁵As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, "That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you." ²⁶At the same time he was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him.

²⁷When two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, but because Felix wanted to grant a favor to the Jews, he left Paul in prison. —Acts 24:25-27, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, dear Lord, I want to hear the life-giving,

burning words from the lips of Paul. I know you can hear them now as then. Just what did he say about righteousness? Felix and Drusilla surely had no righteousness. Even by man's standards they were woefully short. But in the glaring light of your perfect righteousness all of us are dressed in filthy rags! We are dirty and guilty! But, oh, he told of the *gift* of righteousness — that we can be made the righteousness of yourself in him! Blessed be your grace! I have no real true, consistent control of myself! Except by your spirit as a fruit you give me self-control I shall have none! No man, no man is ready to be judged by the absolute standards of right and wrong found in your word! No wonder Felix was afraid!

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me! How lightly did Felix treat (ultimately) the message of Paul — and Paul as a person! He was once “terrified,” “trembled,” was “alarmed,” “took fright,” was “afraid.” But time has a way of putting out the fire. No it doesn't! It is not time; it is *choice!* Felix chose to desensitize his heart. Is that your choice — oh, my soul? No, no, I want to yield my heart — I want to immediately repent! I need not think about it — I already know what to do! What a calloused man was this governor! He often heard Paul and only hoped Paul would let down his guard and offer a bribe! Dear Lord, I relate to all of this — drive it deeply into my subconsciousness!

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Yes, yes. (1) Thank you for the total righteousness I find in you. My faith is counted for me as righteousness. In the good news of my Lord's death is your righteousness revealed and given! Thank you, oh, thank you! (2) Thank you for the fruit of the Spirit which is self-control. (3) Thank you that on judgment day I shall be just-as-if I had never sinned. (4) Thank you that I have found several, several convenient seasons to hear Paul (to hear you through him). (5) Thank you for the passing of time that always brings change — and it can be always for the better. (6) Thank you for the undaunted determination of Paul to be your prisoner — and not of Rome. (7) Thank you for Paul's example of hardships — I really haven't had any problems at all compared to him.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... he left Paul in prison.” I wonder if Paul prayed to be released? We can't imagine he didn't. Was he then disappointed that God did not answer his prayer? Did Paul ever think about the ingratitude of Felix? After all the days he had spoken to him — after all the good news Felix heard from Paul — after all the effort to put life in perspective, and most of all, after Felix learned the whole truth about Paul's unjust imprisonment — after all that “he left Paul in prison.” How did Paul relate this to the deliverance of Daniel from the lions' den? Or his own release from the prison in Philippi?

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Two years waiting in jail as an innocent man; there must have been many petitions — indeed there are today from this text: (1) Open my heart to a full appreciation of the righteousness we have in our Lord. (2) Keep us aware that there *is* a code of ethics which calls us to live a righteous life today. (3) Dear Lord, I need your motivation for self-control. (4) There *is* a judgment to come! Keep me ready if it should be today. (5) Dear Lord, there is a day when all men will be full of awe — keep me ready to welcome it not in fear but joy. (6) Guard me from the subtlety of bribing. (7) Paul and his Lord were of less importance for Felix than favor with the Jews.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these few verses I hear you speak to me: (1) “Paul's example of speaking to the conscience is good for today.” (2) “Paul spoke frequently to Felix but did not convert him — he yet remained faithful.” (3) “Paul was unjustly imprisoned and unjustly kept there — we hear no complaint from him.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Urban Evangelization is becoming one of the key challenges for the Church and for mission agencies. In 1985 there were 309 world class cities (those with a population of over a million), but it is expected that in 15 years' time there will be 433. Of these, 79 will have over four million people, and 24 will have over 10 million. The potential for ecological, economic and political catastrophes will greatly increase as the world becomes more urbanized. The cities are strategic for the gospel, but 57% of them have a non-Christian majority and are increasingly indifferent or hostile to the gospel. Pray for: (1) *Adequate strategies* for the evangelization of the major non-Christian cities of the world. The racial, ethnic, linguistic, social and religious complexities of modern cities make an all-out effort essential to reach each cultural unit of these cities. Los Angeles, for example, will soon have 300 distinct ethno-linguistic people groups, and be 60% Hispanic. (2) *Major international and regional conferences* which will increasingly focus on urban ministries over the coming decade. Pray that these may lead to effective cooperation among churches and agencies without which the task will be impossible to achieve.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Come, Thou Almighty King,
Help us Thy name to sing,
Help us to praise,
Father, all glorious,
O'er all victorious,
Come, and reign over us,
Ancient of Days.

WEEK SEVEN

—Sunday—

Men and women have disappointed me time after time — but there truly is “no disappointment in Jesus.” I want to find this out all over again — just now.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man” (Psa. 118:8). Praise your wonderful name our trust in you is never misplaced. There is no disappointment in you! All your promises are “yea, and amen.” You have total provisions for fulfillment. All men could find all their lives completed and fulfilled in you. In the first place you understand our need better than we ourselves. In the second place, you want to help us more than we want to ask help. In the third place, there is nothing or no one who could stand in your way of fulfillment. How very much better it is to put our trust in you. Just for today will I be ready to say: I trust in you with all my heart and lean not on my own understanding? May it be so.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

For me. How often have I been disappointed by man! How often have I been a disappointment! How often have I found abundant satisfaction in you? Shall I say ten thousand times ten thousand? Yea, more! It is good to lean back and soak up all the meaning of these words from you: “It is better . . .” — indeed, indeed it is. So much better to relate all my life to you than to men. “To trust in the Lord . . .” Since our trust is in your character we have no hesitancy or fear. *Trust* is a strong word. I put my whole weight upon you. I release all hold and give it to you. Oh, how much better it is!

How do you personally relate to the faithfulness of God, and God who is our trust? 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 frustrated and upset because I put my confidence in man? The first man to disappoint me is the one writing these words. The one who fails to fulfill is the one who appears before you. Dear Lord, how I do seek your forgiveness. How I

long to make my promises in the context of what you have promised me and others through me. I have perhaps disappointed myself more often than I have anyone else. It is so good to look forward to a time and a place where there will be no disappointments. Dear God, I want so to purify my heart and cleanse my hands that men can put confidence in me and find faithfulness. Help me. Forgive me. Empower me. “*Dishonor to parents.*” I have been guilty of this. I have sought your forgiveness earlier. But even now I know I cannot repair the harm I did. You have forgotten it; why should I remember it? I know in first honoring you I will find the resources to honor all others.

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

Three days after arriving in the province, Festus **25** went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem, ²where the chief priests and Jewish leaders appeared before him and presented the charges against Paul. ³They urgently requested Festus, as a favor to them, to have Paul transferred to Jerusalem, for they were preparing an ambush to kill him along the way. ⁴Festus answered, “Paul is being held in Caesarea, and I myself am going there soon. ⁵Let some of your leaders come with me and press charges against the man there, if he has done anything wrong.” —Acts 25:1-5, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Who was (is) this man Festus? He seems to be almost totally ignorant of yourself or your Son. He seems to know little or nothing of your law. How well he represents most of the rulers of this world! For

whatever reason, he does save the life of the apostle. We know that one reason is your infinite goodness and fulfillment of your eternal purpose. How I would have liked to ride in the chariot of the governor from Caesarea to Jerusalem! But you were there! How did Festus view the task given to him? Just another job? He no doubt saw much that held his interest. He must have asked questions of those who did not side with the Jews or Rome and could give him some balanced view of the prisoner Paul. Did Festus know of the plot to kill Paul? The Jews were not interested in a trial or justice. Hatred and jealousy knows no rules! Dear Lord, how did you relate to the scene in Jerusalem?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

For more than 40 times I have attempted to lead others to see this text — now I want to look at it as if I had never seen it before! Caesarea was where the palace of the governor was located; but everyone knew the real center of rule was Jerusalem. It was an all-day ride from the busy seaport to the crowded streets of the holy city. How radically changed are both places today! No wonder Ananias and the priests wanted to ambush Paul. They knew from at least two attempts that their charges would not stand examination. I am so glad that Jesus is my attorney at your right hand and Satan's efforts will be no more successful — "Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Can I then, like Paul, expect some unreasonable attempts of Satan to "ambush" my faith? Praise your name he will be no more successful than the high priest!

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the willingness of Festus to face the issues as they were, and not to lie or kill. (2) Thank you for your interest in all affairs of men — in this case to preserve the life of your servant for a few more years. (3) Thank you for the strength of Festus' refusal in the face of urging from those who could hurt him politically. (4) Thank you for the open decision as to who was right and who was wrong. (5) Thank you for the preservation of Luke's account over all these years. It is as fresh today as when the first "lover of God" read it. (6) Thank you there is *always* a way out of every trial, every temptation. Dear Lord, I want to find it each time! (7) Thank you for history (his story) that tells us over and over again who is right and who is wrong!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... come with me and press charges against the man" We could indeed level several charges, but they could all be to the glory of our Lord. We could charge Paul with a love that would not let go of his kindred. He even wanted to go to hell on their

behalf — if such would save them. We could charge him with a great sympathy for the poor and hungry. He obtained money from the "despised" Gentiles to help the weak and unfortunate among the Jewish population in Jerusalem and Judea. We could charge him with a deep worship commitment. Paul wanted to spend time with the Lord in prayer and praise and meditation. Dear Lord, give us men like Paul!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Paul no doubted prayed while Festus talked to the chief priests in Jerusalem. Requests do arise from this text. (1) Lack of knowledge and lack of communication destroy so much. Deliver me from such problems. (2) Determined evil men are such a threat — give me humility and courage. (3) Thank you that some men will not be intimidated — I want to be one of them. (4) Did Festus already know of Paul's innocence? What problems politics produce! At the same time such is no problem with you. May I learn a lesson here. (5) May I appreciate more fully than ever what measure of justice we have in our courts. (6) Is there a particular purpose in Luke's inclusion of this exchange? Give me wisdom to know. (7) Paul was not afraid of death but he wanted to live — why?

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What messages arise from this text? (1) "Change is the one consistent ingredient of life." (2) "Religion is no indication of morality." (3) "Men moved by passion will go to almost any lengths to gain their objective."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Urban Evangelization — Points for prayer: (1) *The mobilization of a trained and efficient work force.* Christian workers, in general, fear the cities, especially the less comfortable slums and inner cities, and do not know how to handle the high costs, complexities and tensions of city ministry. (2) *The essential and effective use of all modern methods of communication.* Millions need to be confronted with the claims of Christ in as short a time as possible. No one medium can achieve this, but a combination of all in a concerted effort could decisively change the spiritual climate of a city.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Day is dying in the west,
Heav'n is touching earth with rest;
Wait and worship while the night
Sets her evening lamps alight
Through all the sky.
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts!
Heav'n and earth are full of Thee!
Heav'n and earth are praising Thee,
O Lord most high!

WEEK SEVEN

—Monday—

I am glad for the confidence you give me that right — not wrong — will win! I need this time of worship to confirm this fact.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked shall perish” (Psa. 1:6). Dear Lord, you are a participant in the way of the righteous — but you have no part or participation in wickedness; therefore his way shall perish.

How wonderful that you can and do participate with men in everything they do. Your knowledge of our lives is intuitive, i.e., you have an experiential knowledge of every part of life: The only reason the way of the wicked comes to nothing is because you are not in it. It is both amazing and humbling to contemplate your participation in all that I am and all you can give. I do not come to get, I come to praise and worship you. At the same time, man is such a needy creature. To worship before Someone who knows everything and is able to do everything is an awesome thought.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

He *knows* my way. Dear, dear Lord, I am trying to assimilate this truth. You are a constant participator in all I am. I know you love me, but to be present in all I think, this is shocking. I have known this before, but I haven't known it. For today: you will be, and are personally knowledgeable of all that will happen. No wonder I can claim the promises of the earlier verses of this blessed psalm: “He is like a tree planted by brooks of water, which giveth its fruit in its season, and whose leaf fadeth not; and all that he does will prosper.” Since you are in me and with me the life and energy to produce fruit are from you — you are indeed the “water of life.” How delighted I am to claim that my life will never lose its color. I am almost afraid to express the next promise — and yet I am sure you said it. I'm sure you mean it — I'm sure I want it. “All that he does will prosper.” Dear Lord, how precious you are!

How do you personally relate to the omniscience of God, and God who knows all?

CONFESSION OF SIN

“The way of the wicked shall perish.” The wicked could ultimately himself perish, but *right now the way of the wicked shall come to nothing.* How many times have I found this true? Dear Lord, I have lost my way because it was not *your way*. “Little is much if God is in it.” But much is nothing if he isn't. Oh Father, I want so much to give you the steering wheel of my life! I want so much to let the water of life soak through the substrata of my heart. Help me, forgive me, indwell all I am!

“Loss of first love.” How better could I describe my need? I return to the intimacy I want with you and you want with me in every part of this day. I want to — help 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 am Thine, O Lord,
I have heard Thy voice,
And it told Thy love to me;
But I long to rise in the arms of faith,
And be closer drawn to Thee.
Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To the cross where Thou hast died;
Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To Thy precious, bleeding side.

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

HIS WORD

⁶After spending eight or ten days with them, he went down to Caesarea, and the next day he convened the court and ordered that Paul be brought before him.

⁷When Paul appeared, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many serious charges against him, which they could not prove.

⁸Then Paul made his defense: “I have done nothing wrong against the law of the Jews or against the tem-

ple or against Caesar.”

⁹Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, “Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me there on these charges?”

¹⁰Paul answered: “I am now standing before Caesar’s court, where I ought to be tried. I have not done anything wrong to the Jews, as you yourself know very well. ¹¹If, however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!” — *Acts 25:6-11, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Blessed Lord, read this again into my heart! Festus is such a poor judge before whom to stand. He is self-seeking and ignorant. But you can use anyone and everything to your own advantage. How very, very good it is to decide everything on adequate evidence! You have given me more than enough reason to accept your intervention in the affairs of men, of your present presence in every circumstance. The three areas of law-breaking are interesting — speak to me through them! (1) The law; (2) the temple; (3) Caesar.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

In the above I have tried to look at myself as you see me. In this expression I want you to speak to me in the deepest needs of my heart. It is before your court I stand to be tried! How delighted and confident I am when I remember there is nothing Satan can bring against me and support with evidence. He is indeed the great accuser, but none of his charges can be proven! Bless your holy name! At the same time I am not unwilling to receive your judgment in my life. I want to repent toward and because of yourself! How strong a word it is to say that *no one, no one* has a right to turn me over to Satan. I have the supreme judge on my side — it is to him that I appeal! No one has a right (including the devil) to hand me over to bondage and death. How gladly I appeal to you and your dear Son. How eagerly I exercise the rights of my heavenly citizenship.

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for a confrontation with Satan — he cannot and will not make any of his lies stick. (2) Thank you for Paul’s perception of the wiles of the devil. (3) Thank you that no trial or temptation will come my way that has not been used by Satan on man for centuries — there is always a way out. (4) Thank you for Paul’s wisdom in knowing just when to exercise his rights and when to give them up. (5) Thank you that in the area of moral choice we have no rights — that are all given to you. (6) Thank you for the defeat of the evil men in religious robes.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“*I appeal to Caesar!*” This was the unique right of a Roman citizen. It saved the life of Paul. How much of our life do we owe to Caesar? Without the benefits of democracy we would lose many things — perhaps even our lives. At the same time we remember that democracy is a fruit of Christianity. I am glad to respect our government, but my appeal is first of all to King Jesus! I claim the right of my heavenly citizenship, to be judged by him.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What a momentous decision it was to appeal to Caesar. In this are occasions for prayer: (1) Wasn’t it sad that Paul was forced to reiterate the circumstances of his innocence? Only when it was a fruitless, useless effort did he appeal to Caesar. What does this say to me? (2) Paul’s relationship with the Jewish law was one of blamelessness; I want to be that innocent with the laws of our land. (3) May I keep your temple, my body, as the sanctuary of your presence. (4) May I stand in just the place you want me for your witness today. (5) I deserve to die eternally, but my Lord took my place. Help me to tell someone else. (6) Deliver me from the plots of evil men.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Give me ears to hear: (1) “You are on trial every day.” (2) “You bear testimony for me every day.” (3) “The right of appeal to me is always open.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The Lord’s Return The last prayer in the Bible is “Come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20). Peter tells us that we should be “looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God” (II Pet. 3:12). How better can we do it than by praying for the fulfillment of Gen. 12:3; Rev. 7:9-10 and Matt. 24:14? Pray for: (1) *The speediest possible evangelization of the world* — of every unreached people group, city and nation. (2) *Your part in achieving this*. What is God’s will for your life? In the coming year are you willing to do whatever He commands regarding the need of the world? Is it possible God is calling you to a specific ministry in praying, supporting, or even personally going to the ends of the earth for your Master? (3) *Your local church’s part*. Pray that your fellowship may grow in missionary zeal and commitment.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK SEVEN

—Tuesday—

Even now you are “giving us the nations” — what shall we do with them? How we do need to repent — help me — I worship before you for this purpose.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession” (Psa. 2:8). What quality of God is here seen? It is kingliness or majesty. The whole Psalm seems to be Messianic — it is our dear Lord who is addressed. God is saying to Jesus, “Ask of me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance.” Did Jesus ever ask? Oh, yes he did. On the cross he asked in blood! The nations of the world belong to him! The uttermost parts of the earth are his possession! Dear God, how can I possibly express myself in any kind of praise or wonder or worship? As I stand beneath the cross I realize that two billion people alive on this earth have never heard they belong to you! If men just knew who you are and what your Son did, wouldn't they believe and be saved? We will never know until we tell them!

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

Read and apply to yourself! I praise you for this amazing quality! How can I sit idly by while millions have never heard? The fact of the matter is we have tried to do something about this overwhelming need. A young man in India reaches hundreds who have never heard. Our dear son, Chris, was in Santiago, Chile for this purpose. We did all we could to get the Pictorial Book of Acts in at least ten languages of 100,000 copies. But all of this is so small and impersonal. Dear God, are you speaking to me? Do I have ears to hear? I have helped to prepare several hundred young people who have gone to tell this good news. Yes, yes, but still the nations of the world have really not been told! Their cry seems but a distant sorrow. Dear God, break my hard heart!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

I sat in homes yesterday sharing the good news that all men belong to you by right of purchase. It seemed so very good to do this! At the same time, I want to confess how guilty I feel most of the time for not doing this. Is not the preparation of others for this task and the teaching of the saved also important? I know I cannot do it alone — but I want to feel like I should! Forgive me for my complacency! *“Evil suspicions.”* How easy it is to enter your sphere of action. Why should I think ill of any man? You are hurt more than I am — I turn it over to you. You decide their motives and act appropriately.

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

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 I shall behold Him,
Far beyond the starry sky;
Face to face in all His glory,
I shall see Him by and by!

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

HIS WORD

¹²After Festus had conferred with his council, he declared: “You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!”

¹³A few days later King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea to pay their respects to Festus. ¹⁴Since they were spending many days there, Festus discussed Paul's case with the king. He said, “There is a man here whom Felix left as a prisoner. ¹⁵When I went to Jerusalem, the chief priests and elders of the Jews brought charges against him and asked that he be condemned, ¹⁶“I told them that it is not the Roman custom to hand over any man before he has faced his

accusers and has had an opportunity to defend himself against their charges.” —Acts 25:12-16, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

You were present in that council that day! There is never a decision made without you. In the choices of men of state, kings and princes and potentates, you are not left out — even if they intend to do so. Most especially is this true when a decision is being made concerning one of your servants. How I do wonder what they said — but these you know. Paul’s wisdom was from heaven — it was transparent; it had no shadow to cast by turning. His appeal was accepted. When the Caesar before whom he was to appear was Nero, Paul’s prospects for a fair trial were not too bright. But then there were many days yet ahead. Was this a delaying action on Paul’s part?

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I wonder how Luke obtained the very words Festus spoke to King Agrippa? Did the Holy Spirit tell him? Did Festus later become a Christian and tell him? Did Bernice or Agrippa give their decision for Christ a second thought and later tell Luke what was said? All of these could be true. The point is that they are true as they stand! These words speak to me: (1) The monotony of a prison confinement is never mentioned. (2) Frustration and griping over an unjust sentence does not once appear in one word of Luke’s account. (3) No harsh criticism of the political “weasel” words of Felix or Festus are mentioned. Dear Lord, dear Lord, what have I to complain about?

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Yes, yes. (1) Thank you for the many decisions of the councils of men that were inadvertently your decisions for the eternal good of men. (2) Thank you for the means of going to Rome — whether at Paul’s expense or the government’s. (3) Thank you for unusual opportunities to speak on your behalf — these are by your intent and not accident. (4) Thank you for King Agrippa and for Bernice. I do not know more about them than appears in the text (except some facts (?) of history). You know them; they represent so many today! (5) Thank you for the “Roman customs” — some of them based on your jurisprudence in the Old Testament. (6) Thank you for “the customs” of our land which include so much of your law of fairness and right of trial. (7) Thank you most of all for the dear man Paul who is my constant example in a hundred ways.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Festus discussed Paul’s case with the king.” Wasn’t Paul known to Festus or Agrippa before they met together to talk over his case? We believe he was. This was why the subject intrigued both men. What did they say, i.e., beyond the fact that Paul was a

prisoner without a charge? Did they know just why there was such hatred of just who this Jesus of Nazareth might be? Why was there such deep opposition to Paul? Did either man seriously investigate the resurrection of our Lord? Perhaps it is idle to imagine the personal interest of these men, but then you are knowledgeable of all they said. Will we all one day know when we stand before you in judgment?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Reaction to Paul’s appeal to Caesar can move us to prayer: (1) For the following qualities of character necessary to endure the tedious monotony of political confusion we pray: Godlike patience. (2) For the long view of the whole picture. (3) For understanding that all men are important to you. (4) For my Lord’s kind of love that is willing to “endure all things.” (5) For a willingness to sincerely pray for these men in high places. (6) For the conversation that Paul knew would take place between Festus and Agrippa. (7) For God’s decision to operate through the decision of these men.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What do you say to me in these verses? (1) “Be careful about your choices — some of them are irreversible.” (2) “You never know to whom you can speak on my behalf — be ready.” (3) “It could be you will be in a place of confinement — realize that much can be done from this place that can be done in no other way.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The World — Points for prayer: (1) *The harvest of people into the Kingdom of God in recent years has been unprecedented.* Never in history has such a high percentage of the world’s population been exposed to the gospel, nor the increase of evangelical Christians been so encouraging. The rate of ingathering in many areas outside the West has been spectacular. The share of the percentage of “all Evangelicals” in the Third World has steadily increased this century. (2) *The dramatic breakthrough in China since 1975 is hard to quantify.* Reliable estimates are that 45-50 million people may have come to faith in Christ since then. This increase, if substantiated, would mean that evangelical believers have increased in the Third World from 74 million to 174 million, or an average annual increase of 9%.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK SEVEN

—Wednesday—

All I want to be you already are! You are indeed my ultimate goal! How good it is to reestablish this acceptance of yourself!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“But thou, O Jehovah, art . . . my glory, and the lifter up of my head” (Psa. 3:3). Bless your name forever! How good it is to rejoice in your presence! I claim for all men what David claimed for himself. David said you are his *character* — we understand the word “glory” to refer to essential being. The psalmist is claiming God as a model of character. He is saying “all I want to be you already are.” God is the ultimate goal of all men in character development. Of course there are some qualities that are exclusively yours — but there are many, many qualities we all need and can share. How wonderful it would be to live in a world where all men were full of generosity! Dear God, I do want to see just how we can reflect your nature by seeing it demonstrated in your dear Son.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

You are my character model and at the same time “the lifter up of my head.” This whole psalm is couched in the context of a battle scene. I have been wounded by the enemy. I have fallen in the field. The wound is deep and painful. I expect any moment to see the grimacing face of my enemy as he draws his sword to slay me. Instead I look into the dearest, kindest face I have ever seen. I feel a support under my head. I sense the surge of healing strength throughout my body. I am raised up and in his strength “I will not be afraid of ten thousands . . .” Dear Lord, how I praise you for the daily strength you give me — for the very personal help you offer me. It is my head in your hand.

How do you personally relate to the glory of God, and God who is our example?

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, you have surely not been the model of my character development, i.e., in every circumstance. It is abiding in your word that produces this change. It is abiding in your Son that enables me to abide in

you. Forgive me for finding a model for imitation in anyone — or anything but yourself! Why should I want anyone else? Once again the tracks of the evil one are discovered. I can and do resist him — but my greatest victory is in my attraction to you. Forgive me for shutting myself off from the power of your love. “Love of money.” It would be so easy to say, “I do not love money” — but the love of what money can do is the love of money. I want to ask you for what I need — not money!

What personal sins do you want to confess? There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

HIS WORD

¹⁷“When they came here with me, I did not delay the case, but convened the court the next day and ordered the man to be brought in. ¹⁸When his accusers got up to speak, they did not charge him with any of the crimes I had expected. ¹⁹Instead, they had some points of dispute with him about their own religion and about a dead man named Jesus who Paul claimed was alive. ²⁰I was at a loss how to investigate such matters; so I asked him if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem and stand trial there on these charges.

²¹When Paul made his appeal to be held over for the Emperor’s decision, I ordered him held until I could send him to Caesar.”

²²Then Agrippa said to Festus, “I would like to hear this man myself.”

He replied, “Tomorrow you will hear him.”

—Acts 25:17-22, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Is Festus telling the whole of the truth? Didn’t he

know more of our Lord than he indicated in his "speech" to Agrippa? Wasn't he being just polite and artful in his choice of words? At least Agrippa knew Paul and our Lord for almost the total extent of his life. Agrippa's father had killed James and imprisoned Peter. Since Paul was born almost the same time our Lord was Agrippa had been associated with Christianity all his life — in one form or another. How vastly important was the little drama about to be given!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

"Some points of dispute about a dead man named Jesus, who Paul claimed was alive." I have read the evidence of his resurrection and I am glad to affirm with Paul that it is even as he said. Festus is not telling the whole truth — his reason for sending Paul to Jerusalem was to deliver him into the hands of the Jews. Am I at times any better than he? Do I always and in every place, with everyone always tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth? Dear Lord, open my eyes to see that nothing — utterly *nothing* is hidden from you. How little hidden was the governor's deception! Two thousand years have not hidden it! Dear Father, through the blood of your Son clear my record!

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the interest and a certain amount of fairness on the part of Festus. (2) Thank you that none of our Lord's accusers — nor Paul's accusers were able to establish a charge against him. Satan cannot today lay anything to the charge of "God's elect." (3) Thank you for the pleasant surprises Christians can offer those who have eyes to see. (4) Thank you for the world religion of our Lord — a Way of Life for all men. (5) Thank you we are still investigating the power of the good news. (6) Thank you for the unusual manner you took in taking Paul to Rome that he might testify there on your behalf. (7) Thank you that we can today still hear the wonderful defense of Paul before King Agrippa.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Tomorrow you will hear him." For every tomorrow of many years I have heard him. How eloquently, poignantly, yea, personally has Paul spoken to me! There is so much he has said that I really have not heard. Paul has spoken to me, and millions like me, of his conversion. It has become a pattern for all of us, i.e., by way of the wonderful change wrought in his whole life. This revolution was caused by three truths: (1) He saw our Lord for who he really is: King of kings and Lord of glory. Once we see him "even as he is" we shall never be the same. (2) Saul heard Jesus speak to him. Our Lord called him by name — this was a very personal, intimate encounter between Saul and our Lord. Once he speaks to you you cannot hear anyone else. (3) Jesus made Saul personally

responsible for either serving him or persecuting him. Such an encounter totally altered Saul from the inside.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

The problem of Festus poses some real questions for prayer: (1) How can we ever open the heart of a man like Festus? (2) King Agrippa knew much more about our Lord, yet how shall we reach him? (3) The prominence of Jesus and the resurrection is such an example for me. (4) Deliver me from pride that prompts deception. (5) Help me to listen to Paul as if I had never heard him before. (6) Some glad tomorrow I will be able to speak to Paul where there are no schedules or interruptions — help me to be ready. (7) May I prepare myself in prayer for each meeting of those who need our Lord.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me words of comfort and challenge from this text: (1) "Guard your heart; it is easy to be deceived." (2) "Guard your heart; it is too easy to deceive others." (3) "Guard your heart; the deceiver is even now at work."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The World — Points for prayer: (1) *The Muslim world is a major challenge*, but the last 10 years have been more encouraging than ever before. Despite the rise of Islamic fundamentalism Muslims have been more exposed to the gospel, and been more responsive to it, than ever before. It is still "the day of small things" (Zech. 4:10), but the number of converts out of Islam has increased, and for the first time churches have come into being in a number of Muslim cities and nations. The cracks in the seemingly impenetrable wall of Islam can be widened by prayer! (2) *Communist territorial gains have not been an ideological success*. On the contrary, Communist-inspired revolutions, wars and takeovers have opened up new opportunities for the Word of God to enter the hearts of hitherto unreached peoples that once were hardened to the gospel — both within those countries and among refugees from them. Yet the persecution and suffering of the Church in these lands has often been acute, and the burden carried by the believers heavy. Believers around the world must share it with them.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, city of our God;
He, whose words cannot be broken,
Formed thee for His own abode:
On the rock of Ages founded,
What can shake thy sure repose?
With salvation's walls surrounded,
Thou mayst smile at all thy foes.

WEEK SEVEN

—Thursday—

You give me "the larger look" — you set me on a high place so I can see things as they really are. Such a place is just before me in the closet of prayer.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

"Thou hast set me at large when I was in distress" (Psa. 4:1). How dear and kind an act is this! We all feel "hemmed in" at times. In these times you position me (us) in such a manner that we can get the larger look. How precious and thoughtful you are! Such a capacity is available to all men. There is no circumstance where this would not be true. Shall we imagine the very worst of all possible places for this to happen: a prison. Paul is a grand example of this. Narrowness or largeness is in the mind. Bless your wonderful interest in each of us. You can give us the breath of the world from a prison cell. You can transport us into the third heaven from such a confinement!

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

You have so often "set me at large" when I was "pressed on every side." Because I have lived long enough I recognize such feelings of confinement come from fatigue and boredom. A good rest for eight hours is sometimes the most holy thing I can do. It liberates me from myself! There is no way I should be bored — the best study of your word has yet to be written. The best record of how men can be won to your Son has yet to be established.

How glad I am for the wisdom from above that opens my mind to vistas of thought and areas of service unheard of before! I believe you could do a much better job on someone else, but I praise you from the very depths for what you do through me.

How do you personally relate to the deliverance of God, and God who "sets at large"? Speak it out or write it out.

CONFESSION OF SIN

I have sometimes complained and wondered — it was when I was tired or bored, or both. The sin is not resting — not opening my heart to the needs of others all around me. Dear God, forgive me! Aloneness in any relationship can cause or be the environment for

selfishness — expressed in many sins. Since I know this, dear God, push me out into the main stream of life! I sin in not waiting — sometimes I sin by waiting. Oh, how I need the wisdom to know the difference! I have come to believe that failure to ask is a sin. "I have not because I ask not." I purpose from today onward to set up an asking service. Forgive me for being so selfish.

"Impatient." Why are we impatient? Because we simply are not ready to accept your timing. I do believe your will is revealed in the midst of our best efforts to do what we think is your will. Help me to patiently accept your refusals and changes in my best efforts.

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 Thy welcome voice,
That calls me, Lord to Thee
For cleansing in Thy precious blood
That flowed on Calvary.
I am coming, Lord!
Coming now to Thee!
Wash me, cleanse me in the blood
That flowed on Calvary!

HIS WORD

²²Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I would like to hear this man myself."

He replied, "Tomorrow you will hear him."

²³The next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and entered the audience room with the high ranking officers and the leading men of the city. At the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. ²⁴Festus said: "King Agrippa, and all who are present with us, you see this man! The whole Jewish community has petitioned me about him in Jerusalem and here in Caesarea, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. ²⁵I found he had done nothing deserving of death, but because he made his appeal to the Emperor

I decided to send him to Rome. ²⁶But I have nothing definite to write to His Majesty about him. Therefore I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that as a result of this investigation I may have something to write. ²⁷For I think it is unreasonable to send on a prisoner without specifying the charges against him.” — Acts 25:22-27, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How absurd to you must appear all attempts of man to elevate himself above other men — to say nothing of being an insult to the One to whom all praise and glory belongs. Why would Agrippa and Bernice put on such a show when all men know of their human frailties? It was all they had to offer. We are all so very, very fallible! Dear Lord, look in kindness and love upon us and open our eyes to see things not as they appear but as they are! You were in the audience room — essentially, *you are the audience* — it is before you and in your sight that we appear before men. You have told us through the pen of Paul what you saw when you beheld the man Paul! Thank you for this fresh look at your “sent one.”

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I do indeed want to sit in the audience and take a new look at Paul. Through the eyes and words of Festus, I will look at Paul. Paul has affected the whole Jewish community. Festus is saying there is not a man in all Jerusalem that has not heard of Paul. All have heard of Paul's faith in Jesus as the Messiah. What an example for me! How many in my city have heard of my Lord from me? It isn't who could have heard and didn't. The reputation of such a man ran ahead of him and prepared the heart of the king to listen with an attention he would not otherwise give.

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

Indeed, indeed. (1) Thank you for the opportunity the gospel had to influence those in high places. (2) Thank you that at all times even when men oppose and lay plans to kill your servants your word is not limited or hindered. (3) Thank you for all that has been written about Paul since that day when the governor had nothing to write. (4) Thank you for the unnamed persons in the audience before Paul. (5) Thank you for the letter Festus wrote to send with Paul to the Emperor. It evidently commended Paul in such a way as to obtain his release. (6) Thank you for the patience of Paul with the injustices of men.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“I think it is unreasonable to send on a prisoner without specifying the charges against him.” It was not only unreasonable, it was also illegal. Festus

would be in trouble with Nero. How many prisoners are condemned without proving the charges against them? Our Lord was the first one. Only those who have been falsely accused and condemned could truly identify with our Lord. Only someone who has been confined in jail could tell what it means to be shut out of and away from the mainstream of life. If life seems monotonous or boring to those who are not in prison, what must be the depths of depression of those inside? Paul experienced imprisonment but not depression or boredom — at least we do not catch the slightest hint of such from his letters.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

It is easy to see petitions related to this text: (1) Keep me aware of how fleeting is the pomp of men. (2) Open my heart to see how eternal is your honor. (3) Move me to remember all men in the incident and all men since will appear before your judgment seat. (4) I want to follow the example of Paul — wisdom from above. (5) I want to imitate his total confidence in your presence. (6) May I remember that truth has a wonderful way of rising to the surface.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What can I hear from you in this text? (1) “All men deserve to die an eternal death.” (2) “All men can be saved from such a fate.” (3) “Paul left the example of how all men can be saved.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The World — Point for prayer: *The extent of the unfinished task is enormous*, but we are making progress! Never before have we had such a clear picture of what remains to be done. We have a task which can be achieved! The Great Commission has two major goals: (1) *To preach the gospel to every creature* (Mark 16:15). It is estimated that possibly 60-77% of the world's population has had some exposure to the claims of Christ (depending on one's definition of what degree of exposure and understanding is needed). (2) *To make disciples of all peoples* (i.e., biblical nations) (Matthew 28:18-20). Many are praying that we may achieve our goal by AD 2000.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Jesus has loved me — wonderful Savior!
 Jesus has loved me, I cannot tell why;
 Came He to rescue sinners all worthless,
 My heart He conquered — for Him I would die.
 Glory to Jesus — wonderful Savior!
 Glory to Jesus, the One I adore;
 Glory to Jesus — wonderful Savior!
 Glory to Jesus, and praise evermore.

WEEK SEVEN

—Friday—

*I do so need to be taught how to bow —
to yield — to submit to your Lordship.
I take this time and place to do it!*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“*Thou hast put gladness in my heart*” (Psa. 4:7). How wonderfully true this is. You are the source of all joy and happiness! The optimism and delight we often associate with the word “gladness” all comes from you. Oh, when will all men know you? To have such delight in our hearts means we have first thought your thoughts. We *think* with our heart, we *meditate* with our heart, we *reason* with our heart. To have your gladness we must discover in your word the cause of joy and meditate on it. To have your gladness means we will or accept what you have thought. We *purpose* in our hearts, we *decide* with our hearts, we *choose* with our hearts. I not only understand what joy and gladness you can bring; I *want* it!

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Your gladness is in *my* heart; it could be and should be in every heart — but at least it is in *my* heart. I can open your word and read: “In peace will I both lay me down and sleep” (Psa. 4:8). My mind assimilates this information — that I can both lie down and I can sleep in confident hope of either tomorrow or heaven. My will accepts such a thought — indeed eagerly assents to this truth. My emotions become aroused — I feel a sense of wonder and appreciation — indeed, gladness fills my heart. My conscience approves of such a thought. Thus my whole heart is filled with your gladness. Praise your name, you have in 10,000 ways put gladness in my heart.

How do you personally relate to the happiness of God, and God who is source of gladness?

CONFESSION OF SIN

That I am not always glad is a confession of my failure to meditate on your word day and night! I read now again just as if I never read it before these precious words from you:

May you always be joyful in your union with the Lord. I say it again: Rejoice!
Show a gentle attitude toward everyone. The

Lord is coming soon. Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart.

—Philippians 4:4-6, Good News Bible.

Your peace and joy are always available. Bless your wonderful name! Forgive me!

“*Unkindness.*” How people look for kindness! How I look for it. How I *need* it! How I want to give it. It is but a return of the gift you have given me. There really is no reason in the face of your goodness and my sin for me to be unkind to anyone.

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.

HIS WORD

26 Then Agrippa said to Paul, “You have permission to speak for yourself.”

So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense: ²⁴“King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews, ³and especially so because you are well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently.

⁴“The Jews all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child, from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in Jerusalem. ⁵They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that according to the strictest sect of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee. ⁶And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our fathers that I am on trial today. ⁷This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. O king, it is because of this hope that all the Jews are accusing me. ⁸Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?

⁹“I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was

possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

¹⁰And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. ¹¹Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them.

¹²“On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. ¹³About noon, O king, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. ¹⁴We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’”

—Acts 26:1-14, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How full of meaning are these few verses! How I do read these words over and over again to catch their meaning. I know you need not read words, since what happened centuries ago is as real and alive today as it was then. The exchange between Paul and King Agrippa is still happening! Just how much of the “Jewish customs and controversies” the King knew, and just how he responded to them you alone can know. Paul had such a great desire to tell of the power and purpose of his Lord! How I admire him! The close knit society of the Jews was a very large part of Paul’s life. You asked him to break away from it. Thank you for your goads in the lives of all your people.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I tried unsuccessfully to read this text just to you and to look at it from your perspective. I kept seeing myself instead of you in it. It is because I have for such a long time identified with Paul’s experience: (1) In the very midst of very religious work I hear you call, and I actually find myself hurting your body, the church. Dear Lord, forgive me. (2) I have obtained what I thought was authority from “the chief priests” to pursue a project of my own — I was wrong — you stopped me. It hurt me in my pride and selfishness, but it helped you. Praise your name!

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for Paul’s open, generous attitude with King Agrippa. (2) Thank you for the record of Paul’s life from his youth to his manhood — in Tarsus and Jerusalem so like so many religious people today. (3) Thank you for the marvelous hope Jesus gives to life! (4) Thank you for the hundreds of prophecies and promises fulfilled in our Lord. (5) Thank you for hope — oh, how good it is to hope! How sure is our hope in him. (6) Thank you for the personal interest you took in Saul — calling him by his name in the language of his home and religion.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“It is hard for you to kick against the goads.” It is hard in several ways for anyone of us to oppose our conscience. Let’s notice a few of them: (1) Our conscience is our divine umpire (animals do not have a conscience). When the rules given to this umpire come from God, then to oppose him is to oppose God. (2) It is hard on us because our conscience represents our own best interests — to oppose the conscience produces depression — deep anger is one form of this depression. (3) When we reject our conscience we are stopping growth since we add to the rules from time to time. (4) We can sear our conscience and stop the whole process of spiritual sensitivity. All of this and more was experienced by Paul as he prepared for his encounter on the road to Damascus.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Paul’s defense before Agrippa moves us to pray: (1) May I have the wisdom and courage to answer each man for the faith I have in yourself and your Son. (2) Thank you that there are no accusations Satan can bring against those in Christ Jesus. (3) Deliver me from present day Phariseeism. (4) May the hope of eternal life be more real every day I live. (5) Open my eyes to see my Lord as I read your word. (6) May I examine my opposition in every area lest I be found fighting against my Lord.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As you spoke to Saul, you can speak to me through these verses: (1) “Listen to my voice every day as you read my word.” (2) “Living as a strict Pharisee did not save Paul.” (3) “I am touched with the hurts of my people.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The World — Points for prayer: (1) *The effective functioning of local congregations.* Each should be an organism, a body. Each member has gifts to contribute to the upbuilding of the whole, yet rarely do congregations function in this way. This emphasis on “body life” has come into prominence in the past two decades. May every congregation be an effective body through which the Holy Spirit can work! (2) *Leadership is the key.* Ministers and elders need constant upholding in prayer.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK SEVEN

—Saturday—

I am so privileged to be able to identify with your analysis of right and wrong — of good and evil. I do that just now!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Evil shall not sojourn with Thee” (Psa. 5:4b). We must be reminded from time to time, and even twice in a time, that we cannot and will not travel with evil and also travel with you. It is more than interesting to note that evil is considered an outsider, a visitor from another country. The footnote suggests the term “evil” could be (perhaps should be) translated “evil man.” Evil is not evil until someone does it. Evil is always the option or the opposite of what you have said. Evil companionship will (not might) corrupt good morals. Is it true that evil has an ally in us? I.e., in our flesh? I do *not* believe this. If we have an ally it is you — in the Spirit you have put within us — your own nature in us! What an ally!

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Evil (or evil men) shall not sojourn with me (or you). Evil men can pay us a visit in various forms and manners: (1) Through books we read. However interesting and entertaining and even informative such books are, there is a subtle question being asked in a hundred ways: “Yea, hath God said?” “Is God really and truly in all?” To spend more time with the secular and sensual than we do with the sacred — and I am thinking of secular/sensual literature. (I know all things created and all of life can be sacred.) Such time and thought will lead into sin and worse than this, it will lead into an attitude of sin. We will begin to answer life’s questions from the evil man’s point of view. I want to spend hours and hours each day in what you have said! (2) When we choose the companionship of those who *never* or *very seldom* talk of you and your word, we are being influenced by evil men regardless if they are elders or preachers or professors. If you will not sojourn with evil men why should I?

How do you personally relate to the holiness of God, and God who abhors evil?

CONFESSION OF SIN

I am rebuked in my spirit when I read again what I

wrote. It sounds like I am saying I do not enjoy or seek out the company of sinners, i.e., lost sinners. . . . Our Lord was a friend of them — how can I be so exclusive? Dear Lord, I cannot. But just how did our Lord establish friendships with publicans and sinners? Zacchaeus and Matthew would be examples of one and Mary Magdalene and the woman of Samaria would exemplify the other. What conversation was exchanged in the homes of the two tax collectors? How often did Jesus talk with Mary before she left all to follow him? Following her great discovery what did the Samaritan woman learn from our Lord? Dear God, break me away from just the “church folk.” Forgive me for exclusiveness!

“Rudeness.” How could a word better describe my attitude — at times — with those who need you so badly. Dear God, reduce me to the place of the Publican in the temple. I have been a Pharisee long enough!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

HIS WORD

¹⁵“Then I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’

“ ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ the Lord replied. ¹⁶Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. ¹⁷I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you ¹⁸to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

¹⁹“So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. ²⁰First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent

and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds. ²¹That is why the Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me. ²²But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen — ²³that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles." — *Acts 26:15-23, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Of all the passages we have considered together, this one does seem to relate to you in a most direct manner. You spoke from heaven — it was a vision from your presence that changed Paul! There are so many things you said to Saul. I want to ingest each word. (1) "I am Jesus" — can it be?! The *same* One who walked the hills of Galilee and the streets of Jerusalem and slept in the house of Mary and Martha and Lazarus? The very *same* one! (2) "I have appeared to appoint!" Your appearances are not to make us feel good, but to make us "*servants*" — *slaves*. Gladly, gladly do I give myself to you. (3) You appear to enable us to witness — give our personal testimony. If you do not appear we have nothing to say! I believe the four gospels are your appearance to me and all men.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Lord, I want to be a source of testimony to those whom you send me. I have, like Saul, an increasing testimony, not only of what I have seen and heard, but of everything I see and hear each day down the road of life. Your purpose for Paul is your purpose for me: (1) To open eyes. What a rich privilege — for today help me to do this! (2) To turn them from darkness to light! Just how bright and beautiful is the light into which we step and walk! (3) From the power of Satan — to the power of God!

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the daily, heavenly vision we can have. (2) Thank you we are the ones to be obedient or disobedient. (3) Thank you that my job is to change men's minds by the preaching of the good news about your Son. (4) Thank you for your daily help in health, travel, food, raiment. (5) Thank you that our testimony is for all men.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"But I have had God's help to this very day." Oh, dear Lord, how true this is! Your help has not all been known. Probably very little of it has been appreciated. How subtle is your help! Behind the scenes. How easy it is to attribute your help to some other source. We had "good luck" or "things" turned out well. The real truth is "every good and perfect gift

comes down from above." Dear Lord, I do want to acknowledge the true source of my blessings. I have been helped inwardly as well. You provide the peace of mind and heart that are so essential to getting anything done. You have given health of body and mind. Your mercies are fresh every morning.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How I do lift my heart in these requests as I read these verses: (1) Teach me to be sensitive to how I can hurt you by hurting your body, the church. (2) Make me your servant today in some area of need. (3) I want to open my mouth and heart to witness for you — help me. (4) Rescue me from some of my well-intentioned friends. (5) Open the eyes of some who have heard of you from me. (6) Keep your heavenly vision ever before me.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I believe you can speak to me through this text: (1) "Men still must repent and turn to me." (2) "Repentance is produced through preaching." (3) "You have my help today as Paul did in the long ago."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The World — Points for prayer: (1) *Spiritual depth is rare* in many congregations. Superficiality, an inadequate devotional life and worldliness are common. This highlights the need for effective teaching of the content, doctrines, and applicability to life and witness, of the Word of God in the mother tongue. (2) *Victorious optimism* is rare where evangelical believers are a small and despised minority. These believers are often introspective and timid, and hardly a mighty force for the pulling down of the fortifications of the devil. Believers need prayer that they may witness boldly and effectively. (3) *Purity of doctrine*. Too often believers' thoughts, prejudices and fears are molded more by the prevailing culture, philosophies, superstitions and religions of the society around them than by the Bible. Humanism in the West, Hinduism in India, etc., are examples. All such can rob Christians of their assurance, power and joy in the face of a hostile world, and sidetrack believers into secondary or irrelevant issues.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

A wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord,
A wonderful Savior to me,
He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock,
Where rivers of pleasure I see.
He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock
That shadows a dry, thirsty land;
He hideth my life in the depths of His love,
And covers me there with His hand,
And covers me there with His hand.

WEEK EIGHT

—Sunday—

To talk with myself is a very frustrating practice. To talk and know you hear me satisfies my heart like nothing else!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Give ear to my words, O Jehovah, consider my meditation.” The quality of real interest in our needs is the quality here described. It is so good, my Father, to appear before you with the full knowledge that you are truly listening. You are *not* only waiting until I am through talking to get involved in something important. You hear with the inner ear. I want to tell you how much your listening means to me: (1) You sustain attention — no fluctuating in your absorption of listening. How good to right now know you are leaning forward, looking me directly in the eyes, wholly interested in what I am saying. (2) You are intelligent and are thinking with me each thought I present. There is no distraction or lack of understanding. Even when I am unclear you read the intentions of my heart. Praise you — I love you!

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

What was said above concerning myself is but representative of your interest in all men of all the nations of the world. Every day such waiting is available! But for me I would like to tell you how very, very much this quality means to me: (3) You listen to help and not just to be interested. I am so glad there is a counterpart to all I say in your word. I have *no* need, no sin, no problem you have not discussed in your word. Even the fact that I so sorely need someone who will give this type of interest and I find you are this type of person when I read your word is an example. (4) You listen as the same person — you are eternally the same — you have as much interest today as you had yesterday, and you will be listening tomorrow with the same total absorption you gave me this morning. Oh, blessed be your name!

How do you personally relate to the attentiveness of God, and God who is always listening?

CONFESSION OF SIN

Since I know you are such a good conversationalist — since I know this dialogue called prayer is such a rich

help to me — how is it I do not much more often call on you? Why am I taken up with talking to men and women who do not listen or understand? Forgive this sin! But forgive another sin: selfish ego-centeredness. If I am bothered by those who only half-listen, what of yourself? I have a difficult time selling 12 copies of a pictorial version of your word to 300-400 people. Not because they do not believe it, but because they will not read it! They are not reading the copies without pictures; why read it with pictures? Some do! Some do! Thank you! Thank you! Forgive my lack of faith. I know your word will one day be heard and known by all men. It will judge them on the last day.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

There have been names that I have loved to hear,
But never has there been a name so dear
To this heart of mine, as the name divine,
The precious, precious name of Jesus.
Jesus is the sweetest name I know,
And he's just the same as His lovely name,
And that's the reason why I love Him so;
Oh, Jesus is the sweetest name I know.

HIS WORD

²⁴At this point Festus interrupted Paul's defense.

“You are out of your mind, Paul!” he shouted.

“Your great learning is driving you insane.”

²⁵“I am not insane, most excellent Festus,” Paul replied. “What I am saying is true and reasonable.

²⁶The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner. ²⁷King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do.”

²⁸Then Agrippa said to Paul, “Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?”

²⁹Paul replied, “Short time or long — I pray God that

not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains."

³⁰The king rose, and with him the governor and Bernice and those sitting with them. ³¹They left the room, and while talking with one another, they said, "This man is not doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment."

³²Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free, if he had not appealed to Caesar." — *Acts 26:24-32, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Oh, let me see this incident through *your* eyes! When you created man as a rational being and he fails to use his capacities for your purpose — when a recital of your interest and involvement in Paul's life sounds like the words of a mad man — what will you say? Either Festus was not listening or did not care or both! What was said was reasonable and could be understood. How near to acceptance of your Son was King Agrippa? Was he saying with just a little more persuasion Paul would have won him to yourself? Or was he saying what Paul said was not at all adequate to convince him? You know — I wish I did.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Paul is saying what he did for a real purpose — what was it? Isn't he telling me something very personal to him that he wants to be very personal with me? I believe he is! He is saying to me: "What converted me should convert you." "I saw the Lord — you through my vision can see him too." Dear Lord, I do! "I heard him call to me — accuse me, commission me." Dear Lord, dear Lord, I *do* hear you — I *do* want to respond to you. I *know* you include me in your commission. Surely I know as much as Agrippa. I can become what Paul was. Paul was a Christian first — "one sent" second. Such is the position of every one of your servants. Paul was also left in chains because of the pride of men. How disappointing are men. How eternally satisfying and fulfilling are all your ways! What Festus and Agrippa didn't know was that Paul was already set free!

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 Paul's polite response to the unreasonable outburst of the governor. (2) Thank you that Paul's abilities were recognized — even though misunderstood. (3) Thank you that Paul cared about one man named Agrippa. (4) Thank you that we like Agrippa can know and believe what the prophets wrote. (5) Thank you that Paul felt that all who heard on that wonderful day could have become Christians. (6) Thank you that Paul convinced those present of his innocence — and we believe of much, much more.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"*This man could have been set free . . .*" The rulers didn't know that the greatest freedom possible was already the possession of Paul. "Freedom" is an elusive word — just when we think we have it defined we discover another facet we had not considered. We receive our Lord's words with new meaning. "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). The knowledge here spoken of by our Lord is experiential knowledge. He is saying, "When you experience the truth then you shall be set free." Paul had inwardly received the truth of the forgiveness of sins through grace — he then was free from the guilt of condemnation of sin.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I wonder what requests Paul made after he left the court room? We have requests from this experience: (1) Keep me as calm as Paul when men do not understand what I say. (2) Keep my motive clear: to persuade men to become Christians. (3) I believe your prophets — increase my faith. (4) I want to indeed become the kind of Christian I see in Paul. (5) Increase my desire to be a totally submissive slave to King Jesus.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What are you saying in these verses? (1) "There are yet men who consider gospel preachers insane." (2) "There are leaders today who are near the kingdom — speak out." (3) "Politics still mean more to many than truth."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Africa — Points for praise: (1) *The exciting harvest.* The dramatic ingathering into the churches is unique in history. Africa is the first continent to become majority Christian within a single century. (2) *The spiritual hunger* has grown in the backlash of post-independence disillusionment because of the insecurity, economic stress and political ineptitude. The bad news of Africa has dominated the world's media, but the good news of church growth has not. (3) *The vigor and vitality of many younger churches.* Some of the older churches have stagnated, and growth in some of the more recent evangelical denominations is slowing down, but the third wave of advance has begun in many areas.

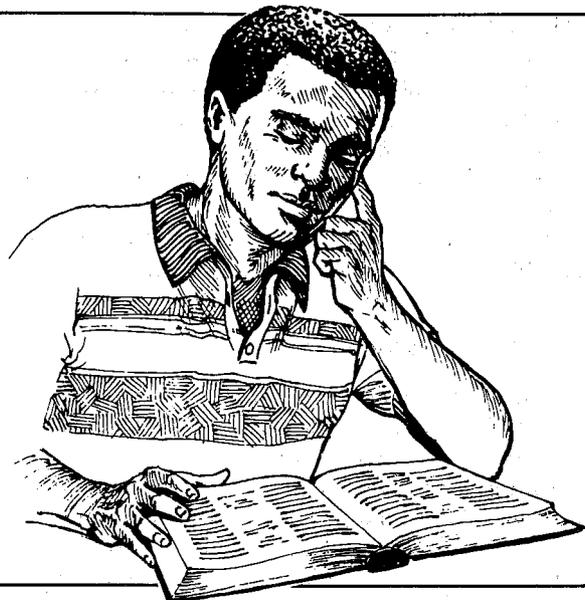
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK EIGHT

—Monday—

Love and awe are my most natural of responses to you. I want to be very specific just now in the closet of prayer.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“But as for me, in the abundance of thy loving-kindness will I come into thy house; in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple” (Psa. 5:7). I am well aware that I am (along with all other Christians) your house today. We are “a holy temple” unto you, made up of living stones, i.e., the lives of your dear people (I Pet. 2:5). At the same time it is with the same attitude as Daniel that I come before you just now. It is in an awareness of the great abundance of loving-kindness that I approach you. I accept every piece of clothing, every bite of food, every hour of rest, every provision for transportation as direct expression of your lovingkindness to me. It humbles me; I bow in awe before you! I bow down in wonder! What I have said of myself should be true of all men. How sad that one day all men will see and acknowledge the source of all good, but it will be too late then.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

How infinitely good you have been this week! You have enabled us to lead a few persons to accept your dear Son and your salvation. I count it the highest of joy to teach and lead eternal people to yourself! To give me strength and health for more than 40 years of such activity is a total amazement to me! It will finally be that “in the abundance of thy lovingkindness” I will be led into your everlasting house called “your presence” — or “at home.” Surely I shall never reach thee by any other means! I am keenly aware of how inadequate my conduct and thoughts have been to plead for anything but mercy! Today let me bow anew in “fear” or deep reverence toward your eternal Temple.

How do you personally relate to the loving-kindness of God, and God who is infinitely good?

CONFESSION OF SIN

How I need this time in my worship of you. Indeed, if we were inclined most of the time could be spent in introspection of all our failures and sins. I only want

to be yielded, open, honest. You see and define my sins. Not as I see and define them. I do indeed bow and “worship” before you in *fear*. If I did not believe and accept your grace, mercy, and lovingkindness as readily as your holiness I would be hopeless! Please accept me (as I know you do) in “the beloved.” *“Easily angered.”* If you are not easily angered with me — and you surely are not — how or why should I be so with others?

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

O Zion, haste, thy mission high fulfilling,
To tell to all the world that God is Light;
That He who made all nations is not willing
One soul should perish, lost in shades of night,
Publish glad tidings,
Tidings of peace;
Tidings of Jesus,
Redemption and release.

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

HIS WORD

27 When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Regiment. ²We boarded a ship from Adramyttium about to sail for ports along the coast of the province of Asia, and we put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us. —Acts 27:1,2, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dr. Luke here joins the contingent that sails for Rome. I know he knows that you too were present. Man proposes but you dispose. This voyage was to be with much danger. Why did the authorities wait until

the last few days of sailing time to make such a decision? I am sure you alone really know — I would assume this decision and action is like most governmental moves — tied-up with red tape until it can hardly move at all. What a fortunate choice was Julius! But then, you know who to choose. Was the friendship that Paul established with this centurion what opened the door to the “whole Imperial Regiment in Caesar’s household” (Phil. 1:13)? Only you can truly know — but it is a most intriguing thought and it fits the zealous character of your dear servant Paul (and such speaks to my heart).

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 stand on the dock and prepare to board the ship from Adramyttium! Luke and Aristarchus are there. Then there are also “some other prisoners.” Who were they? How many? I shall gladly take the place of one of them. There is a long and uncertain voyage ahead of us. What shall we think about and do while on board the ship? Shall I introduce the subject of salvation to some of the sailors, or to the prisoners? What shall we eat? Where shall we sleep? What if I get seasick? All these questions and more must have been asked by Luke, Aristarchus and Paul. Why was Luke along? Was he too a prisoner? Perhaps Paul was sick and needed a physician. All of them needed your presence and so do I!

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

As we anticipate this voyage we pause to thank you. (1) For health of body and mind that makes it possible. (2) For the record from Festus that Julius carries to the Emperor. It is probably much better than the record of some of the other prisoners. (3) For your own choice of the centurion in charge. (4) For the fond memories Paul had of all Luke had shared with him. (5) For the confidence Paul could place in you to deliver them through the unknown. (6) For Luke’s willingness to serve.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . and we put out to sea. . . .” How well does this describe the whole life of the apostle Paul! He was always going somewhere or uncertain as to what would happen to him in his present location. At the same time, we have not met a man who was more confident and peaceful. The answer to why he could find such rest in unrest is in the fact that our Lord was the captain of his ship. There was Someone at the helm who had already charted the course and knew every channel in the sea. So often it would seem Paul had to settle for an uncertain way. He knew not what form of bonds and afflictions awaited him in

Jerusalem, but he went. He knew not what to expect on the way to Rome, except that he would bear witness, and he went.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

When sailing time came Luke joined Paul at Caesarea. We can see much need for prayer: (1) The needs of Paul as he sailed for Rome can also be ours. Help us to influence all on board with our attitude and words. (2) On every journey give us your traveling mercies. (3) Give us sympathy and understanding for our fellow prisoners. (4) May we never forget your word and yourself are not bound. (5) Give us listening ears for the hurts of those with us. (6) May we see your power in your handiwork of creation. (7) Keep us calm in the face of danger.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

For preparation of today’s journey speak to me: (1) “I see beyond the obvious needs to the needs of your heart.” (2) “Speak to me often on your journey.” (3) “I have an eternal port all ready with a warm welcome for you.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Africa — Point for prayer: *The challenge of the “isms”*: (a) *Islam* is the strongest ideological contender for the hearts of Africans. Muslim advances since 1960 have been meager in all except in western Sahelian Africa. It is only in some of those lands that conversions to Islam have exceeded those to Christianity. Many gains were only temporary — through force in Sudan and Amin’s Uganda, political intrigue in Nigeria and Cameroon, and financial encouragements in many impoverished states. Yet there is growing sophistication in Muslim missionary activities in Zaire, South Africa and elsewhere. (b) *Revolutionary socialism*, often openly claiming to be Marxist-Leninist, has shaken up many countries. Over 20 nations have had, or still have, revolutionary regimes, but Communism has not generally been attractive to Africans. Christians have suffered restrictions and even severe persecution under some regimes, but only a few were openly repressive to Christians in 1986 for ideological reasons.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Walking in sunlight, all of my journey;
Over the mountains, through the deep vale;
Jesus has said, “I’ll never forsake thee,”
Promise divine that never can fail.
Heavenly sunlight, heavenly sunlight,
Flooding my soul with glory divine;
Hallelujah, I am rejoicing,
Singing His praises, Jesus is mine.

WEEK EIGHT

—Tuesday—

How very often do we read of yourself as our refuge — our fortress — or place of escape — we need such every day!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“But let all those that take refuge in thee rejoice, let them shout for joy because thou defendest them” (Psa. 5:11). How delightful to acknowledge these two wonderful qualities: (1) You are my hiding place, my protector, my true escape. (2) You are my defender; you fight some battles for me. Bless your holy and beautiful name! I love to draw away each day and hide myself in you. Such a comfortable place is the security of your arms! To change the figure just a little: the beautiful, peaceful place I have to live — a charming house full of surprises. One lovely painting, color scheme, carpet after another — somehow the place I live is alive; it emanates energy and strength to me. What I find all men can and should find. How many battles have been fought and won of which I had no knowledge at all? I do believe you have “kept me from the evil one” full many a time. I believe you have told Satan, “This far and no further.”

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

What a refuge and defender you are! Let me cite times when I so sorely need you and seek you: (1) When the events of life just do not make sense or hold any value to me — it is then I can come and relax in your presence and peacefully reach out to eternity, to infinity, to total power, to total knowledge, to absolute love. What a calm and assurance comes over me! (2) When I have lost in the fight of temptation, when trials have really hurt me, I have no doubt whatsoever that you love me and forgive me. I will be able to overcome the same testing later. You forgive me and I can hear you say, “Try again, you are stronger now.” I take refuge in you and because I do I can in the depths of my being rejoice. I shout for joy because you are defending me before your throne.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear God, how often have I tried to find refuge in the fig leaves of my own invention! How many times have I tried to defend myself only to find I was fighting a foe much too strong and wise for me. Forgive me for my stupidity and pride! Most of all: forgive me for not remembering, for being so busy about other things that I found myself exposed to Satan, vulnerable to his attack. I have been hurt and overcome so often just because I was not willing, or ready, or hurting enough to look up, to look away, to break the schedule, to stop the drift. Dear God, here I am. I hide myself in you. Please insulate me today!

What personal sins do you want to confess? There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

³The next day we landed at Sidon; and Julius, in kindness to Paul, allowed him to go to his friends so they might provide for his needs. ⁴From there we put out to sea again and passed to the lee of Cyprus because the winds were against us. ⁵When we had sailed across the open sea off the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia. ⁶There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy and put us on board. ⁷We made slow headway for many days and had difficulty arriving off Cnidus. When the wind did not allow us to hold our course, we sailed to the lee of Crete, opposite Salmone. ⁸We moved along the coast with difficulty and came to a place called Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea. —Acts 27:3-8, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It does become redundant to mention the obvious, i.e., you are always "on board." Paul had already gained the respect of Julius. Was it because Paul was a citizen of heaven or of Rome? For whatever reason, it was appreciated. We are sure Paul and Luke lifted their hearts to you in gratitude. What needs did Paul have? Was he seasick? Did he need traveling money? There must have been several interesting days of sailing. What accommodations were furnished? How wonderful it would be to be able to see and know this incident today as if it had only happened yesterday. This capacity is surely present with yourself! This account is in the first person. How glorious to know all your life is that way with you!

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How little of the physical difficulty is here discussed. What creaking and cracking and rocking of the ship is in that little phrase: "The winds were against us"! How many vessels lay at the bottom of the deep waters off the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia? How very little emotion is a part of Luke's record! Could Paul look on the coast of Cilicia and not think of Tarsus and home? What a record of events had passed by since he left the care of his mother and father. Did he mention such thoughts to Luke? How I do want to sail with these good men! A new ship, new people, new quarters, new responsibilities. Paul seems impervious to it all, but was he? I'm sure I would be praying! Since I would not know if these men would live beyond this voyage, I would want to share the hope of the gospel with them. Isn't this true of all men you meet on the ship of your life?

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Yes, yes! (1) Thank you for all kindness shown to me (as with Paul) by those who do not even recognize you — the source of all that is kind and good. (2) Thank you for the unselfish interest of so many in the apostle Paul. (3) Thank you for the nautical and geographical accuracy of the historian Luke. (4) Thank you for providing a ship sailing for Italy. There were many on board who could be influenced for our Lord. (5) Thank you for the sense of control Paul had (because of you) on every circumstance. (6) Thank you for uncertainty that can always move us toward yourself! (7) Thank you that I want to thank you.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... with difficulty (we) came to a place called Fair havens, . . ." Dear Lord, it is with difficulty all of us come to such a place. It is the fair haven of your presence toward which we sail. There are no difficulties in our life with which there is not also a way of

escape that we may be able to endure it. I realize this speaks of temptation (I Cor. 10:13), but temptation becomes tests and steps of maturity if we receive them as such. I am so glad the angels of God have taken up their place of service on our behalf. The greatest way out in all our trials (and sins) is the bright, eternal hope of heaven. We might add that that haven will be very commodious and will last throughout eternity.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Thank you for the kind centurion named Julius. Thank you for Dr. Luke. In this whole circumstance we pray for: (1) An appreciation for friends who have often provided for our needs. (2) Those who sail with us and offer help. (3) You everlasting power seen in your creation. (4) What seems accidental that we can interpret as providential. (5) Every contrary wind which can teach us a lesson. (6) The safety we have enjoyed time after time on our journey thus far. (7) Your total knowledge of the total picture where we can only see a small part.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As we pause for a little while at "fair havens" we hear you speak to us through this text: (1) "I have been on every voyage of every man every day." (2) "There are no winds or waves I cannot calm." (3) "I give wisdom — but man must want it and ask for it."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Africa — Point for prayer: *The African church in crisis.* Prayer and effort will have to be made to conserve the fruit of growth and prevent spiritual tragedy on a massive scale. (a) Much church growth has been without a deep repentance from sin and the works of darkness. In many churches there are still people bound by the fear of witchcraft. The decisive confrontation with Satan's forces has yet to be made in many areas. (b) Many have come to faith, but lack teaching. Syncretism is widespread because the Word of God is not adequately taught and understood. (c) The critical lack of trained leadership is crippling growth. The poverty of most churches makes it hard to support those in training or in the ministry. (d) There have been few Christians prepared to speak out for moral uprightness and ethical standards in societies riddled with corruption, greed and favoritism. Often church leaders have become, themselves, part of the problem.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I love Thy Kingdom, Lord,
The house of Thine abode,
The Church our blest Redeemer saved
With His own precious blood.

WEEK EIGHT

—Wednesday—

I want to relax in your arms just now. I am so glad to be in the care of one who loves me perfectly.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! Who hast set Thy glory above (upon) the heavens” (Psa. 8:1). The word “excellent” does well describe the quality of yourself seen in your handiwork. Man is constantly seeking “excellence” in all his work. This is but a reflection of yourself! I want to praise you for the following qualities of excellence I see in all you have made: (1) Your work all has perfect balance, i.e., when man has not caused a malfunction. The planets and stars are far enough removed from man’s bungling to be a grand example. Without your perfect balance our little planet would long ago have been dissolved. (As indeed it one day shall.) (2) Your work has a real satisfying purpose. However small or large the purpose, it is fulfilled. Most of man’s work (apart from you) has no fulfillment.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

For me alone. “O Lord, my Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth, your real character is above the heavens.” I tried in the above expression to include all men — in this section let me just speak for myself! I stand in constant amazement and wonder at the beauty and purpose I see in all about me! The renewal of my physical strength is such an excellent power, blessing, gift of yourself. The ability to reason and relate is excellent beyond description. One tree in its total growth cycle is so very excellent! The explanation you have given in your word for the origin, growth and purpose of life is more than excellent! The most excellent of all your works is the work of salvation you gave us as a free gift. Indeed, all your works are gifts for us to enjoy! Blessed and wonderful is your name!

How do you personally relate to the excellence of God, and God who is excellent?

CONFESSION OF SIN

That I should not always so praise you is a sin above

all sins. I shall do so — and right gladly — in your eternal presence. Dear Lord, make it so today! Ingratitude is the fundamental sin of man. How interesting is the fact that we never truly appreciate something until we know what it is to be without it. Such as health from sickness, food out of hunger, money out of debt. Oh, that for once I would look at my hand and appreciate it and its wonderful work for me. Do I have to lose it to thank you deeply, truly for it? Oh, not so!

“Failing to discern the body.” Remarkable! This is carrying the above sin of insensitivity to its ultimate end! When we fail to see you in all of life, we fail to see you at the table! Forgive me, not someone else, but *me!*

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

More like the Master I would ever be,
More of His meekness, more humility;
More zeal to labor, more courage to be true,
More consecration for work He bids me do.
Take Thou my heart, I would be Thine alone;
Take Thou my heart and make it all Thine own;
Purge me from sin, O Lord, I now implore,
Wash me and keep me Thine forevermore.

HIS WORD

⁹Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous because by now it was after the Fast. So Paul warned them, ¹⁰“Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also.”

¹¹But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and the owner of the ship. ¹²Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided that we should sail on, hoping to reach Phoenix and winter there. This was a harbor in Crete, facing both southwest and northwest. ¹³When a gentle south wind began to blow, they thought they had obtained what they wanted; so they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete.

¹⁴Before very long, a wind of hurricane force, called

the "Northeaster," swept down from the island. ¹⁵The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along. ¹⁶As we passed to the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were hardly able to make the lifeboat secure. ¹⁷When the men had hoisted it aboard, they passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it together. Fearing that they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along. —Acts 27:9-17, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Yes, yes. What an exciting, fearful time these verses describe! But you were there all the time. I wonder if anyone thought that to inquire of Paul was tantamount to inquiring of yourself? How good it would be to be so near to yourself and know your word so well that this would be true of us. Paul was speaking not only on your behalf, but out of all the experience he had in sailing these same waters before. To sail or not to sail, to go or stay — how often have we all faced these decisions. Paul does not here seem to be speaking out of divine illumination. Dear Father, are you saying something about the decisions of life? Man seems to be left up to his own devices, but above and beneath and ahead of us is yourself — in whom we live and move and have our being.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

In a place of crisis, in a time of indecision, in the valley of choice — dear Lord, what shall I do? You seem to say: (1) Examine the whole picture — the total subject. (2) Realize there could be, most likely will be, another time to get what you want now. (3) Do not jump at conclusions — "a south wind" can be deceptive. (4) Even if you make the wrong choice, all is not lost. God is with you in the storm as well as the calm. (5) God expects me to do all I can to solve the problem. (6) There *are* storms that *can* and *will* wreck your little ship, i.e., of finance, or job security, or of local influence. All is not lost. He has something better prepared for you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you even for delays in timing — you can and do use it, if not arrange it. (2) Thank you for the preciseness of Luke's record (i.e., "fast" — Jewish Day of Atonement. In the year 59 A.D. it was on October 5; in 60 A.D. it would have been September 23). (3) Thank you that you can override the foolishness of men and use it to your glory. (4) Thank you for all the winds that blow — all of them blow some good.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... They tied ropes around the ship itself to hold it together." What desperate precautions will man take to save himself from suffering and death. However

much we work at it, this old ship will come apart and we shall all stand before him with whom we have to do. Why are we so anxious to avoid death? We can understand the attitude of the men (and women?) on board this ship. But it is much more difficult to account for the fear in the hearts of Christians. Paul faced this inevitable journey with great, eager, positive anticipation. "For me to die is gain." He said, "I have a great desire to depart the body which is far better."

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

It was dangerous to sail, but more dangerous to ignore the advice of Paul. (1) As I face the storms of life may I hear the words of your servant Paul. (2) Help me not to be deceived by the "gentle south wind" of the evil one. (3) Lead me to a harbor for the winter of life. (4) Help me to make all necessary precautions in sailing a safe course in life. (5) May I expect the best and prepare for the worst. (6) Thank you for Paul's courageous attitude.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As we enter the storm there is much we can hear from you: (1) "I can work through a storm as well as without one." (2) "I have ways of convincing even stubborn men." (3) "A gentle south wind can be the precursor of a storm."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Asia — Point for prayer: *Praise God for the gospel advances in Asia over the last 200 years.* (a) *The gospel has been preached in nearly every country in Asia.* Only in the Maldives and Mongolia is there no organized indigenous Church. In 19 of the 25 nations over 1% of the population is "Christian"; in seven it is over 10%. Just 200 years ago there were only a few Protestant churches in the whole of Asia. (b) *The most dramatic gospel advances have occurred over the past 20 years.* Notable is the growth of the Church in South Korea, China and Indonesia. Over the last 10 years maybe nearly 50 million have believed in Christ in China alone. Over the past 10 years the number of Protestants (including Chinese home churches) has increased by 9.8% annually. (c) *The maturing of churches in Asia* has been remarkable, with rapidly rising educational standards among pastors. There are probably more seminary students in South Korea than in all of Europe!

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom spread from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

WEEK EIGHT

—Thursday—

I honestly look forward to judgment! I have no confidence in my own righteousness — but I look forward to the world you have prepared. Renew my heart.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“But the Lord shall endure forever; he that prepared his throne for judgment” (Psa. 9:7). It sounds like you are given a great deal of opposition. How eternally true this is! Men have opposed you out of their own selfish desires. It is a strange fact full of wonder that the very qualities that reflect yourself have been used by man to oppose you. Man can choose and he has chosen to reject and refuse. Man has the capacity and desire to worship — he worships himself. It is not that you are in a “waiting game” to simply endure longer than man’s opposition. You have done so much to awaken man to Satan’s lies. You are even now opening the eyes of men to your love and forgiveness. But there will be a judgment — a time of total evaluation. It is so good to worship One who will always endure and who will balance the books.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me! I want to trust Someone who has never betrayed a confidence. I want to love Someone who never in the slightest disappoints. I want to believe Someone who has never told a lie. I want to follow Someone who knows exactly where he is going. Oh, joy unspeakable! I have found that Someone! I want to believe in Someone who has a total record of what all men said — and exactly *why* they said it. What an unspeakable, unimaginable day it will be when you set up your judgment! Truly, truly, I cannot imagine what it will be. But that it will be, I am as sure as your promise backed by your integrity!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Do I really and truly believe I will be judged? Is your grace and mercy an automatic bath that is turned on each time I sin and is applied without fail before I appear before you? Is there no need for true, deep, per-

sonal repentance? If some sins have held on like stubborn barnacles, shall I yet be accepted? There will needs be a cleansing — is that a part of the judgment? No sin or unrepentant sinner will enter into your presence. I know this and tremble in fear! At the same time, I also know that my knowledge and performance are *not* the basis of acceptance. I simply do not want to “continue in sin that grace may abound”! Dear God, forgive me! Accept me! Praise your name, I know you do.

“Lukewarmness.” Dear Lord, I want to feed the fire. I want to stir up the gift. Forgive me for the times I haven’t.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Lord, speak to me, that I may speak
In living echoes of Thy tone;
As Thou hast sought, so let me seek
Thy erring children lost and lone.

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

HIS WORD

They lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along. ¹⁸We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. ¹⁹On the third day, they threw the ship’s tackle overboard with their own hands. ²⁰When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.

²¹After the men had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: “Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourself this damage and loss. ²²But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. ²³Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me ²⁴and said,

‘Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.’ ²⁵So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. ²⁶Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island.” — *Acts 27:17c-26, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How little and frail is man. As compared to the quantity of water in the sea he is an infinitesimal speck! Since he *is* so small and incapable, how is it you have an interest in him? It would be easy to say, “because you created him in your own likeness” — and so you have. How is it you placed your likeness in such a small temporary body? If you were going to make man to rule over all the rest of your handiwork, how is it you did not give him a stronger and larger body in which to live? Why create him as subject to all the buffeting of sea and weather? Ah, it is easy to answer part of this question: If man does not do any better with the little you have given him what would he do with more? Bless your name, you have made all things well!

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me. How I can identify with the seasickness of those on board. What sad words are those of Luke: “We finally gave up all hope of being saved.” After being without food for so many days (two weeks) there was an apathetic acceptance of the inevitable. It would seem that the last thing they needed to hear were the words of Paul when he said: “I told you so”! But in such a condition this is the one thing I need to hear. I need to be deeply, deeply reminded that you are *always right* — that if I would only listen ahead of time I need not suffer. But even now — in the midst of despair there is hope — my hope is in you and only in you.

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you dear Lord that the ship escaped the sandbars of Syrtis. (2) Thank you that your chastening does lighten our lives of all excess baggage. (3) Thank you for the immense power you manifest in the physical creation about us, only remotely comparable to your Spiritual power. (4) Thank you that when we give up hope there is always someone who does not. (5) Thank you for Paul’s willingness to take advantage of every opportunity to say a word for you. (6) Thank you for the promise that even Caesar will hear from Paul (and you).

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

‘Nevertheless we must run aground on some island.’ What a remarkable prophecy this was! There are so many other things that could have happened: (1) The

ship could have sunk with all on board. (2) They could have weathered the storm and continued their voyage. (3) They could have made it into a harbor to spend the winter. (4) The ship could have been broken up in the waves and ultimately sunk.

Not one (of 276) would be lost! How wonderfully good you were to Paul and all the people on board. This has not always been your will, but when it is it is indeed appreciated. It is a strange phenomenon that we can be so much more concerned about physical safety than we are with the real person in danger. All 276 persons (with the exception of Paul and his companions) were lost and headed for an eternal drowning in the lake of fire.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In every desparate situation we need prayer: (1) It is so easy to be marooned in life — “Jesus Savior pilot me.” (2) Open my mind to take every precaution I can take against Satan’s storm. (3) May I lighten up all *excess* baggage for the voyage of every day. (4) Teach me again that what is hopeless with men is full of hope with you.

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) “Angels still minister to my servants.” (2) “I can save men through you from a worse death than drowning.” (3) “Seldom do I work through ideal circumstances.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Asia — Points for prayer: (1) *The Church, as a whole*, is stagnant or even losing ground in Sri Lanka, parts of India, Bangladesh, Taiwan and, to an extent, even Hong Kong, though in each land the more evangelistic bodies are growing. There is much nominalism that needs to be replaced by a living, vibrant faith. (2) *The Church is under pressure* from, or discriminated against by, non-Christian religious majorities. Muslims have sought to limit or stop all outreach where they have the political power to do so. The social and family pressures in Hindu and Buddhist societies make conversion hard, and Christians are too frequently hedged in to a single section of the community. (3) *Persecution is very real in Communist states*. Despite the greater degree of freedom for Christians in China, there are believers in prison for their faith. The Church, where it exists, only does so illegally in North Korea, Mongolia and Kampuchea. In Vietnam, Christians are under constant surveillance and pressure.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK EIGHT

—Friday—

Your "name" represents yourself — all you are and do. I bow before your "name" and trust you. I renew such a relationship just now.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

"And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee; for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee" (Psa. 9:10). Praise just for the qualities I see in this beautiful verse: (1) You are knowable, i.e., man can and should enter into this knowledge. Your qualities and characteristics are all knowledgeable. How wonderful is this thought! We need to pause long before your two great books: a) Nature and b) the Bible. (2) Assimilating facts does not give us a knowledge of yourself — we must become emotionally involved with such information before it becomes real. Such knowledge is experiential or it is nothing. (3) Our response to such knowledge is that we *will* (not *might*) put our trust in you. Only when man walks and talks with you, and you with him can man truly know you.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. Dear Lord, I do, I do want to *know* your whole self! To know your name (which is many names) is to know you, and not to know you. I must and I do pause before you to contemplate your greatness and goodness! I look with the eyes of my heart at these words which but represent all you are: (1) Love, (2) Power, (3) Wisdom, (4) Grace, (5) Mercy, (6) Kindness, (7) Patience. All of these qualities need to be raised to the *absolute* or totality! Indeed, indeed, you have "not forsaken those who seek you." Right now I bow in wonder and amazement and joy!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

That I am not always caught up in the joy of worship is a sad confession. Such joy need not be loud or

seen, but Jesus did say "my joy I leave with you, my joy I give to you, and no man shall take away my joy." Therefore for such joy to leave is the sin here confessed. Dear Lord, anger and selfish desire removes such joy. Forgive me. I do, I do forgive those who sin against me.

"Stinginess." It is only when we freely give ourselves away to you that we are ready to give generously to others. Forgive me for the miserly attitude I have had toward giving.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I must tell Jesus all of my trials;
I cannot bear these burdens alone;
In my distress He kindly will help me;
He ever loves and cares for His own.
I must tell Jesus! I must tell Jesus!
I cannot bear my burdens alone;
I must tell Jesus! I must tell Jesus!
Jesus can help me, Jesus alone.

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

HIS WORD

²⁷On the fourteenth night we were still being driven across the Adriatic Sea, when about midnight the sailors sensed they were approaching land. ²⁸They took soundings and found that the water was a hundred and twenty feet deep. A short time later they took soundings again and found it was ninety feet deep. ²⁹Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight. —Acts 27:27-29, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How easy it is to relate this circumstance to yourself! Only you can handle it! How many thousands of

ships and sailors have come and gone on the seas of life? There has never been a despairing cry for help you have not heard. Whatever help any received came from you — recognized or not. Just why thousands (millions) have drowned — just why ships have sunk is best known to you. I am sure it will be no problem at all to explain this to me and to anyone else in the light of eternity. If I am prepared to say there is a plain understanding above mine then, I can safely rest in the One who lives in that realm. From my own understanding it would seem that those who place themselves in the environment of the operation of the laws of nature or the created world will receive the consequences of those laws.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I do want to get on board that ship. I want to stand on the reeling deck and feel the force of the wind and rain. What strange and different thoughts would I have after fourteen days with little or no food. Fourteen days of seasickness would move me to near despair. How many times I would wish I was dead. Luke evidently was right there to see and hear all that happened. One hundred and twenty feet of turbulent water in the middle of the night is an awesome thought. How would prayers hasten the day? Did all the occupants of the ship participate in these prayers? This seems to be nothing more than a fervent desire which is here described by Luke as a prayer. Dear Lord, how would I word a prayer in such conditions? Like Peter, I cry "Lord save me!"

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the fact that you see and know as well in the night as the day. (2) Thank you for your promises that all the storms of life cannot defeat. (3) Thank you for every desperate situation when I must trust in you. (4) Thank you that my sins are cast into a deeper sea than the Adriatic. (5) Thank you for the four anchors of our faith: (a) Justification; (b) Sanctification; (c) Redemption; (d) Hope. (6) Thank you for the ship of faith that shall never be broken by any rocks of this world. (7) Thank you for the captain of the ship of our life.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight." This must describe millions of men in the desperate darkness of a storm at sea. It could describe millions of others who found themselves in a place where danger was present and life has lost its meaning. There is a lesson in this for me — for all who have felt like the night would never end. (1) We need to do what we can. The four anchors have represented as many things as the imagination of man could manufacture. They do represent what we can do. (a) We can read your word — what an anchor! (b) We can talk with others who love us. (c) We can pray with someone else in the same plight. (d) We can take the Lord's supper and remember him who died in darkness. (2) We need to remember *there will be another day.*

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

At midnight it is hard to keep a balance — we need prayer: (1) We are all coming closer to the shore of eternity — how far is it? Lord give us a "sounding" from time to time. (2) There are four anchors we need as we sail through any storm: (a) The anchor of real personal prayer. (b) The anchor of daily meditation upon your word. (c) The anchor of a close friend in whom we can confide. (d) The anchor of a hope both sure and steadfast that reaches through the veil of death into heaven itself. (3) How I do pray for the dawning of that eternal day when all storms will be past. (4) Thank you that you know so much more about every situation than we do.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In this midnight hour what do you say to us? (1) "Be urgent when life is calm as well as when troubled." (2) "There are men who are counting on you to speak a word for their salvation." (3) "I am your guide through every dark night."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Asia — Point for prayer: *The unfinished task is enormous:* (a) *Vast areas in Central Asia:* Tibet, Kashmir, Northwest China and the Himalaya region have never been effectively evangelized. (b) *The Muslim bloc* is almost untouched. Apart from Javanese Muslims in Indonesia, few have heard the gospel and even fewer have believed. There has, until now, only been a trickle of converts to Christ from Muslim Malays, Indians, Bengalis, Pakistanis, etc. Very few national or expatriate workers are even engaged in seeking to win them. (c) *The Hindus* have only been marginally evangelized. Much of present Indian cross-cultural outreach is to the tribal peoples. (d) *The Buddhists*, in Buddhist majority lands, are largely unreached. Missionary outreach has had meager results and church growth has been slow among Buddhist peoples. Only among the weakly Buddhist Chinese, and then among the Vietnamese and Cambodians in the early '70s has there been more fruit. The churches in Thailand are, however, growing more than for many years.

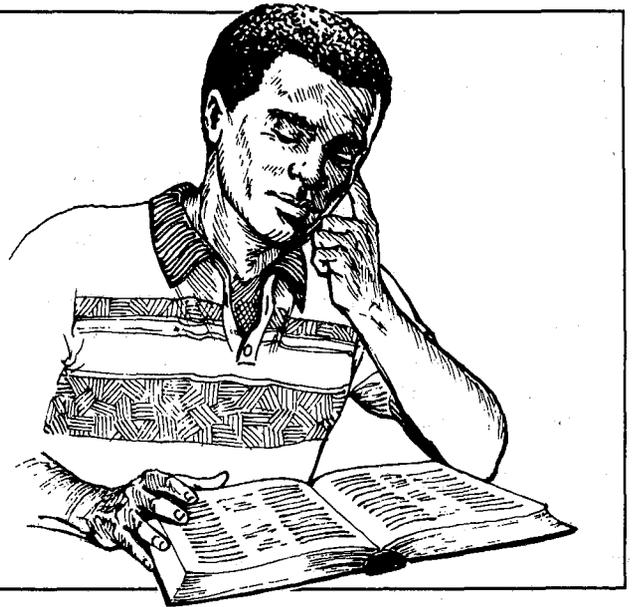
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

All hail the pow'r of Jesus' name!
 Let angels prostrate fall;
 Bring forth the royal diadem,
 And crown Him Lord of all.
 Let us crown Him, Let us crown Him,
 Let us crown the great Redeemer Lord of all;
 Let us crown Him, Let us crown Him,
 Let us crown Him Lord of all.

WEEK EIGHT

—Saturday—

To spend time in your presence is to assure my heart that I will have joy. Give me your grace and wisdom that it may be so.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Thou wilt shew me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Psa. 16:11). I realize this is a Messianic Psalm fulfilled in the resurrection of my Lord. However, the beautiful promises made in it have such a general application for all men. Oh, will you not gladly show all men the path of life? Indeed you have in the life of your dear Son. But in another sense you have spoken to the fathers in the prophets. You have spoken to all men today through your apostles and prophets as they told of your Son. It is such an encouragement to know there is indeed “a path of life.” Living and thinking and talking “in your presence” is indeed “the fulness of joy.” These tremendous promises all fulfilled in Jesus are open to all men.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me — open for myself — right now! For my own life — *today*. I claim these promises: (1) You will show me the way to walk and talk — indeed you have in your word and in your Son. Am I going to memorize more of your word? Am I going to look again at the life of my Lord? (2) Only in your way is there *life* at all — death is the alternate! The life you give is like yourself — eternal, strong, constant! (3) In your presence is the fulness of joy! This will be eternally true in heaven, but for today, just for today, I need and I want this fulness of joy. I hear my Savior say: “Hitherto have you asked nothing in my name; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (John 16:24). I want to embrace to my heart the words of fisherman Peter: “Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (I Pet. 1:8). By your authority are there pleasures for evermore. Amen!

How do you personally relate to the pleasures of God, and God who is the fulness of joy?

CONFESSION OF SIN

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

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

O perfect Love, all human love transcending,
Lowly we kneel in prayer before Thy throne,
That theirs may be the love which knows no ending,
Whom Thou forevermore dost join in one.

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

HIS WORD

³⁰In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from the bow. ³¹Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, “Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved.” ³²So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it fall away. —Acts 27:30-32, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How exciting is this word! How strong is the desire

for self-preservation. Somehow I want to look at this incident from *your* perspective. Who were these several sailors? You know them, you know the families left behind in some town to which they fondly hoped to return. You can see the situation that surely appears desperate to these men. I can't imagine you look on them with anything but mercy and pity. At the same time the words of your servant Paul are to be considered. You had already promised the lives of all on board, but not without the help of these sailors could the ship be run aground so all could escape. Paul's cooperation in your plan must have pleased you.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Whose place shall I take? Could I imagine that I would be as driven by a desire to live as these men? Would I stoop to deception to preserve my life? How about the soldiers? I am sure by this time I would respect any words the apostle said. Would I respond as quickly and decisively as these men? Would I cut away the boat? Was this a wise choice? It removed any possibility of using it for a landing, but then it was inadequate at best. Could I imagine myself in Paul's place? It would seem that he was the only one who really knew what was happening. The expertise of these sailors was essential. Their act was selfish; it must be stopped. I cannot say just where I fit in the action here. But I am glad to try to imagine. I remember the angel of the Lord who sees all this.

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 unsuccessful attempts to escape — it has been very needful that we stay with the good ship Zion. (2) Thank you for weakness that leads to your strength. (3) Thank you for those who love us and warn us when we are wrong. (4) Thank you for those who have responded immediately to our need and helped us. We might surely have been lost if such had not happened. (5) Thank you for removing all ways of escape except in your dear self! (6) Thank you for the sharp sword of your word that can cut through all my deceit. (7) Thank you for Paul who through all the stress was your man with your message.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it fall away.” Dear Lord, I know this represents just what must happen and what has happened in my own experience. Until I am ready to cut away all “provisions for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof,” I can never really and truly “put on the Lord Jesus.” The life this boat represents to me I do not want. But until the

boat is cut off it can be, it does become a provision, a temptation. I take this principle to be the same my Lord had in mind when he said, “If your right eye offend you, pluck it out”; “if your right hand offend you, cut it off!” We are in the midst of a storm; the situation is desperate — it calls for drastic measures. Cut it off and let it go!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Desperation moves men to do strange things — it moves others to pray: (1) May I stay with the ship of life for others if not for myself. (2) Dear Lord, I know some of my complaints are a form of escape — open my eyes. (3) Help me to stop deceiving myself and do what I can to help others. (4) I want to pray as if everything depended on you and work like it all depended on me. (5) Enable me to cut away all avenues of escape into this world. (6) Lord, keep me honest about my motives when I am distressed. (7) Thank you for the ark of safety I find in Jesus.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

When men's hearts fail them for fear, speak to me: (1) “There are many things worse than death.” (2) “To live is Christ; to die is gain.” (3) “I see a way out when there is none from your viewpoint.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Asia — Points for prayer: (1) *Missionaries are needed*, but it is increasingly difficult to obtain precious missionary visas. Although more unevangelized people live in Asia than in the other continents, and there are more unreached people groups, they often cannot be reached by present means. (2) *The missionary vision of the Asian Church* has grown in a spectacular way. There are many expressions of that vision, including: (a) Outreach to neighboring ethnic or tribal groups. This has frequently taken place in Burma, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, etc. (b) Outreach to people of the same ethnic groups in other lands (Chinese, Korean and Japanese missionary work was, until recently, more of this type).

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I've a message from the Lord, Hallelujah!
The message unto you I give;
'Tis recorded in His word, Hallelujah!
It is only that you “look and live.”
“Look and live,” my brother, live,
Look to Jesus now and live;
'Tis recorded in His word, Hallelujah!
It is only that you “look and live.”

WEEK NINE

—Sunday—

You know my heart — I bow before you. I need your assurance — I can find it in this time of worship.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; Thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress” (Psa. 17:3). There are several marvelous qualities of yourself that I want to appreciate fully:

(1) You “prove” or test, or declare genuine or faulty the hearts of men. The heart is the mind, will, emotions and conscience — essentially the soul of man. (2) You are not troubled by fatigue therefore need no rest and night is the same as day with you. But when man is tired and weak and resting you come to see if he yet trusts in you. Or is your nocturnal visit to offer strength and help? (3) Man can be and is weighed in your scales — heated in your crucible. David is speaking of consistency, not perfect obedience, when he says “and shalt find nothing,” i.e., nothing lacking when David’s heart was tried, it was found trusting in and faithful to you. (4) Your word is the criterion for sinning or not sinning, i.e., we either keep it and do not transgress or we fail to keep it and sin.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

I am tempted by Satan to simply give up! To *prove* my heart! But when I remember the test is only for the basic desire to love you and trust you, not to perfectly obey you, I am greatly encouraged. What happens when you visit me in the night? You will find me quite unresponsive — I am asleep. Dear God, I want to be able to openly welcome you at all times. Break through — penetrate fully my subconsciousness. Dear Lord, I do want to say with the psalmist, “Thou has tried me, and shalt find nothing.” No rebellion, no resistance, no hesitancy, no unwillingness — you can find much full of fault, but you will find a heart open and willing. If *purpose* keeps me from sinning, i.e., with my mouth, then indeed I do purpose. My mouth is the opening for sin. Dear God, I do purpose; deepen it!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Most of the above was a confession of sin. Dear Lord, I cannot even know my heart; it is too deceitful. You alone know it. However, I *can* and *do* control the input of my mind. I *can* and *do* control the decisions of my will. I *can* and *do* respond emotionally to what I understand and decide. I *can* and *do* program my conscience to react in approval or disapproval. I can therefore control the content of my heart. Right now I ask for forgiveness for terrible deficiencies in this area. I ask for the divine wisdom I need to best use the input.

“Pride in what is seen.” Dear Lord, what would I do if I could not “show and tell” with people? Help me to work for you and let people see for themselves! This is a serious juvenile sin. 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

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
Through all eternity.

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

HIS WORD

³³Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. “For the last fourteen days,” he said, “you have been in constant suspense and gone without food — you haven’t eaten anything.” ³⁴Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head.” ³⁵After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. ³⁶They were all encouraged and ate some food

themselves. ³⁷Altogether there were 276 of us on board. ³⁸When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea.

³⁹When daylight came, they did not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a sandy beach, where they decided to run the ship aground if they could.

⁴⁰Cutting loose the anchors, they left them in the sea and at the same time untied the ropes that held the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach. — *Acts 27:33-40, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Paul included you in the eating of the bread. I'm sure you never left after thanksgiving. Indeed you were present at the time and after the time or Paul would never have paused to acknowledge the source of all we are and have. How confident was Paul! What a source of strength and encouragement he was. It was all because he believed you! Luke was there as a participant in all that occurred. The grain would be of no use to anyone — it was only a burden. How totally inadequate are all our provisions unless you are in them. Simply because you promised they *would* run aground does *not* mean they need not do all they could to make it possible.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Can I position myself alongside one of the occupants of this ship? It has been two weeks of seasickness and hunger, of wonder and despair, of prayer and brief conversation. But there is someone who has not reacted as we have — his name is Saul or Paul the apostle. Why is he so different? Somehow he has identified with his God. Was Luke as confident as Paul? We believe he was. It is all working out even as Paul said it would. How wonderfully subtle are all your moves! It is always this way. A circumstance occurs which we could attribute to you. But there is *always* another explanation. If we listen we will soon hear the voice of humanism.

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 fourteen days of sharpening up our sensibilities to receive the message of our Lord. A fourteen day fast can be a great conditioner. (2) Thank you for the common sense and spiritual emphasis combined in Paul. (3) Thank you for the reiteration of your promise. (4) Thank you for Paul's boldness in the midst of unbelievers (or were they now wondering about his God?). (5) Thank you for your direction to the island of Malta.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... they hoisted the foresail to the wind and make for the beach." There are indeed times in life when

decisions must be made and carried out regardless of the consequences. What are the feelings of the occupants of this ship? What about the prisoners? What of the soldiers? Who made up the 276 on board? Were most of them prisoners? All of life becomes very much like this voyage to Rome: (1) We are all on this journey — like it or not. (2) We encounter the unexpected in so many areas of living. (3) We know God's messenger has given us assurances and promises — but somehow in the storm we do not hear him. (4) There are times when we simply cut away the anchors and hoist the foresail to the wind and make for the beach. We cannot say that every time God delivered us safely without the loss of one. But we can say our voyage was (and is) constantly under his care.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Luke reports from firsthand observation on a desperate situation. We wonder what he prayed? Perhaps he prayed: (1) Continue to give Paul the practical courage he has now. (2) Thank you for his humble boldness in the presence of this company of people. (3) We are so glad we have food to give us the physical stamina we will need. (4) Thank you for the assurance of the angel's message of safety for us all. (5) Help me Lord, I can't swim. (6) Give us courage to do all we can and leave the rest to you.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In the hours of the early morning speak to us: (1) "It is always appropriate to thank me for food." (2) "The promise of my protection does not eliminate your need for work." (3) "Men will do almost anything to save their lives."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The Caribbean — Points for prayer: (1) *The relative stagnation of the Church* in the Caribbean is cause for deep concern. Once Caribbean missionaries played a major role in evangelizing West Africa. Why not again? In many churches there is much enthusiasm, but less depth and little outreach. There is much religion without personal faith in Christ, and various cults are making rapid inroads. (2) *The difficult economic situation* in most islands is a great challenge. Limited financial resources cripple church development and outreach. There are simply not the personnel with the training to cope with the serious moral slide and breakdown in family life. In some islands 85% of children are born out of wedlock. Often Christian leaders are part of the problem.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK NINE

—Monday—

Please light my candle — I do so need your illumination; your warmth. I look forward to a real time of renewal.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“For Thou wilt light my candle; the Lord God will enlighten my darkness” (Psa. 18:28). How all men need to know this! All men are lights. How sad — more than sad — that some men, most of the world has never found the One to give them the fire of life! The new birth does just this. The renewal of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5) is the fulfillment of this beautiful verse. You do not want to leave one man to wander in darkness. It is your intention that every man will provide his own light, after you have given him the source of such light. The Holy Spirit has regenerated us at the time we were born of the water. He has given us his word to enlighten all the dark recesses.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me — for my candle, lamp, spirit, my darkness. Dear Lord, I do believe you are the total source of all light — my spirit has been set on fire, fused with divine power to be the light of my life. How beautiful a thought: each life is lighted by you, but no two lights shine just the same. Each offers a charming new light or appearance; each enlightens the same areas but each in a new and bright way. Others are helped when they see what you have done for others. We cannot defuse the light or shine in the darkness of this world system as someone else can. But we have a lamp or light or candle they do not have and you have asked us to shine. It is *our* light and *your* light. For my individual darkness there is no light at all apart from you. Praise your name I claim your light for every dark place in my life today!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Oh, wonderful Father, how is it we so often forget? I *know* why! We do not keep the switch on. It is in an open connection with heaven that your power can enlighten our lives — I refer to prayer and Bible study

and to sincere repentance of seeking false lights. There is in them no light at all. Forgive me! It is in the meditation on your word, day and night, that my darkness flees away! Light is equal to the absence of darkness — turn on the light! How I do want to absorb every word you have given me! All of it is light!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is His new creation
By water and the word:
From Heav'n He came and sought her
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died.

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

HIS WORD

⁴¹But the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground. The bow stuck fast and would not move, and the stern was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf. ⁴²The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping. ⁴³But the centurion wanted to spare Paul's life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land. ⁴⁴The rest were to get there on planks or on pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached land in safety. —Acts 27:41-44, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, how often do men run aground? How often are lives broken to pieces? But such is an analogy not at all a part of the text except in my own imagination. The surf still pounds on the shore, on the beach at Malta. How many of the 276 were saved? All of them were from the Adriatic Sea, but how

many were saved from the lake of fire? Dear Lord, you know. I would like to think Paul baptized all who needed you in the Adriatic waters before they left Malta. Once again, thou Lord knowest, I do not. All the prisoners owed their very lives to Paul. Why was Paul so valuable to Julius? Was it because Paul had a spot on the agenda of Nero or had Paul so befriended this centurion that he did not want to harm him? I am so glad to acknowledge your constant presence: "In the covert of thy presence thou hidest them from the plots of men" (Psa. 31:20).

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I owe my life to others: I owe my life to the care my dear mother and father gave me when I was a child at home. I owe my life to a stranger who saw me drowning in the Pacific Ocean and jumped in and saved my life. I owe my life to the carefulness of several bus drivers who delivered me to school and back home, to hundreds of pilots of planes, to the peace of our country established by those in high places. Most of all I owe my life to the preacher who first told me the good news and my dear wonderful Savior, who saved me from hell to heaven, from death to life. I confidently expect to reach that eternal shore.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

This text is indeed a source of gratitude: (1) Thank you for every ship of life that has run aground within range of help by those who care. (2) Thank you that we can show those whose lives are being broken to pieces Someone who can put it back together again. (3) Thank you for every soldier who this very day is in the armed forces to protect our country from destruction — from within and without. (4) Thank you for men like Paul who love your word more than life itself. (5) Thank you for some of the strange ways you have saved us from ourselves and others. (6) Thank you for the testimony of those who were saved from the sea according to Paul's promise. (7) Thank you for the research on the island of Malta that establishes the accuracy of Luke's record.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"In this way everyone reached the land in safety." In the first century only "some" could swim. No doubt real fear gripped the hearts of many, many on board that ship. The very thing that was going to be their place of death — the ship — was going to furnish the means of saving them. The storm that all but cost them their lives was now going to break the ship up into a form that would save their lives. How mercifully good God was to every one of them. This has not been the record of ten thousand ships that have sunk at sea. We want to meditate on this account for what it is — not what it is not. The frantic efforts of these men (and women?) to reach the land reminds me of our efforts to get safely through many a trying experience. We did not get there as planned — and we lost a great deal — but we are safe and alive and there is yet another day ahead of us, and you are in it all.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Saved at last! Were prayers prayed on the way to the shore? We can find requests in this text: (1) Extremity produces petitions: Paul: "I honor your word and praise you for your mercy." (2) Luke: "How beyond human understanding are your ways of preserving our lives." (3) Aristarchus: "Give me a deeper commitment to your love." (4) Paul: "Open the heart of Julius that he might understand just who Jesus is." (5) Luke: "Lord, help me to remember all of this for my second treatise." (6) Aristarchus: "What an example Paul is. Help me be more like him."

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In this life and death situation speak to me: (1) "All of life will one day break up; be sure you have Someone who can save you." (2) "I will save other men because of you." (3) "I want all men to be saved."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Eastern Europe — Point for prayer: Praise God for the growth of the Church in Eastern Europe. In the midst of suffering and trials, the Holy Spirit has worked in many areas. God reigns today — even behind the Iron Curtain! a) *Evangelical believers have ultimately increased* in every country of the region since the coming of Communism, with the possible exception of Albania and Bulgaria. b) *Young people* are turning to Christ in large numbers in parts of the USSR, Poland and Romania despite years of constant atheistic indoctrination, and the very real threat this brings to their future prospects for further education and employment. c) *The infamous "Gulags" or prison camps* have been places of intense suffering and martyrdom for many believers; but through them prisoners have been won to Christ and large areas of Siberia evangelized. d) *The thrilling growth of the church in Romania and parts of the USSR* has been with touches of revival too. In both lands the pressure of the authorities on the churches has been particularly severe. e) *The widespread impact of Christian radio programs* has been remarkable. One well-known radio preacher has an estimated audience of four million or more every time he speaks!

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Praise ye the Lord, the Almighty,
the King of creation!
O my soul, praise Him,
for He is thy health and salvation!
All ye who hear,
Now to His temple draw near;
Join me in glad adoration!

WEEK NINE

—Tuesday—

*The enemy is without and within —
renew my strength — reinforce my love
and commitment to you.*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“For by thee I have run through a troop and by my God have I leaped over a wall” (Psa. 18:29). This is the response of the psalmist to your character, to your essential person. Several rather obvious thoughts present themselves to us: (1) We are in a warfare. The enemy troops are near enough to hurt us. (2) Deathless courage was given to David — perhaps this describes several battles you helped him win. (3) David did not have promised that he would split the troop — he charged and let you handle the result. (4) The situation is desperate — it calls for risk — put your life on the line (the battle line). Does all of the above describe my battle with Satan? Indeed it does! I would that all men would see the following qualities of yourself from this text: (1) Nearness — you are in the battle with us. (2) Knowledge — i.e., you *know* what is happening; you see *all* the circumstances. You *know* where the enemy is weak. (3) Power and strength not our own that you share with us!

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

What troop shall I break through? Over which wall shall I leap? Troops and walls show up every day! There will be no problem with troops and walls *if* I relate to you in the way I want to! Dear Lord, I want to intimately identify with your nearness. You are right here, right now! Blessed be your wonderful presence. I want to trust in your perspective. You see all that occurs. Nothing, utterly nothing, is hidden from your omniscience, absolute knowledge. Oh, my Father, I cast myself upon you and rest in your knowledge. At the same time, as I see opportunity, I will take it. I will lay my life behind my decisions — break a way for me with your Almighty Power!

How do you personally relate to the empowering of God, and God who is our strength?

CONFESSION OF SIN

What a problem I have in separating presumption

from boldness or faith! Am I saying what seems presumptuous to man is faith with you? Dear Lord; I want to *know*, I want to be humble-minded, to prefer others before myself. I want the honor and praise to go to you! How often such is *not* the case — help me! I claim the wisdom I need (James 1:5ff.). If I move ahead and let men see the works and not the worker, they will glorify you! Thank you!

“Disrespect.” What you respect I do not want to disrespect. You respect age, little children, public law offices, law and order, per se! In all these areas I set a guard by your help.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

28 Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. ²The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold. ³Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. —Acts 28:1-3, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How gladly do I take up this word. Dr. Luke was in the water. Those who could swim were the first on

shore. Were he and Paul two of the early ones? This was not the first shipwreck of Paul — perhaps Luke was with him. “A night and a day” Paul had spent in deep waters (II Cor. 11:25b). Perhaps it was in a cave or on the open beach the islanders had built a fire. Did they also have food prepared for them? (I am trying as best I can to see this incident as you do.) Was it in November? I would like so much to visit Malta in November — 1922 years later. But with you there are no yesterdays or tomorrows — only one eternal *now*, so this is happening now as all other events of man’s short sojourn.

A snake came from the brushwood as Paul tried to feed the fire. This is the only form of “taking up serpents” I find in your word. It was not taken up on purpose, but by accident. You had a purpose larger than a poisonous snake bite. It did become a sign to the unbelieving islanders.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just for me — yes, yes. Probably the first question asked to those who met them on the beach was, “Where are we?” How very different this whole story could have been! There are several possible alternatives that we will not postulate — the same can be said for my life. I have not just survived a shipwreck (except vicariously with Paul) but I do want to ask others, myself, and most of all the only One who really knows: “Where am I?” There are so many things that could have happened to me, perhaps *should* have happened, but they didn’t. I am here; I am safe; I am saved, but right now I want to look out and see life as I have never seen it before and ask you, “Where am I?” There are several areas in which I want to make inquiry: (1) Where am I in my personal devotions. (2) Where am I in my personal knowledge of your word? (3) Where am I in real genuine evangelism. (4) Where am I as a father and grandfather? (5) Where am I as a husband? Dear Lord, I purpose to find out!

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the sure knowledge of your word that tells us just where we are at all times. (2) Thank you for unexpected kindness from unexpected sources. (3) Thank you for fire and water and their many uses. (4) Thank you for kindness from those we would expect the very opposite. (5) Thank you for shelter from the weather, for warmth from the cold. (6) Thank you for Paul who wanted to help anyone at anytime in anyway he could. (7) Thank you for the miracles of your record, all of which move us to believe in what you have said.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand.” A viper called Satan has done the same thing to us. How often has that same snake fastened its poison fangs in your heart? Even when we were trying to do good, evil is present. When we are in the act of helping others we are hurt by the devil. Why? Why? Because hidden in all our efforts to do good,

deceit, selfish ambition, pride, the love of money are always at least potentially present. Snakes do not attack them who do not disturb them. It should be a comfort for us to know we have bothered the old serpent. Our response should be that of Paul. He made no show of it; he simply shook it off into the fire. Since this will be the ultimate end of the devil and his angels we can at least consign him there. We need suffer no more permanent injury than Paul — our great physician is able to heal.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In trying to help others you yourself are hurt. How shall we pray? (1) Since your hand is upon me why should I be afraid? (2) We have all found ourselves in a similar situation. Open the eyes of those who oppose you as to just who is innocent or guilty. (3) Deliver me from the serpent hid in some very ordinary pursuits. (4) Help me to be prepared for the evil the heat of your word drives out. (5) Thank you for the promised protection of Mark 16:17,18. (6) Thank you for the supernatural necessary to confirm your word through Paul. (7) May I be as ready to help in the mundane matters of life as was Paul.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What do you say to me from these verses? (1) “There are many islanders who would gladly hear the good news if you would take it to them.” (2) “There are always problems when you try to help people.” (3) “There are snakes today who cannot stand the heat of truth.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Eastern Europe — Points for prayer: (1) *The unreached* a) *Albania* is one of the least evangelized countries in the world. There is no known evangelical witness. b) *Large areas of Yugoslavia and Poland* are without an evangelical congregation. c) *Numerous East European minorities* remain largely unreached — the Jews, Muslims and most ethnic groups in Yugoslavia. d) *Numerous peoples in the USSR* are without a known Christian witness. This is especially true for Central Asian Muslim peoples and Siberian minorities. (2) [Note: *The events in Eastern Europe in 1989* took many people by surprise. Even now it is hard to tell what will be the ultimate result, but God knows!]

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Praise ye the Father! for His loving kindness,
Tenderly cares He for His erring children;
Praise Him, ye angels, praise Him in the heavens,
Praise ye Jehovah!

WEEK NINE

—Wednesday—

*What a beautiful verse is before me:
"Your gentleness has made me great."
Make this clear to me in your closet!*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

"Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation; and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great" (Psa. 18:35). The qualities of our God are here set before us in a most poignant manner: (1) You have given all men (who want it) the protection of your salvation. Behind your shield we are safe from the fiery darts of the evil one. Who would not want the safety of salvation from the shaft of justice? If we stand unprotected before justice we are dead! (2) How weary we become in the long days of conflict! How good to hide beneath the protection of your strong right arm. Indeed we could easily transfer this figure to our Lord as the right arm of our God. (3) Your gentleness has made us great. This is a mother or wife-like quality. It is the softness and tender kindness in the midst of hurt that gives us strength and resources we never knew were ours.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for today: Just for today I want to find in you a hiding place, a shelter of safety, a shield of salvation. I need to be saved from much more than eternal hell. You are for me right now my deliverance! You are for me today holding me up and renewing my strength. It is your strong right arm underneath to lift up when I fall, to give me the strength to fight through just this one more battle! Praise your name! Most of all it is your gentleness that has made me great. I am not at all great by evaluation of talent, by power of promotion, by record of accomplishments, but "through your gentleness" all greatness has been placed within each of us by you. It is in the quietness of love and tenderness of personal care that such is released for expression.

How do you personally relate to the protective love of God, and God who is your Shield?

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, there are those around me who are hoping for a gentle look, touch or word. Their greatness is

also released through this beautiful quality. Help me to be like you. Forgive me, I have been selfish and hurtful without much cause. I have been perverse and hard. Forgive, forgive me! My dear Lord had more than enough reason to be hard and harsh, and yet he was gentle, kind, thoughtful of others. Paul could have treated the Thessalonians in a stern and unyielding manner, but he says he was gentle as he worked among them even as a mother with her children. Dear Lord, I have less reason to behave in any way but gentle, i.e., where I compare what faces me and what Paul endured.

"Fearfulness." Is it a sin to be afraid? Yes, yes, when God has promised victory, it is a sin to be defeated. Dear Lord, I enter as a victor, not the victim!

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.

HIS WORD

4When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live." **5**But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. **6**The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall over dead, but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.

7There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and for three days entertained us hospitably.

—Acts 28:4-7, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, I do so very, very much appreciate all your word is saying to me. My purpose here is to read it back again to you and attempt to share your viewpoint. What appears as a large matter and full of importance is sometimes small and insignificant to you. It is not that you ignore the serpent fastened in Paul's flesh, but your perspective turns the incident in an entirely different light. First, the person must be accepted and then his message. This will become a means to that end. Since the islanders thought Paul a god, they would listen to him. I'm sure you didn't put the snake in the brush, or did you? How unusual that Publius was so hospitable — 276 guests?!!! Or was it only Paul and the soldiers? You know and one day I will.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Yes, yes, Dr. Luke was there to report first hand as a participator what happened. I would like to take his place or a place with him. Isn't it wonderful to see how God works? It is exciting to be a part of the moving of God's spirit in the circumstances of life. I know how deadly is the bite of that particular snake. There are hundreds of dead victims to confirm this fact. Paul will die, but not from a snake bite. I do remember something our Lord said about this!

"These *signs* will follow them that believe: . . . they will pick up serpents." Paul had just done it — it was a sign (and advertisement) to make the Maltese wonder — which they surely did. Their faith in you came from the words Paul spoke to them. Dear Lord, I believe, not because of the signs but because of your word. These signs confirmed my faith, but did not produce it.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Indeed I do: (1) Thank you for the innate sense of justice that prevails in many cultures. (2) Thank you for Paul's immediate reliance upon you for your direction in his life. Did Paul know he would not die from the snake bite? It would seem to be a matter of indifference to him. (3) Thank you for the honest effort of the islanders to seek an explanation that included the supernatural. (4) Thank you for Publius who had a wide influence for our Lord when he became a believer. (5) Thank you for the marvelous preservation of your word down through two millennia. (6) Thank you for the same Lord — the same faith and the same hope we have today as Paul had then.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"He welcomed us to his house and for three days entertained us hospitably." Why would this man do this? We can pose two or three possibilities: (1) It was customary and just a part of what would happen to any strangers who landed on Malta. This is not a very

real possibility, and most especially if he was entertaining 276 people. (2) He did it for the tribune who was with Paul as a representative from Rome. Since his island was under the rule of Rome, he felt it was to his distinct advantage. (3) He was told of Paul's encounter with the viper. We need to remember that Paul's life story was written by a doctor who is an eyewitness to what happened. Publius wanted help for his father who was sick. He received it.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

The men of Malta were superstitious. Dear Lord, I want to be full of faith. (1) Lord, if I received justice it would not be heaven. Thank you for your mercy. (2) Satan has fastened his fangs in me more than once. I am glad for the deliverance of Satan back into the fire. (3) What a wonder to be delivered from death in trespasses and sins. (4) Thank you that we are sons of God, and the best is yet to come. (5) Give me the courage and contact to pray for those in high places. (6) Thank you for the kindness that fills the hearts of some who do not even know you.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these few verses speak to me: (1) "Judge not by appearances, but by truth." (2) "People are ready to accept feelings before faith." (3) "What do ye more than some unbelievers?"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Eastern Europe — Point for prayer: *Missionary outreach*. The Great Commission is just as valid for Eastern Europe. The ways and means of obeying His command may have to be unusual. Pray for: a) *An increase in missionary vision among believers in these lands*. Survival rather than cross-cultural outreach has been more prominent in the past. Many students from unreached ethnic groups and closed lands study in the cities of Eastern Europe. Numerous ethnic minorities in the USSR and Eastern Europe can only be reached by local believers, but few have the understanding or experience for such ministry. b) *An increase in dedicated workers from the Free World* committed to the evangelization of this vast region, and effective means of deploying them in vital ministries. c) *An effective long-term strategy* to evangelize, plant churches and provide the Scriptures for every unreached people group, area, city and country in Eastern Europe.

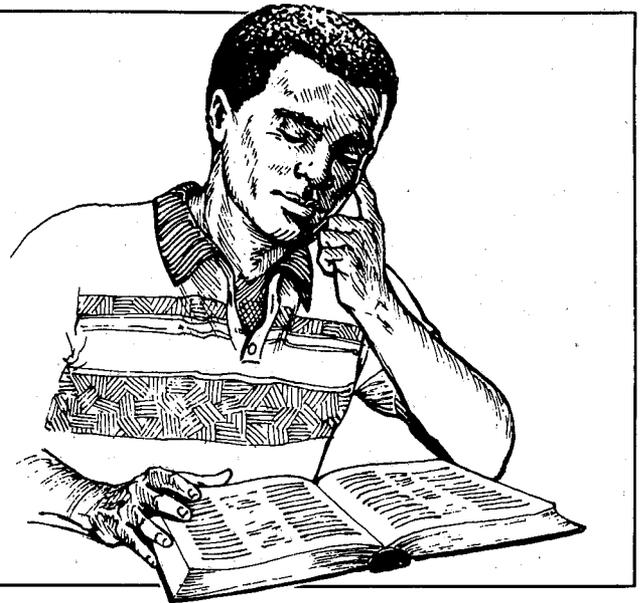
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I have a song I love to sing,
 Since I have been redeemed,
 Of my Redeemer, Savior, King,
 Since I have been redeemed,
 I will glory in His name;
 Since I have been redeemed,
 I will glory in my Savior's name.

WEEK NINE

—Thursday—

Perfection and simplicity are seldom found in the same place — but with you and your word they are there! How very good to worship you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple” (Psa. 19:7). Even as my words say much about my inner self, so your words describe your character. Your law, or word, is “perfect.” This is true from several perspectives: (1) Perfect in the sense of being without flaw or mistake. Blessed be your wonderful name — such would be the only conclusion if you were without flaw, then your word would necessarily express the same quality. (2) Your law is perfect in the sense of maturity, i.e., it expresses the thoughts of one who has total understanding. This is a strong encouragement for us to allow it to turn our lives around and put them on the right path. If we want to be wise, we will assimilate such wisdom from him who knows all.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. “The law of the Lord is perfect” for me! I am glad to acknowledge that I am persuaded that not one word of the 66 books of the Bible is in error in any form. The autographs were without flaw. I have no reason to think or suggest the existing copies are in any way changed from the autographs. Most of all, I want to say that the perfection or maturity I find in reading and meditating upon your word convinces me more each day that your law indeed is perfect. My life has been turned around and I am glad. I attribute it to *your word*. To yourself, but all I know about you is from your word. How simple and ignorant I am without your testimonies! How wise and mature I can become through them!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

How sorely I have neglected a close personal meditation on every word you have spoken. In these last

days of my life, be they few or many, I want to repair this lack. Forgive me for being so late in fulfilling what is a real joy to do! Dear Lord, grant grace and strength, and heaven’s wisdom in this pursuit. Forgive me for any presumption on my part.

“Fearfulness.” Dear Lord, you did not give me a spirit of fearfulness, but of power and of love and discipline and a sound mind (II Tim. 1:7) When I am hesitant or afraid, be thou near. In so many areas we need courage — your courage — I claim it! Forgive my timidity.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Saved by the blood of the Crucified One!
Now ransomed from sin and a new work begun,
Sing praise to the Father and praise to the Son,
Saved by the blood of the Crucified One!
Saved! saved! My sins are all pardoned,
my guilt is all gone!
Saved! saved! I am saved by the blood
of the Crucified One!

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

HIS WORD

⁸His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. ⁹When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured. ¹⁰They honored us in many ways and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed.

¹¹After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island. It was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux. —Acts 28:8-11, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How I do want to read these words as if I had never

read them before. Why did you heal the father of Publius? Why heal all the others of the island? Luke reports it even as it happened. He does not mention the obvious: i.e., that many islanders believed and became Christians. Is it at all possible these people — at least some of them — were already Christians when Paul landed? Luke has given a record of so many others who wondered at the signs and believed the message. Paul has not altered his purpose. For reasons best known to Luke and yourself he does not record the “head count” of those who accepted you and your Son. How I wish I knew more. I am so glad for the success of your servants amid the most trying of circumstances.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Yes, yes, I do. Apply these words to my life. When Paul visited the father of the governor, he did two things: (1) He prayed for him — how I would love to hear the voice of Paul in prayer; how I would listen so very carefully to every word he prayed. (I can read several of his prayers now in his letters.) (2) He placed his hands on him and healed him. He didn’t get better, he got well! Instantaneous restoration to full health is the impression I receive. What happened to one happened to all. There is no way to explain what happened without your supernatural intervention. How I do wonder just who is included in the pronoun “us,” i.e., “they honored *us* in many ways.” It would seem from the fact that all 276 people were detained on the island that the honors and provisions were for all of them. How Paul did “take charge” in this whole situation!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the wonderful way you can use any and all circumstances for your good and your glory. (2) Thank you for the wonderful gift of healing used by Paul to point to yourself and your Son. (3) Thank you for the report of Luke that there were no unsuccessful attempts at healing. (4) Thank you for the provisions Paul supplied for the whole group that would not otherwise have been there. (5) Thank you for the whole three month sojourn on Malta — everyone learned much. (6) Thank you for supplying a ship going to the very place they wanted. (7) Thank you that time has a way of eliminating Castor and Pollux and retaining Jesus and yourself.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux.” I wonder why Luke mentioned the figurehead of this ship? It does seem incongruous that God’s servants would sail aboard a

ship dedicated to the mythical gods of the Greeks. Castor and Pollux are the early counterparts of Saint Christopher of today. Of *late* Saint Christopher — the saint to protect travelers — has been canonized. We can find in all such mythology a principle truth. Our Lord is indeed interested in our protection while traveling. We are glad to give him the praise and credit for every safe trip we have made.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

As Paul and his friends prepared to sail for Rome we can think of our preparations to sail for our eternal home. (1) May I help just as many people as I can to know you before I leave. (2) I know if just one is raised from death in sin many will be affected. Lord, lead me to that one. (3) Dear Lord, surely there are many I can reach with the healing love of my Lord; open my eyes. (4) How infinitely good you are to me — may your goodness lead me to repentance. (5) I know you know the day and method of my departure from this life — this is enough. (6) I am so glad I serve and worship a living heavenly Father. Thank you. (7) You have surely provided all I need for the eternal journey.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What do you say in these verses? (1) “I might come before you leave.” (2) “Take as many with you as you can.” (3) “Behold, I come quickly.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Latin America — Point for prayer: Praise the Lord for the powerful work of the Holy Spirit in Latin America this century. This has been one of the great success stories of modern missionary endeavor in times of persecution and severe economic stress. (a) *Evangelicals have grown* from an estimated 200-300,000 in 1900 to 34,300,000 in 1985. This will increase to 80,000,000 by the end of the century, if present growth rates continue. (b) *The regular church-going population* of Evangelicals in most countries now exceeds that of Catholics. (c) *The impact of the Scriptures on Catholics* has opened the hearts of millions to a personal encounter with the Lord Jesus. Many have become fervent evangelical believers, both within the Catholic Church and, increasingly, outside it. (d) *The value of Bible translation.* The pioneer work of *SIL* in providing NTs in indigenous languages, has sparked off gatherings of peoples into churches across the continent. In some lands the work of translation has been virtually completed. Praise the Lord for a task well done!

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK NINE

—Friday—

What beautiful qualities of yourself do I find in your word. Teach me — I am eager to learn. I enter your school room!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes” (Psa. 19:8). As a man’s word represents the man, so do your words express your character. Dear Lord, I am glad and delighted to affirm with the psalmist that your precepts or statutes are always and in every place with everyone exactly what should have been done. The term *right* means the law or principle or advice perfectly fits the occasion. Life is like a jig-saw puzzle with several parts missing. We are given several offerings by Satan — each time we attempt to fit his pieces we hurt because they do not mesh and the edges rubbed are our nerves! When we get a good look at your statutes; when we turn them this way and that and see the whole and then try it in the open space, it is *right*! What a joy to our heart!

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

For me, just for me — your commandments are pure, they enlighten my eyes! I have noticed again just yesterday how authoritative are the teachings of my Lord. Jesus does not offer suggestions. He gives commands. He states it like it is. Dear Savior, I hear you. Your commandments are like a good pair of glasses: they perfectly fit my eyes — the eyes of my heart. I can only see very dimly life and its meaning (what else is there to see?). When I look at life through your commandments all is clear and sharply defined. What enlightenment your commandments have given me. I never tire of putting on your glasses. I do not enjoy the out-of-focus living I get when I forget to look through your commandments. You give me a trifocal view of all things. Bless your holy name!

How do you personally relate to the statutes of God, and God who has given them?

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is one thing to put down on paper, or speak out in public my prayer of affirmation, of approval and

commitment to your statutes and commandments; it is quite another to fulfill this in the daily routine of private living. This is a good example of what we have just said. It is altogether “*right*” to confess my sins — what *enlightenment* such a command gives to the eyes of my heart! The *doing* of what you have said is a part of the expression itself. There is no life or fruit without doing.

“Disbelief.” Surely this is all we can really do other than obey you! I know I have selfishly thus sinned. Please forgive me!

What personal sins do you want to confess? There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

¹²We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days. ¹³From there we set sail and arrived at Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up, and on the following day we reached Puteoli. ¹⁴There we found some brothers who invited us to spend a week with them. And so we went to Rome. ¹⁵The brothers there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. At the sight of these men Paul thanked God and was encouraged. —Acts 28:12-15, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How always glad I am to enter this phase of worship.

When I attempt to see these verses as you do it always gives fresh and new meaning to the text. What happened during the three days at Syracuse? What evaluations are the travelers making of Paul's God and his Son? What meditation is going through the mind of Luke? We have heard nothing of Aristarchus since we left Caesarea — what happened to him? How rapidly and fully had your word spread! In only thirty or thirty-five short years the good news was preached in the far outreaches of the empire. The devotion of the saints of Rome was an example to all (cf. Rom. 1:8). Only you can answer some of these questions, but it has done me good to ask them.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I want to be a traveling companion of Paul. How I would like to ask him one hundred questions. One day I shall — if when I see him the answers are not already mine. Here are a few of them as related to this portion of our journey: (1) "Has your thorn in the flesh bothered you on this journey?" (2) "How did you handle this eternal sitting around?" (3) "How could you find companionship with these Gentiles who had not knowledge or appreciation of your Jewishness?" (4) "How could this journey be so leisurely? I.e., spending a week with Christian brothers?" (5) "Didn't the centurion and almost everyone else become a Christian?" I am humbled to the ground when I attempt to follow Paul's example of devotion.

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

There is so much here for which we can thank you! (1) Thank you for the safe journey all the way to Rome from Malta. (2) Thank you for what seems to be a transference of authority from the centurion to Paul. (3) Thank you for the thousands of Christians of the first 30 or 40 years of the history of our Lord's called out ones. (4) Thank you for all the mutual joy and love that must have been shared at Puteoli. (5) Thank you for the willingness of the Christians at Rome to walk over 40 miles to see Paul. (6) Thank you for Paul's spontaneous gratitude upon seeing the Christians from Rome. (7) Thank you for the completion of Paul's long time prayer and desire to be in Rome.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"At the sight of these men Paul thanked God and was encouraged." We wonder if Paul thought the cause of our Lord had been defeated in Rome, or if he thought false reports had preceded him to Rome. Why was Paul so thankful? It could be that in a sense he was full of relief — Rome at last! For how many

years had he planned and longed and prayed that he might be able to visit Rome. In spite of the fact that God had repeatedly promised that "he would bear witness in Rome" Paul wanted to express his personal appreciation for answered prayer and fulfilled promises. How warm must have been the greetings! How many inquiries were made concerning this one and that one!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Four stops on the way to Rome: what requests arise from this journey? (1) Paul seemed to be in no hurry to reach Rome — neither am I to reach heaven — I want to learn all you have for me along the way. (2) How I do wish I knew what was said in the three days at Syracuse — thank you for mutual interests in our Lord. (3) Did Paul hold a week's evangelistic crusade at Puteoli? Luke doesn't tell us. Thank you for Christians at this Italian town. (4) How good to read of Christians in almost every stop — how can we so increase your word today? (5) May I today be the source of encouragement to my fellow travelers. (6) May I find today in my brothers a reason to be encouraged. (7) More than 40 miles is a long way just to greet and strengthen a brother. May I learn from this.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What do you say to me as I journey through the land? (1) "I have people in places of which you never heard." (2) "You can always speak a good word for me." (3) "I went further than 40 miles to tell you I loved you."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Latin America — Point for prayer: *The Roman Catholic Church* has passed through 30+ years of tumultuous change. The traditional monolithic structure that once dominated the continent has gone for ever. The impact of the Vatican II Council, theological diversity, emphasis on Bible reading, and the influence of the charismatic movement, have been enormous. Pope John Paul II has pulled the Church back from political and doctrinal extremes to a more traditional Catholicism.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is His new creation
By water and the word:
From Heav'n he came and sought her
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died.

WEEK NINE

—Saturday—

There is a wholeness and a rightness about all you say — about all you do — I pause to be transformed by the renewal of my mind!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether” (Psa. 19:9). Once again: the qualities of yourself are seen in yourself and your actions. How can I fear you? This is to ask “how can I reverence you?” Does this reverence or “fear” carry in it the thought of punishment? Yes, but it is only one of the qualities for which I reverence you. In what sense is my reverence or fear of you clean or pure? In two ways: (1) It should be whole or one or single. Your overpowering character should at all times be in force and be the single most significant attitude of my heart. Dear Lord, I *want* this to be! (2) If this is true then the second meaning will be mine. I will be clean or pure or wholistic in my living and in my inner attitudes.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. I try to praise you in the above expression as a personal representative of principles applied to or for all men. In this area I want to apply your word as relating to yourself just for me! How I do want to hold you constantly before me as my meditation day and night! I can only do this as I memorize and internalize your word! I will never be clean or whole until this happens! I am much closer today than last year, or ten years or twenty years ago! I take courage in the fact that my pursuit is like what is pursued — “it endureth forever.”

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

I have sinned and have fallen far short of your character. This is *not* to say I have first fallen far short of your expectations for me for this is *not* my

first thought! It is yourself that is first to be disgraced by my sin. I believe with all that is within me that if I seek first your rule in my life and your acceptance among men my attitudes and actions would follow as light follows day. I fail so miserably — please forgive. Thank you for letting me see what could be and for the Spirit-prompted desire to fulfill it.

“Praying to be seen of men.” When this is our primary purpose, we are sinning, not praying. It is almost impossible to pray in public, i.e., to lead in public prayer, or to pray with the public in heart, without including them or being aware of them. Dear God, I want only and always to address you, pray to you, for you, through you.

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.

HIS WORD

¹⁶When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself with a soldier to guard him.

¹⁷Three days later he called together the leaders of the Jews. When they had assembled, Paul said to them: “My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. ¹⁸They examined me and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death. ¹⁹But when the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar — not that I had any charge to bring against my own people. ²⁰For this reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain.”

²¹They replied, “We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of the brothers who has come from there has reported or said anything bad about you. ²²But we want to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against this sect.” —Acts 28:16-22, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It would be a real experience to seek out and find the house where Paul lived in Rome and pay him a visit. I know you never left him and were indeed with him. I hope to get their impressions of him. What was the purpose of Paul's words to the Jews in Rome? Dear Lord, I read these words to understand the mind of Paul — which is the mind of your dear Son. This is a defense: "I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors." ". . . I was not guilty of any crime deserving death." ". . . not that I had any charge to bring against my own people." Paul loves his people, the Jews! I know you do too. What a tremendous influence they could be if all were your children!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just suppose I was Paul in Rome in 60 A.D.! How would I react to the confinement? Since I had been repeatedly treated so very badly by the Jews would I now call the leaders of them to me? What would I say to the soldiers who guarded me? Would my defense convince anyone? What would I anticipate as I appeared before Nero the emperor? What would I do day after day after day in the house when I was confined? How would I react to the use of the term "sect" as applied to my faith? I guess what I am saying is that I can learn so much from Paul by way of love and patience.

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Who was it who said "in everything give thanks"? Who was it who wrote later from this very place "rejoice in the Lord — again I say rejoice"? If Paul could, surely we can: (1) Thank you for the accommodations of Paul, which could have been far worse than they were. (2) Thank you for Paul's desire to clear his name and the name of our Lord with the Jews. (3) Thank you for the term "brother" applied in sincerity to both Jews and Christians. (4) Thank you for the fairness in the laws of the Romans. (5) Thank you for the saints in Rome who were beloved of God and also of Paul. (6) Thank you that the saints in Rome "belonged to Jesus Christ and we do too." (7) Thank you for the faith of the Roman Christians that was "proclaimed in all the world."

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

". . . people everywhere are talking against this sect." It makes one wonder just in what context this question was asked: (1) Were these Jews (at least some of them) Christians and they wanted to hear one of their own defend Christianity so as to reinforce their faith? (2) Were they interested in getting more information so they could become Christians? I.e., they had a real genuine interest in knowing about Jesus as the Christ.

(3) They were "ever hearing but never understanding" and thus were only seeking to oppose our Lord. From what follows as a result of Paul's speaking we could believe there were some of each. Surely in our audience of unbelievers we find the same type of listener. May we be as faithful as Paul.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Paul was ever and always full of concern for those with whom he associated — especially his own people. (1) Give me the same concern. (2) Dear Lord, I want to become all things to all men that I might win some of them to you. (3) I want to learn from the example of Paul's speech to the Jews: he referred to them as "brothers." (4) He was completely frank with them. (5) He considered his Lord as the only hope that the Jews or anyone else had. (6) He did all he could to give adequate time to explain his position. (7) Dear Lord, in all the above areas give me grace to be like your servant Paul.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What do you say to me out of this text? (1) "Paul as a prisoner had more freedom than those to whom he spoke." (2) "Paul used all means available to reach men with the good news." (3) "Men will always be curious — use this capacity for me."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Middle East — Points for prayer: (1) The home of the early church is now the most needy mission field in the world. Spiritual decline and the Muslim conquests between the seventh and fifteenth centuries have steadily reduced the percentage of Christians in the region. Centuries of discriminatory legislation and taxation and, at times, outright persecution have led to many nominal Christians converting to Islam. (2) Islam has become the greatest missionary challenge to the Christian Church. a) Muslims are convinced that Christianity is divided, decadent and in decline, and that their religion is the answer to mankind's problems. b) The new confidence that independence and oil wealth have given Muslim nations is giving greater incentive to spread the message of Islam and thwart Christian missionary efforts. c) Islamic fundamentalism has brought revolution to Iran and tensions right through the Muslim world. Pray that the harshness and extremism often manifested may cause many Muslims to consider the claims of Christ.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I love Thy Kingdom, Lord,
The house of Thine abode,
The Church our blest Redeemer saved
With His own precious blood.

WEEK TEN

—Sunday—

Gold and honey — what a combination! Your word is both very usable and very satisfying. I want to find it so on a very personal level.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“More to be desired are they (the statutes of the Lord) than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb” (Psa. 19:10). I just come to praise you for the qualities of yourself I see in this beautiful verse: (1) You must be wonderfully interested in the deepest needs of man or you would never have given us your word at all. (2) There must be something intrinsically attractive about your word or man would have no desire for it. (3) Your word must be understandable or man would not be attracted to it. (4) The value is deep and lasting and permanently satisfying — this can not be said of gold. (5) Its value grows. Even much fine gold finally is gone. (6) Your word appeals to man’s senses. All his sensate abilities are given full expression: (a) The more we look at it the more we see. (b) The more we hear it the more we listen. (c) The more we taste it the more we want to devour it all — over and over again.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. To make personal application of the general principles is both painful and profitable. I know you are indeed interested in the deepest needs of my life. I want to do two things about this. (1) Read much of your word each day. (2) Be sensitive to what you will say to me. Relate your words to my personal sins, weaknesses, ignorance. Your word has more attraction to me than anything else in this whole world. My consuming desire is that all men might hear you speak to them through your Son in your word. Dear God, keep me on the track running toward the goal. I do indeed believe your word is a revelation not a riddle. I also believe we must yield to your Lordship before we have a personal desire to know what you have said.

How do you personally relate to the word of God, and God who is speaking to you?

CONFESSION OF SIN

My blessed Father, all my fondest expressions are

read for what they truly and actually mean. As I know (and you know perfectly) they, i.e., my expressions, are mixed with desire and fulfillment. I am in a constant struggle to match my desire with my action. Forgive me, dear Lord, for the large gap that often develops between the two. I do praise you that at times I have felt the two were one (you know how easily I am deceived). Forgive me for excuses — rationalizations, justifications and just plain wilful disobedience.

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

Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, city of our God;
He, whose word cannot be broken,
Formed thee for His own abode:
On the Rock of Ages founded,
What can shake thy sure repose?
With salvation’s walls surrounded,
Thou mayst smile at all thy foes.

HIS WORD

²³They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. ²⁴Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe. ²⁵They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: “The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said through Isaiah the prophet:

²⁶“Go to this people and say,
“You will be ever hearing but never understanding;
you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.”
²⁷For this people’s heart has become calloused;
they hardly hear with their ears,

and they have closed their eyes.
 Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
 hear with their ears,
 understand with their hearts
 and turn and I would heal them.'

²⁸“Therefore I want you to know that God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!”

³⁰For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him.

³¹Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ. — *Acts 28:23-31, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, was Paul satisfied that he had fulfilled his commitment and accomplished his purpose in “seeing some”? There were “large numbers.” How many? I’m so glad that only you know. Where did Paul get the energy to speak from morning till night? Oh, my Father, what is meant by “declaring” your kingdom? Your rule, your kingship in the hearts of men. Dear Lord, how I need to see and hear this word for myself. To be convinced is something far more than being baptized or confessing that Jesus is the Messiah — although I’m sure it included such. The practical daily application of your will lived out in human relationship.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I unavoidably include myself in the above, but here I want to apply this text as personally as at all possible: (1) If Paul could talk from morning till evening when he was past sixty years old, who am I that I should complain about the classes I have to teach? (2) I can be and want to be convinced from the Law of Moses and from the prophets that Jesus is the Messiah. (3) Dear Lord, I want never to be among those who “would not believe.” (4) How easy it is for religious people to disagree among themselves — what a danger there is in this for me!

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Yes, yes, there is much gratitude here: (1) Thank you for the Holy Spirit who spoke the truth in the Old Testament scriptures. (2) Thank you for the courage of Isaiah and Paul in applying the text to life. (3) Thank you for ears that can hear and eyes that can see your wonderful truth. (4) Thank you that I can set a guard on my ears and eyes and heart lest they become calloused. (5) Thank you that I can be healed and made whole. I can see and hear and believe as you want me to. (6) Thank you for the two whole years Paul had to preach and teach.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.” Here is such a meaningful verse. We have here described both the manner and the matter of Paul’s work in Rome. “Boldly” — in freedom of speech — this does not refer to brashness or offen-

siveness — the content might have been received as brash or some because of their life or beliefs would have been offended! But the majority did not so consider the preaching of Paul. Did he only preach to the lost and teach the saved? Perhaps so — but the communicative dynamics were the same in both if the crowd was large as seems to be here indicated.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In these last verses of Acts we can find areas for petitions: (1) Give me the same dedication to the teaching of your word. (2) Is your rule in the hearts of men my *primary* subject in teaching? Help me! (3) May I always remember that your Son is the subject or theme of all the Bible. (4) I *want* to believe — help me to find men who share this attitude. (5) As the Holy Spirit speaks through your word, give me ears to hear and a heart to understand.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these closing words speak to me: (1) “I still rule as king in the hearts of some men.” (2) “Consider again the evidence of fulfilled prophecy.” (3) “I want you to preach and teach to your generation what Paul did to his.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Middle East — Points for prayer: (1) *Believers from a Muslim background* are few and often scattered. Pressures on them are usually acute, from relatives, in employment and from the authorities. For many, emigration is the only way out of impossible situations. Pray for: a) *All who have come to Christ out of Islam*. They need fellowship, but often cannot find it with Christians from a different background. They need to study the Word and become established, but rarely have the time or facilities. They need courage in the face of intimidation, threats, ostracism and even physical danger. b) *Christian homes*. These are few. Unequal marriages between Christians and Muslims are a major cause of backsliding. The Muslim world needs to see the beauty of a Christian home. (2) *Effective means of reaching Muslims* must be exploited to the full: Medical work, personal witness by nationals and expatriates, literature, radio, Bible Correspondence courses, and gospel recordings. *Muslims in other lands* are more accessible.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK TEN

—Monday—

Trust is much more than mere acceptance — I rest my whole life in your name — yourself. Deepen this commitment!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God” (Psa. 20:7). What are the attributes of yourself I see in this verse? Here are some: (1) Chariots are a protection in battle. You are my strength and protection in any and every conflict. A soldier is much less vulnerable in a chariot than on foot in the field. How often do we need to repair to the cover of your presence. (2) Chariots offer much more speed and maneuverability than any foot soldier could find. The psalmist is saying that the physical battle advantages of chariots and horses are nothing without your direction, but we see a parallel in what chariots and horses offer with the name or character of our God. In the realm of the spirit — where all battles are really fought — our Lord is superior to all chariots and horses can offer.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. It was by no accident that Paul described the Christian life as a battle. I find it so! I want to “fight a good fight.” Dear Lord, if we didn’t have to fight every day it would be easier. I hear my commander say: “As your days are so shall your strength be.” I can climb into his chariot right now in this early morning hour and let him direct my moves through the battle of this day. Praise the Lord, I do not need to fight one battle of yesterday, nor make one move in tomorrow’s conflict.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, as you know I have trusted in what men can do and have found it sorely, sadly lacking!
“Blessed are you when you fall into manifold trials

(temptation) because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance” (James 1:2,3). If I would turn to you automatically, if I didn’t have to make a value judgment temptations would only become tests and would indeed develop perseverance. As it is, it is your grace and mercy that develops my perseverance. Temptations too often become a trap or snare — not all temptations — but “the sins that so easily ensnare us.” Dear Lord, I am still in the battle and I do indeed love you. Forgive my defeats — they are also your loss.

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

If you are tired of the load of your sin,
Let Jesus come into your heart;
If you desire a new life to begin,
Let Jesus come into your heart.
Just now, your doubtings give o’er;
Just now, reject him no more;
Just now, throw open the door;
Let Jesus come into your heart.

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

HIS WORD

⁸Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, ⁹yet I appeal to you on the basis of love. I then, as Paul — an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus — ¹⁰I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. ¹¹Formerly, he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me.

¹²I am sending him — who is my very heart — back to you. ¹³I would have liked to keep him here with me so he could take your place in helping me while I am in chains for the gospel. ¹⁴But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do will be spontaneous and not forced. ¹⁵Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back for good — ¹⁶no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear

brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord.

¹⁷So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. ¹⁸If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. ¹⁹I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back — not to mention that you owe me your very self. ²⁰I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. ²¹Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask. ²²And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers. —*Philemon 8-22, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What a precious message I have to share with you! Am I right in seeing in this letter a strong emphasis on apostolic authority? Please help me! These are the reasons I say this: (1) "I could be bold and *order you* to do *what you ought to do*." (2) ". . . so he could take your place *in helping me*." (3) ". . . not to mention that *you owe me your very self*." (4) "I do wish, brother, that I may *have some benefit from you* in the Lord." (5) "Confident of *your obedience*." All these phrases seem to say that Paul has a rank that should be respected. He did not want to "pull rank" but appeal out of love. Is this what you are saying to me through Paul?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

There are so many areas where I can use this text. I want to take the place of Philemon; (1) I receive the appeal of love *and* apostolic authority. There are a hundred things I *ought* to do and the love of my dear friends and brothers moves me to do them. At the same time the apostolic authority enforces it and breaks me away from my selfishness into action. (2) I believe I am almost as old as Paul was when he wrote this letter, but my body is soft and flabby compared with Paul's. How his age and imprisonment rebuke 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 a slave who was willing to listen and learn to be converted. He became a slave to a new Master. (2) Thank you that Paul saw the value of a person not a position. (3) Thank you for the fact that our usefulness to anyone is in you. Formerly we were useless, but now we are useful. (4) Thank you for showing me that Paul gave his heart to many people — "his *very heart*." (5) Thank you for Paul's example of welcoming and seeking others to help him in your work. (6) Thank you that Paul ever sought spontaneous service. (7) Thank you Paul referred to himself as he wrote to Philemon as "a partner."

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"*Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing you will do even more than I ask.*" How good it would be if our Lord was always confident of our obedience. This quality is essentially all we have to offer our Lord. We, like our Lord, must learn obedience by the things we suffer. The lesson of obedience comes from these sources: (1) Respect for authority. If we do not have confidence in the integrity of the one who has given us the command, we have little reason to obey. Can we respect and honor the One who commands us? Indeed, we can! (2) The value or purpose in the command. Our Lord obeyed "for the joy that was set before him." There is no order given by our commander that does not have great reward.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Surely in these personal requests of Paul we can find requests for prayer. (1) May my motives always be "for love's sake." (2) I want to be indeed "a prisoner of Christ Jesus." (3) How many who now enjoy new life owe their life to my teaching or preaching? Not near enough. Help me. (4) *Onesimus* is such a meaningful name, i.e., *useful* or *beneficial*. I want it for my name. (5) How I need more real empathy for those with whom I work. (6) I wonder just what type of service *Onesimus* gave to Paul? (7) How can I say to those about me: "Charge that to my account"?

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

There is much you can say to me in these verses: (1) "Let others refresh your heart in Christ." (2) "You can refresh others in my Son." (3) "Treat your fellow Christians as 'beloved brothers.'"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The Pacific — Points for prayer: (1) *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 missionaries. (2) *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.

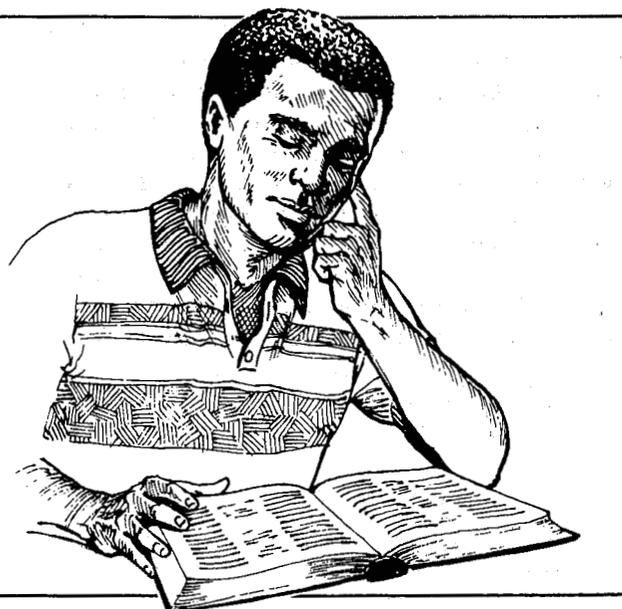
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Praise ye the Father! for His lovingkindness,
Tenderly cares He for His erring children;
Praise Him, ye angels, praise Him in the heaven,
Praise ye Jehovah!

WEEK TEN

—Tuesday—

You know my inmost self — you know how vulnerable I am — I need your strength — your forgiveness.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength (rock), and my redeemer” (Psa. 19:14).

There are three or four qualities of yourself I see in this verse: (1) You know the words I form in my mind before they come out of my mouth! This is an awesome thought! But to think less of yourself is to lack omniscience. You do know all. (2) The meditations — or evaluations — I make before action is taken are also known to you. It is in such meditations I reveal your real involvement in my life. Praise your name you do not expect or demand perfection — sincere desire to doing right is acceptable with you! This is all we can give. (3) You are indeed my total source of strength — of stability. (4) You have bought me with a great price; I belong to you.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me — I want this text to sink down into the very depths of my being! (1) You know, you hear, you listen to the words of my mouth. By my words I am cleared or condemned! (2) The evaluations I give to any project or any choice in life — all choices in life are also known, understood, shared by you! (3) You do not expect, nor can I give perfect obedience, but you do expect and I can give consistent sincerity. Dear Lord, dear Lord, I do! (4) I have no strength at all to fulfill what I have just written; except you build this house it won't be built, but you want to live in it therefore you will help me to build it. (5) I have been bought with a price; I want to glorify you in my body!

How do you personally relate to the strength of God, and God who is our Rock?

CONFESSION OF SIN

There is much confession of my missing the mark in the above worship. At the same time, I want to seek your cleansing blood. I want to claim your inward

strength. I want to hide in the rock. I want to openly, fully, dear God, *finally* confess all my sin, cast all my guilt over on you; free me and clear my record — I claim your promise!

“Keeping Jesus on the outside.” This can apply to all my relationships. I do not want him on the outside for salvation or forgiveness of past sins — I surely do not want to go to hell. But do I really want him to eat with me, live with me every day in every relationship? Yes, yes, come in Lord Jesus and make my house your home!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior divine!
Now hear me while I pray,
Take all my guilt away,
O let me from this day
Be wholly Thine!

HIS WORD

³I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. ⁴Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy.

—II Timothy 1:3,4, NIV

⁸Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, ⁹for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained.

—II Timothy 2:8,9, NIV

⁶For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. ⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. —II Timothy 4:6,7, NIV

⁹Do your best to come to me quickly, ¹⁰for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. ¹¹Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. ¹²I sent Tychicus to Ephesus.

—II Timothy 4:9-12, NIV

¹⁶At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. ¹⁷But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. ¹⁸The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen. —II Timothy 4:16-18, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Did Paul have two times of "prayers"? You were the One to whom he lifted his voice — so I know you know and heard. I do wonder so earnestly just how he worded his prayer to you about Timothy. Paul had a clear conscience because his performance was near enough to what he planned that your umpire (his conscience) approved of his actions. Am I right on this? How Paul did find happiness in the presence and work of others. Dear Lord, I want to do the same! I am woefully short here. Help me! How precious are the words of Paul in the few closing days of his life. What an outlook: (1) The word of God is not chained. (2) I have fought the good fight. (3) I have finished the race. (4) I have kept the faith. (5) Mark is helpful to me in my ministry (he could not always say that). (6) The Lord (even yourself) stood at my side and gave me strength. (7) I was delivered from the lion's mouth. (8) The Lord (even yourself) will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory forever and forever!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How gladly I take this up! What did Paul do? Where did Paul go after he was released from his first imprisonment? It is good for me to read again what I wrote several years ago in my study of his letters to Timothy and Titus. Right now I want to go into that prison with Paul and share his words: how I do want to serve as my forefathers did! I can think of those who served from 1809 to 1919. I know many of them had a clear, clean, good conscience or they would never have done what they did. May I imitate their faith.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for Paul's devotion in spite of desertion. (2) Thank you for Crescens and Titus — good men who had jobs for you in Galatia and Dalmatia. (3) Thank you for Luke the beloved and faithful physician. (4) Thank you for Mark the profitable servant. (5) Thank you that Paul had "a ministry" even while in prison. (6) Thank you for the personal touches Paul includes in his letter to Timothy. (7) Thank you that "all the Gentiles heard the message through Paul." I do not know just how this was done, but I'm glad it was.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom." Does the promise always hold with everyone in every situation? The "rescue" of the Lord must always be first our reaction to such evil attacks. Our Lord does not necessarily deliver us from such attacks. Let us listen to Paul tell us of many of these "evil attacks": (1) Many, many imprisonments (not just this last one at Rome). (2) "Countless beatings" — often near death from these beatings. (3) "Five times my back has been torn to ribbons by the lash of the Jews." (4) "Three times I have received the rods of the Romans — even when I am a Roman citizen." (5) "I have been shipwrecked three times before the latest episode — I spent all night and all day adrift in the briny deep."

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In these last words of Paul there is so much about which to pray: (1) Dear, dear Lord, I want to keep up the names and needs on my prayer list. Help me. (2) Where is the deep longing for fellow workers that filled the heart of Paul? (3) How can I better impress upon my heart the reality of my Lord's resurrection? (4) Since the word of God is not bound, release it through me. (5) May I be as ready to depart this day, this moment as was Paul.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You speak real often to me in these verses: (1) "Finish the race." (2) "Keep the faith." (3) "I will stand by you even as I did with Paul."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The West — Points for prayer: (1) *A godless materialism* has become the formative philosophy of the majority — particularly in Europe. To term Europe today as 'post-Christian' is a sad partial truth. Pray that this trend may be reversed, and that empty churches and chapels may once more be filled with people praising God. (2) *In many countries an increasing percentage of the population has had no meaningful contact with biblical Christianity for ages.* 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.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom spread from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

WEEK TEN

—Wednesday—

My very life — here and hereafter are dependent upon your goodness — I renew this quality of you in worship.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Do good to your servant, and I will live; I will obey your word. Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law. I am a stranger on earth; do not hide your commandments from me” (Psa. 119:17-19). My very life is dependent upon your goodness. How I need to assimilate the meaning of such an expression. On how slender a thread does our life hang! How exceedingly fragile is our very existence. Without your goodness we could not draw our next breath. Why should we then be hesitant to obey your every word? I wonder just what David meant when he prayed the prayer: “Open my eyes that I may see the wonderful things in your law”? Whatever it meant it is increased many fold in this gospel age!

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Just for me. The qualities of yourself are ever before me: (1) You want to and do communicate with your servants through your word — through your teachers — through answered prayer — through your providence. In all these I praise you! (2) Every communication of yourself is out of *absolute goodness*. (3) You have ways of opening the eyes of our understanding to meanings and applications of your word we would never consider unaided. Praise to you for your goodness! (4) I am indeed “*a stranger on earth.*” I do not know how to direct my feet — in this need — “do not hide your commandments from me.”

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Full many a time I have found but little reason for a continuance of my life — i.e., from your point of view. I live by your goodness! To say that I obey your

word is an absurdity — i.e., as you consider my efforts. Forgive my failure even to meet my own standards. How dull are my ears — how sleepy my eyes — shock me — woo me — lead me into an awareness of the deeper meaning of your word. Forgive me for my sad response to your revelation. I do look upon the world about me as “a stranger.” If I do not have your direction from your commandments I shall wander and be lost — help me — forgive me!

What personal sins do you want to confess? 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

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God —
—Romans 1:1, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Shall I *ever* become accustomed to the impact of your word? I hope not. Here are three characteristics of your Son seen in the life of your servant Paul: (1) A slave or servant; (2) called to be one sent (Heb. 3:1); (3) set apart for the glad tidings — or for the purpose of heralding this good news. Such are the three qualities I would want most in my own relationship with you. Whether Paul thought of himself as a *doulos* (slave) as compared to the slaves of the Roman empire — or a *doulos* in the context of the Old Testament, such as the prophets. He still asks me to imitate him.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How we think of ourselves is so very important — in these days it is called “self image.” How we think of ourselves is going to effect others — we have such a strong tendency to project onto others what we think of ourselves. Am I your called and sent one? Surely not in the same sense as the twelve and Paul — but no less called (by the gospel) and no less sent as your light and salt. Am I separated *unto* or *for* the gospel? It is one thing to be separated from sin and Satan — it is quite something else to be separated for our Lord and his good news.

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 Paul — all he means to me and the whole Christian world. (2) Thank you for preserving this word of your apostle for all these years that I might read it and obey it today. (3) Thank you for the privilege of belonging to the One who bought me at such a price. (4) Thank you for the call out of and into, given to every Christian by the good news. (5) Thank you for the source of the glad tidings — even yourself. (6) Thank you that I can be a herald of the King of Kings. (7) Thank you for the divinity of the job I have to perform.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . set apart for the gospel of God.” All of us are set apart for something — “His you are whom you obey.” Utter selfishness governs us too often. God in Christ has set us apart for spreading his good news; but this is purely judicial until we “put some feet on our faith.” When shall we be ready to agree with God’s estimate of what is important? How many people are set apart or sanctified for other purposes. There are numbers of men and women who hold two jobs so they can accumulate more money. Mothers set themselves apart for their children. The capacity is there — but where is the willingness?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I can pray with real meaning through this verse: (1) It is required of a slave that he be absolutely submitted to his master — this is my sincere desire. (2) A slave depends so much on his master — so do I — open my heart to see just how much. (3) Since I belong to you by right of purchase you have unrestricted authority over me — forgive my rebellion. (4) There are so many servants (slaves) of times past that teach me — Abraham, Moses, Joshua. I want to learn from them. (5) Most of all I want to learn from the One who came to give himself for us.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me once again in this verse: (1) “You are my servant — I have no one else to do what you can do.” (2) “I have called you; I am calling you; I will call you — answer me.” (3) “Until you are separated from the world you cannot be separated unto the gospel.”

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. e) *The migrant workers* who need the gospel. Most are from unevangelized areas of Southern Europe and the Middle East. f) *Overseas students*. These number about 500,000 at any one time — especially in the USA, Canada, Britain and France. Many come from lands closed to conventional missionary work.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee,
 God of glory, Lord of love;
 Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee,
 Opening to the sun above.
 Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
 Drive the dark of doubt away;
 Giver of immortal gladness,
 Fill us with the light of day.
 All Thy works with joy surround Thee,
 Earth and heaven reflect Thy rays,
 Stars and angels sing around Thee,
 Center of unbroken praise.
 Field and forest, vale and mountain,
 Flowery meadow, flashing sea,
 Chanting bird and flowing fountain,
 Call us to rejoice in Thee.
 Thou art giving and forgiving,
 Ever blessing, ever blest,
 Wellspring of the joy of living,
 Ocean depth of happy rest!
 Thou our Father, Christ our Brother —
 All who live in love are Thine;
 Teach us how to love each other,
 Lift us to the joy divine.

WEEK TEN

—Thursday—

How easily are we led away to the lies of Satan — lead me to your word in the closet of prayer.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Though princes sit together and slander me, your servants will meditate on your decrees. Your statutes are my delight; they are my counselors” (Psa. 119:23,24). It was no ordinary man who spoke against David — but Saul, Abner and Ahithophel. The king, the general and the chief counselor. We have no problems at all compared to David — God’s chosen king. What was David’s response? *“Your servant will meditate on your decrees.”* He must have had some documents to which he could make reference.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

I have sixty-six books of your decrees and statutes. It is indeed my delight to turn each word over and over again — new light falls on my path as from the reflections of a flawless diamond. Praise and thanksgiving arise from my heart that you have been so thoughtful of our poor servant. It is not in a begrudging admission of my need that I come to your word — but in the exuberance of delight. How eternally important it is that I hide your word in my mind and conscience that I might have counsel in my hour of need.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

I know I hide nothing from you. Self-deception is bad enough — but to attempt to deceive the all knowing One is ridiculous. I am much more influenced — intimidated by what those in high places (the ones who influence me) think or say or do than I ever want to admit. Forgive me for this hypocrisy! I meditate much more on what those who can call the shots say and do than I do about the eternal decrees of heaven. I do want to improve — help me! There are times when

your decrees are indeed my delight — increase those times. Keep me committed to an assimilation of a portion of your word each day.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

HIS WORD

²*the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures —Romans 1:2, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

There are three qualities of the message just as there were three attributes of the messenger: (1) It is *good news*; (2) it comes from your very Self; (3) it was promised long ago by the prophets. I want to always remember that: (1) I have the very best of news: *“Christ died to save sinners.”* I hope the wonder and beauty of this message will never be last in my heart. (2) The message I carry is divine — not from a theological seminary — or even a home Bible class but heaven. (3) It was promised long ago in types and shadows by the prophets.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I want these words to be etched upon the tablets of my heart. Where is the excitement of the glad tidings?

I have had good news of a financial nature — I could hardly wait to tell someone. Our children have been blessed in some material manner and we want to tell everyone about it. Dear Lord open my eyes to the beauty and value of the glad tidings. I work far too often as if I was but a slave to some earthly pursuit — it is your very word I love to teach — how can I be so callous? The O.T. heritage I find fulfilled in the N.T. moves me to worship you.

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for all the centuries that have come and gone as a testimony to your faithfulness. (2) Thank you for Bethlehem's stable and Calvary's burden foretold and fulfilled. (3) Thank you for the expectation of meeting each of the prophets in the land that is fairer than day. (4) Thank you for the same Holy Scriptures present in my hands as was present when Paul wrote. (5) Thank you for your Son who gave himself for us that we might give ourselves to you.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son,” your dear Son gives the meaning to the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation. It is indeed true: “The Old is in the New explained, the New is in the Old contained.” But in both the Old and New Covenants the Son is the theme. It needs to be pointed out that our Lord spoke of his own importance in the Scriptures: “For I tell you, what has been written must be fulfilled in me.” Those who knew him best were making constant reference to the O.T. prophecies being fulfilled in his life and ministry. Such a concept surely gives great depth to the historical record.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I shall never tire of lifting my heart in prayer as I read these precious words: (1) May the joy of those who first heard of your love through your Son be mine. (2) Thank you for your total faithfulness in all your promises. (3) Lead me into a deeper awareness of the divinity of the Scriptures we sometimes treat so lightly. (4) I know I do not appreciate the messages of prophets as I should — help me! (5) Sum up all things in your Son in my life. (6) Stop me long enough to absorb each thought of your word as I read it!

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

My ears are open — speak to me: (1) “My message is

and has always been *good news* to those who have themselves received it.” (2) “The depths of centuries is in every gospel message.” (3) “If you do not communicate my Son you have not preached the gospel.”

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: a) *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. b) *The steady growth in numbers, confidence and influence of Evangelicals* in both North America and Europe is encouraging. This growth is also in mainline denominations returning to their biblical roots, and an ever increasing number of pastors are Evangelicals. Liberal theology that helped to empty many churches is being eclipsed, and the decline in Protestant church attendances appears to be ending. c) *The renewal movement* has deeply affected nearly every denomination in most countries. Many nominal congregations have been transformed. d) *The remarkable turning to Christ* of many thousands of the world's 6,000,000 *Gypsies* in parts of Europe. The Gypsy churches in Spain have become the largest evangelical fellowship of churches in that land.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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 His name — I'm fixed upon it —
Name of God's redeeming love.
Hitherto Thy love has blest me;
Thou hast brought me to this place;
And I know Thy hand will bring me
Safely home by Thy good grace.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Bought me with His precious blood.
O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee:
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, O take and seal it;
Seal it for Thy courts above.

WEEK TEN

—Friday—

Use this time of personal worship to renew me — to teach me — to meditate on your wonders.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I am laid low in the dust; renew my life according to your word. I recounted my ways and you answered me; teach me your decrees. Let me understand the teaching of your precepts; then I will meditate on your wonders” (Psa. 119:25-27). My purpose is always one: to praise you for your very Self! I can do this so well in observing your character is what you do in human experience. “Many are of the earth earthy, and never lament it; only the heaven-born and heaven-soaring spirit pines at the thought of being fastened to this world, and bird-limed by its sorrows or its pleasures” (Charles Spurgeon, *Treasury of David*).

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Praise your name that you place within my heart a desire to break out of this earthly existence. You have placed no unfulfilled desires in man. Praise your name that this deepest and highest of all desires — to be liberated from an earthbound existence — will be fulfilled! It is out of your word this life arises. Your word gives a record of your renewal — and in and of your word we find spirit and life (John 6:63)! “Nothing brings more ease and more life to a man than a frank acknowledgment of the evil which has caused the sorrow and the lethargy” (*ibid*). I have praised you often for your willingness to forgive and renew. I do it once again!

How do you personally relate to the wonders of God, and God who exalts us? 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 taught by your very Self! But I know there is no learning until I have been forgiven. There is a great impassible barrier to learning in unconfessed

and unforsaken sin. “When God forgives our sins we are all the more fearful of sinning again. Mercy, which pardons transgressions, sets us longing for grace which prevents transgressions. We may boldly ask for more when God has given us so much; he who has washed out the past stain will not refuse that which will preserve us from present and future defilement” (*Ibid*). To all of these precious words I add a hearty “amen”!

What personal sins do you want to confess? There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

It may be at morn, when the day is awaking,
When sunlight through darkness
and shadow is breaking,
That Jesus will come in the fullness of glory,
To receive from the world His own.
O, Lord Jesus, how long, how long
'Til we shout the glad song
Christ returneth!
Hallelujah! hallelujah! Amen,
Hallelujah! Amen.

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

HIS WORD

³regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, ⁴and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. —Romans 1:3,4, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

This is such a glorious declaration of the nature of your Son I do not have words to express the half — or even a tithe of the meaning. The human and divine nature of my Lord is here set forth in a most attractive manner. From what man can see, he was just what the sign said: “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the

Jews." He was of David's royal seed according to the flesh. But on the inside he was your Son — his body came from David — but his life, his presence in the flesh, came from yourself! Such a wondrous fact was made known through his resurrection from the dead. It was the Holy Spirit who raised him from the dead (Rom. 8:11).

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

There is so much wonder in this expression I looked for a poem to express it in words I cannot command.

The lark, the linnet, and the dove,
The chaffinch and the wren,
They must have known His watchful love,
And given worship then;
They must have known and glorified
The child who died for men.
And when the sun at break of day
Crept in upon his hair,
I think it must have left a ray
Of unseen glory there —
A kiss of love on that little brow
For thorns that it must wear.

—Albert Bigelow Paine

I shall never fully comprehend the full meaning of the incarnation, but it is good to try.

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 descendant from David so clearly and accurately seen in your Son. (2) Thank you for the very human nature of Jesus — the Son of man. (3) Thank you for the constant association of the Holy Spirit in the life and ministry of Jesus. (4) Thank you for that pure Spirit who lived in the very human body — his name was Jesus. (5) Thank you for the powerful declaration of your Sonship by the resurrection from the dead.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

. . . *declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead.*" Here is the cap sheaf of his miracles! The resurrection proclaims to all the world for all time that he has power over life. The control of life or spirit is to control the very essence of things as they are. The resurrection declares his control over death. Indeed the last enemy has been conquered. His resurrection heralds to things visible and invisible that he can extend his power to "all that are in the grave." If Christ is not risen from the dead we are of all men most to be pitied — but now is Christ raised from the dead and we are of all men most triumphant!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I see requests in these verses to meet my deepest needs: (1) Keep the eyes of my understanding open to the divine nature of your Son. (2) I want to personally feel the interest my Lord has in my life. (3) May I remember just now that the same Holy Spirit who raised my Lord from the dead lives in me. (4) May the impact of his resurrection ever be with me. (5) I do want to look death in the face without fear — yea, with anticipation!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

My ears are open to your word as you speak to me: (1) "I am the same yesterday, today and forever." (2) "Both my human and divine nature were a gift from my Father for you." (3) "My resurrection remains a declaration for all people of all time."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Afghanistan — Points for prayer: (1) *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. (2) *Unreached peoples — none can be considered reached with the gospel.* Pray especially for the *Uzbeks* in the north; the *Hazaras* in the center; the many *Nuristani tribes* north and east of Kabul, only recently Islamized; the nomadic *Pushtun tribes* of the west and the *Baluchis* in the south. (3) *There are still foreign Christians serving the Lord* in the land as doctors, teachers, etc. Pray that their lives may commend the Savior to the people to whom they minister and earn opportunities to testify to them. Pray that they may be able to minister there in the midst of difficult and dangerous conditions for as long as the Lord wills.

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,
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee;
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee;
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

WEEK TEN

—Saturday—

Deceit is in our hearts — it is the very essence of our enemy's efforts to defeat us. I seek your strength just now!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word. Keep me from deceitful ways; be gracious to me through your law. I have chosen the way of truth; I have set my heart on your laws” (Psa. 119:28-30). Sorrow can indeed be very debilitating. Only the hope and peace we find in your word can remove this weariness. Your word is living and active — the very balm of Gilead. It is because you have considered man's need and gave him a treasury of riches for his need that we can ask you to strengthen us. Dear Lord, how much I need a fulfillment of these promises of protection and strength! I lift my heart in praise for your grace to 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

It can become redundant to speak so often of the absolute necessity of a propositional revelation — but I never tire of praising you for your word! Only in my firm constant choice of truth can I escape the ways of deceit. There is something mysterious about the desire to choose the way of truth. I refer to the *desire* to do so. It is of yourself and I praise you for it. When desire enters the realm of emotion — when decision becomes emotion then your service becomes joy. How glad I am to affirm it is even so in my own experience.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

“Consistency, thou art a jewel, and oh, how rare.” This is indeed my testimony — yea, my confession! How fluctuating is the human heart (my heart). I am glad to say the more I chase the way of truth the easier it is — but unless such a decision is repeated

often it is so easy to walk and think in the way of deceit. Forgive me! It is only when my whole heart is set on yourself as revealed in your law that I can testify to deliverance. What a blessed refreshment is confession and forgiveness. I want to live today on the side of your grace and 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

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

⁵Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. ⁶And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. —Romans 1:5,6, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What bounties we receive from him! I want to thank you and praise you for the following: (1) A large quantity of unearned favor — in so many areas of my life this is true. But for what purpose? The little expression, “for his name's sake” has always intrigued me. The reason for your grace is that I might better spread your fame to all who know me. Your name, which stands for your very self, is to be held up and admired. It is because of who he is and what he has done that I have grace at all. (2) Apostleship in the

sense used here relates particularly to Paul, generally to all of us.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I am trying to understand the impact of these words: "to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith." It is the gospel that accomplishes this grand end. Paul was very experienced in fulfilling this very purpose. How many thousands had Paul called out from among the Gentiles? Only heaven can tell. There is no faith without obedience, and there is no real obedience without faith. This is the largest lack we have in so-called "saving faith" today — a lack of commitment — which tells everyone we have not been obedient in our faith.

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 believe and obey today and become just what these persons were in their day. (2) Thank you I can belong to Jesus Christ, your dear Son. (3) Thank you for the calling of yourself through the glad tidings. (4) Thank you for the book of conversions — i.e., Acts, where I can see these principles in action. (5) Thank you I have been called to belong — give me grace to affirm this position. (6) Thank you for this beautiful salvation.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ." How precious is this thought! We are the called to belong to Jesus our Lord. Since we are his possession he will take a real personal interest in us. Every Christian first belongs to the One who paid the price for his redemption. We also belong to each other — and to a local assembly. But we are his twice over: he created us and he bought us. What a high honor is ours! We can and do disappoint each other — and we become quite unhappy with the activities of the local church — but with the great head of the body there is no fault in him.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Lead me into this prayer time with a keen sense of your presence: (1) It is *through him* we have been saved — keep my eyes up and away from other members of the body to the One who saved us all. (2) What authority is found in my Lord! His name means *all in all to me* — at his name every knee shall bow — beginning with me! (3) It is "for his name's sake" all has been done in salvation and sanctification — keep me related to him as a servant. (4) If I never call

anyone out of darkness my calling has failed — impress me with this thought.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me again through these precious words: (1) "Faith still requires obedience to be real or fruitful." (2) "Millions of Gentiles have never even heard the call of the goodness — does this mean anything to you?" (3) "If the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost — can you do less?"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Afghanistan — Points for prayer: (1) *Afghan believers are few* and mostly Dari-speaking; but since the Russian invasion, they have become bolder for their Lord, and more Afghans are coming to Christ than ever before. Pray for their protection in persecution, and growth in numbers and grace. Pray that living churches may be planted all over the country. (2) *The few Bibles and NTs in the country, in Pushtun and Kabuli Farsi, are not easily understood; however, the Dari New Testament has recently been completed.* Pray for the wise and effective distribution of God's Word. Pray for the translation of the Scriptures into other languages too; work is in progress in six, but at least five other languages definitely need translators. (3) *Afghans outside the country.* Pray for those who witness to Afghan students and refugees in the West, in hospitals and in the growing number of refugee settlements over the border in Pakistan. Pray for open doors and hearts among these suffering and sorrowing people.

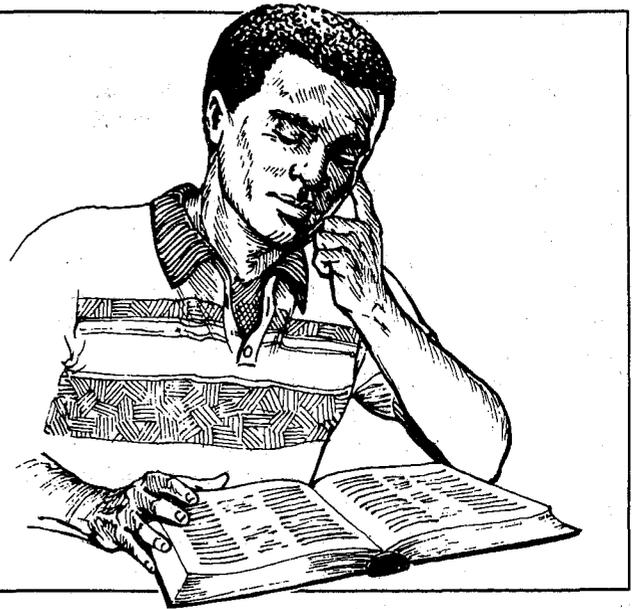
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

O worship the King, all glorious above,
And gratefully sing His wonderful love;
Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of Days,
Pavilioned in splendor, and girded with praise.
O tell of His might, O sing of His grace,
Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space!
His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form,
And dark is His path on the wings of the storm.
Thy bountiful care what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light,
It streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,
And sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.
Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,
In Thee do we trust, nor find Thee to fail:
Thy mercies how tender, how firm to the end,
Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend.

WEEK ELEVEN

—Sunday—

Will I come out of the prayer closet knowing more and more of your word? This is my desire. Help me!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

"I hold fast to your statutes, O Lord; do not let me be put to shame. I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free" (Psa. 119:31,32). A choice is ever before us. In the realm of teaching we have before us your word and the words of men — to what will we hold fast? It is evident that we have often failed here. What material do we pick up to read more often than anything else? Is this not that which we hold fast? Are we ashamed of such action? It is in your truth we have freedom — yea, liberty of heart. I do want to make this prayer mine!

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

My praise is for the quality of steadfastness which you provide. It is really not in man to direct his own steps. Indeed, unless you build the house it will not be built. My response of obedience is a consequence of running in the path of your commandments — the more I do your will the more comfortable I am in doing it. I *do* have the capacity to choose — in such a choice oft repeated is the liberty you have promised. I do indeed want to avoid the shame I bring first upon yourself, and then upon my own head. There is no joy like that which comes from a sense of your approval. Thank you for accepting me in your Son!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

What a dull, stubborn student I am! How is it I lose interest so soon? Interest is a by-product. It is in direct proportion to my involvement in the object of interest. If I have been giving hour after hour of interest to one sport and another sport is introduced to me for my consideration I have but little interest.

Even so with your statutes — forgive me — I know I am at war with the environment in which I live — indeed, I want to produce my own environment! In this struggle there are many failures — for each of them made only yesterday, forgive me! I so eagerly accept your cleansing!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I can hear my Savior calling,
I can hear my Savior calling,
I can hear my Savior calling,
"Take thy cross and follow, follow Me."
Where He leads me I will follow,
Where He leads me I will follow,
Where He leads me I will follow—
I'll go with Him, with Him all the way.

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

HIS WORD

To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. —Romans 1:7, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

There are five forms of worship I can lift to your throne: (1) Praise, (2) Confession; (3) Intercession; (4) Petition; (5) Thanksgiving. Of these five which shall it be from this text? It would indeed be easy to use all five — but the words of the text seem to direct me to praise and thanksgiving. The Christians in Rome (and in every place — then and now) were described as: (1) Called; (2) Belonging to Jesus Christ; (3) Loved by yourself; (4) Saints — or those set apart. If I could not praise you for these bounties I have lost all sense of meaning. If gratitude does not spontaneously arise

to my lips I have lost all meaning in life.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I know I will be short of expressing all I want to in this realm of praise and thanksgiving — but I do want to try. (1) Help me to respond to your calling — I reach out to all you are and all you want me to be. Thank you for the wonder of being your child and your servant. (2) I have a contractual agreement with you in which you have agreed to purchase me as your very own — I do want to offer praise and love to yourself and the lost world in which I live. (3) “*Loved by God*” strikes me with real force — I can hardly comprehend a small part of what this means. Since this life is only a small part of your plans for me I am full of excitement.

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 you objectively consider me in your Son as a “saint” or one set apart. (2) Thank you that subjectively I am expected — and want to respond to my position in your Son. (3) Thank you for your constant grace. (4) Thank you for the peace that does indeed surpass human understanding that can and does guard my heart in your Son. (5) Thank you for the constant joint effort to meet my needs by yourself and your Son.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“*Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*” This is surely a pleasant greeting. But it is much more. This greeting contains the essentials of life. We could not live without the unearned favor of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul wants the Christians in Rome to appreciate such grace — i.e., to appropriate such a concept into their very being. It is very difficult to convince many Christians that they really are in God’s favor. Once we accept this gift of God we have peace. Peace is a consequence of grace. I want to hear this greeting as though it came from heaven itself — spoken by Gabriel just for me.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I do need the requests that arise from this one beautiful verse: (1) May I hear this as if spoken only to me. (2) I need the fact of your love for me impressed upon me again and again. (3) May I live this day conscious from time to time of my being your “called one.” (4) I want to look at life from the detached position of one separated unto yourself —

and yet placed in the midst of life as salt and light. (5) I want to just now enjoy my present position in grace. (6) May your peace guard my heart and thoughts (emotions and intellects) just now.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I do want to hear this greeting — and all it says as if I had never heard it before: (1) “My love separates as well as constrains.” (2) “I ever stand before you with my arms outstretched calling you away from and into.” (3) “Grace and peace to you from myself and my Son.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Albania — Points 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. (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. (4) *The Greek minority has been heavily persecuted, and a large proportion are in prisons and labor camps.* Pray for them. (5) *Christian radio broadcasts are the only way, at present, to get the gospel into the land.* Pray for the raising up of more believers in the West who are fluent in Albanian who can help prepare programs for transmission by TWR from Monaco and IBRA from Lisbon. There are now six programs beamed into Albania every week. Pray that the news of these broadcasts may reach those who need the message of the gospel. Pray for good reception in Albania, where radio receivers are few and of poor quality, and where the government frequently jams incoming broadcasts.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Come, we that love the Lord,
And let our joys be known;
Join in a song with sweet accord,
And thus surround the throne.
Let those refuse to sing
Who never knew our God;
But children of the heavenly King
May speak their joys abroad.
Then let our songs abound,
And every tear be dry;
We’re marching through Emmanuel’s ground
To fairer worlds on high.

WEEK ELEVEN

—Monday—

Control my preferences — just now I seek your face! Renew my life!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain. Turn my eyes away from worthless things; renew my life according to your word” (Psa. 119:36,37). If there ever was a quality we might devoutly desire it is this one! You can produce within us an inclination or leaning. What a wonderful capacity to attribute to yourself and for which I can truly praise your name! “Our wills are free, and yet without violating their liberty, grace can incline us in the right direction. This can be done by enlightening the understanding as to the excellence of obedience, by strengthening our habits of virtue, by giving us an experience of the sweetness of purity, and by many other ways” (*ibid*). Thank you, I wonder in joy before your throne.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

In order to impress upon my heart the terribleness of covetousness (which is at the base of the desire for selfish gain) I want to review the awfulness of this most common of all sins: “It is idolatry, and so dethrones God; it is selfishness, and so it is cruel to all in its power; it is sordid greed, and so it would sell the Lord himself for pieces of silver. It is degrading, groveling, hardening, deadening — *sin!* — which withers every thing around it that is lovely and Christlike. He who is covetous is of the race of Judas, and will in all probability turn out to be himself a son of perdition” (*ibid*). I now want to claim to my heart this attribute of yourself! *Turn my eyes away* — you can do it — I want you to — “Turn my eyes away from worthless things — renew my life according to (or by) your word.”

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is indeed good to be transformed each day by

renewing our minds (it is a blessing I cannot compare with any other one thing). At the same time it is necessary to each day confess our sins. It is so easy to be drawn away by the love of selfish gain. If we are in love with the blessings we find in the searching of your scriptures we will have no time or interest in selfish gain. This, however, has not always been my desire — forgive me. How often have my eyes been turned — and even fascinated — by “worthless things” — not necessarily sinful — but *worthless*. Dear Lord, renew my desire to be renewed.

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

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

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

HIS WORD

⁸First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. ⁹God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you ¹⁰in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God’s will the way may be opened for me to come to you.
—Romans 1:8-10, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Paul had not been to Rome, but he had heard enough about the congregation, and had enough friends there he had met in other places (16:3-16), that he could lift them up to your throne in thanksgiving. We are well aware that this is a formal greeting of salvation and thanksgiving — but it is much more. Everywhere Paul

went in the Roman empire — and he was a world traveler — he heard something good about the believers in Rome. This is such an interesting use of the term “faith.” Paul did not hear about what they believed — he heard about what they did. Paul was that one whom our Lord said in John 4:23 you were looking for to worship you. In spirit and truth — Paul served (worshipped) with his whole heart in preaching the gospel.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

It would seem an exaggeration to call your very Self to witness his constant remembrance of the Christians in his prayers, i.e., if we did not know the vast importance of intercessory prayer. I need to be reminded again that Paul had “prayers”, i.e., a time and place for praying. There is nothing more important than this time and place. If Paul interceded for each of the more than 20 persons named in the last chapter of this book he must have spent much time in prayer — he no doubt prayed equally for the Christians in Philippi, Thessalonica, Ephesus and other places. Much of Paul’s day must have been spent in prayer. What does this say to 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 there is indeed someone listening when I pray. (2) Thank you for the example of Paul in keeping times of prayer. (3) Thank you for your personal interest in the many “little” things that make up all of life. (4) Thank you that your will is being worked out at all times — whether I recognize it or not. (5) Thank you for opening doors and shutting doors in every day of my life.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . that now at last by God’s will the way may be opened for me to come to you.” Why did you make Paul wait for a positive answer to his prayer? It is totally useless to ask such a question, I doubt seriously that at this juncture in his life Paul even asked it. He was confident you were at work and if the way did not open for travel then it was better that he not travel. Waiting is what we can do best here because in the world to come there will be no time — therefore no waiting. It is enough to know that acting or waiting it is by your will such takes place.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I relish this time of prayer above all other times of the day: (1) Thanksgiving is such a good quality — keep

me open to gratitude in the changing circumstances of this day. (2) Paul was indeed “*people oriented*” — I need this quality much more than presently is mine. (3) Being able to sincerely rejoice in the success of others is a grand attitude I need. (4) Paul felt he served you first and people second — give me such an understanding. (5) Memory is such a boon to life — flood my mind with the needs of others that I might pray for them. (6) There is deep assurance in knowing you are superintending the activities of this day.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Once again I pause before your throne of grace to hear you speak to my heart: (1) “Thanksgiving is always welcome and in order.” (2) “If people do not hear of your works they have not heard of your faith.” (3) “It is possible to serve me with your whole heart.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Albania — Points 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 northwest Greece* 12,000 living in villages near the border. d) *In west 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. (2) *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. (3) *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 inside the country. Pray that the slight thaw in relations with the West may result in more openings.

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 power are great,
And, armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

WEEK ELEVEN

—Tuesday—

I wish today to renew my obedience to you — I can best do it in worship.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Fulfill your promise to your servant, so that you may be feared. Take away the disgrace I dread, for your laws are good. How I long for your precepts! Renew my life in your righteousness” (Psa. 119: 38-40). Inward confidence in your presence and interest in us are constantly in need of reinforcement. With me: among the options open nothing makes sense but a confidence in yourself as revealed in your Son and in your word. You have fulfilled ten thousand promises to me — I can with strong assurance fear or worship you. Full assurance is the renewal of obedience and I purpose to obey!

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

There are many circumstances in my own experience where I would bring disgrace upon your name and my own. I do not trust myself without your presence — and most especially your word in my heart. (And I mean *consciously* in my heart.) If you will turn our eyes away from falsehood, and I believe you will, then we may also expect you to turn falsehood away from injuring your good name! Thank you for this assurance. We are often bowed down by our sense of weakness and need of grace but we can claim sincerity — a strange desire to fulfill your precepts in us. Essentially this is all we can offer you — but we can long after your will in our lives and expect the renewing such a desire produces.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Must I always confess my need? Is it not enough to know that you know my need and will meet it? *No — it is not enough!* It is in verbalizing — in framing such need in words that I find relief: forgiveness and

a fresh start. Where is my reverence toward you at 10 A.M. — or 2 P.M.? Unless or until my present worship of you affects my total attitude it is wasted time — but I *do* see effects in my experiences — but not as much as I want. Forgive me and renew me according to your word and in *your* righteousness.

What personal sins do you want to confess? There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Tell me the story of Jesus,
Write on my heart every word;
Tell me the story most precious,
Sweetest that ever was heard.
Tell how the angels in chorus
Sang as they welcomed His birth,
“Glory to God in the highest!
Peace and good tidings to earth.”

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

HIS WORD

¹¹I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong — ¹²that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. —Romans 1:11,12, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Paul's modesty is surely evident in these few words. He expects to find something in the faith (lives) of the Christians in Rome to strengthen and encourage him. He also expects to be able to share with them his faith in such a manner that they will be encouraged. Such an encouragement is the spiritual gift he would give them. That Paul felt his need of strengthening is a real revelation to us. How sadly lacking is this quality in our association with those who work with us and we with them.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

We find just what we are really looking for. If I expect to find those who will lift my heart and bring cheer to my life I will find them. If I believe all men are negative I will surely find enough to make me think the woods are full of them. Paul was positive in his anticipation of his visit to Rome. If there is one thing we need more than encouragement I do not know what it is. Perhaps acceptance would be a close second, but it must actually precede encouragement, i.e., if we do not accept people we will not encourage them. Dear Lord, I want this quality up front in my relationships!

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 common feelings expressed by Paul almost two thousand years ago that we share today — we too long after the good of others. (2) Thank you for the spiritual gift Paul has given to us in his many epistles. (3) Thank you that we in imagination can be present to receive the encouragement this letter gave to the Roman Christians. (4) Thank you that one day Paul's presence will encourage all of us when we see him in your house. (5) Thank you that we can be made strong by encouragement. (6) Thank you for the ministry each Christian has in your body.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith." Anyone who has just returned from a session of preaching and teaching as I am just now will know just what Paul means. There is something wonderfully exhilarating about sharing the good news with others. In the very act of teaching and preaching we have a form of worship. When we learn of the needs and desires of those to whom we speak we are drawn out in concern for them. The example of devotion I found in the life of a mother who had lost two sons and was now giving her life to the care of the third son who was paralyzed in an automobile accident will not soon be forgotten.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I have already found real reasons for prayer, I know there are others: (1) Give me the longing to identify with the needs of others I see in the life of Paul. (2) May I have enough spirituality to be able to help others. (3) I want the compassion and wisdom to find encouragement in the lives of those with whom I work. (4) May I always know you are the real planner in my life. (5) May the constant concern for the lost seen in the life of Paul move me to the same commitment.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I am listening — speak to my heart: (1) "I long to see you — you can share my concern for others." (2) "My desire is for increasing strength for all my children." (3) "I move in and through the little things of life."

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. (4) *The unreached* — really the whole nation. a) *The growing cities* — the educated elite, the middle classes, and the teeming slums. b) *The Kabyle in the Djurdjura Atlas Region*. There are no longer any missionaries in the country speaking the language, and any efforts to evangelize them in their own language is a politically sensitive issue. Many live in France. c) *The Shawiya* — no known believers. d) *The Tuareg*. 1-2 believers known. No continuing work in Algeria. e) *The Mzab* oasis towns in the Sahara. No known Christians and no specific effort ever launched to evangelize them in their tight-knit communities.

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.
Through 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.
All you may need He will provide,
God will take care of you;
Nothing you ask will be denied,
God will take care of you.
No matter what may be the test,
God will take care of you;
Lean, weary one, upon His breast,
God will take care of you.
God will take care of you,
Through every day, o'er all the way;
He will take care of you,
God will take care of you.

WEEK ELEVEN

—Wednesday—

Freedom — hope — comfort — all these are mine. In obedience I find them. I here and now renew my covenant with you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I will always obey your law, forever and ever. I will walk about in freedom, for I have sought out your precepts. Remember your word to your servant, for you have given me hope. My comfort is this: your promise renews my life” (Psa. 119:44,45; 49,50).

“Nothing more effectually binds a man to the way of the Lord than an experience of the truth of his word, embodied in the form of mercies and deliverances. Not only does the Lord’s faithfulness open our mouths against his adversaries, but it also knits our hearts to his fear, and makes our union with him more and more intense” (*ibid*).

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

I have found the above sentiment to be gloriously true in my own experience. To continue from the pen and heart of Spurgeon: “Saints find no bondage in sanctity (and every Christian is a saint). The spirit of holiness is a free spirit; he sets men at liberty and enables them to resist every effort to bring them under subjection. The way of holiness is not a track for slaves, but the King’s highway for freedmen, who are joyfully journeying from the Egypt of bondage to the Canaan of rest” (*ibid*). The constant quality of hope is essential to all of life — only in yourself and your word do I find hope. Blessed be your name!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Since all these qualities are a part of your very Self and a gift to me — how is it I am so sadly lacking them from time to time? I fail to obey your law because I remove it from the upfront interests of life — I relegate it to a certain time and place and only

return to it when that time and place become a part of my life. How sad a confession is this! In you and you will we live and move and have our being — how then can we remove ourselves from you? My hope is this: your promise renews my life. Praise to your mercy and 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

All hail the power 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!

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

HIS WORD

¹³I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles. —Romans 1:13, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

There are so many blessed truths in this one verse. Paul was so very interested in people he had never seen. Notice: he had heard much about the Christians in Rome; he continually remembered them when he prayed; he is full of a tender love for them; he had often planned to visit them. Paul says in 15:22 that he was hindered from coming to Rome because he had purposed to preach where no one else had been. Perhaps this was the reason for his inability to get to Rome. Dear Lord, I am trying to understand this verse from your perspective — I’m not doing too well. Paul looked on all Christians as his brothers and

sisters — I want this same quality — but not in any superficial manner.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Paul expected results and he had them. The necessity of fruitbearing was in the mind of our Lord (John 15:1-8) and Paul had the mind of his Master. Paul could pass off a harvest of thousands of precious people with the little phrase “as I have had among the other Gentiles.” Could we do it? Do we do it? Dear Father, speak to my conscience! Do I truly believe it is essential that my life bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit — that my efforts in your service bear fruit in the lives of others? Can I leave the harvest with you and not brag about it or seek compliments? You know I ask these questions to probe my own inadequacies. 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 constant thought of others that filled the heart of Paul. (2) Thank you for the blessed word “brothers” — it so well describes all who love you. (3) Thank you for the negative answers you give to some of my prayers. (4) Thank you that I can always count on some answers from you. (5) Thank you for telling me again of the necessity of fruit bearing. (6) Thank you that someone cared enough to tell this Gentile of your love.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... just as I have had among the other Gentiles.” Paul had a harvest among the Gentiles. It was indeed a hundredfold harvest. Every one of them was taught, baptized and taught again — even as our Lord commanded. Paul wrote back from a Roman prison cell that he did indeed have a harvest — “the whole Praetorian Guard” were included. Many of the original members of the church in the imperial city were converts from the teaching of Paul. This consuming concern for the lives of men and women characterized Paul from the Damascus road to his martyrdom in Rome.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How needy I am as I stand in the presence of this bondservant of yours. (1) Dear Lord, have I ever laid plans to reap a harvest for you? Open my heart. (2) How do I look on my fellow travelers? As “brothers” or just Christian people? (3) May I first of all submit all my plans to your will. (4) Do I believe your good news has power today? I believe — help my unbelief.

(5) When people are won they belong to you — not myself. Keep me aware of this.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You through Paul speak so powerfully to my heart: (1) “All your plans are subject to my approval.” (2) “You can have the same heart of compassion you see in Paul.” (3) “The harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few.”

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. 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 active mission force has steadily declined since 1970 with a number of expulsions.* Missionaries are severely restricted in their activities. All use secular jobs for residency and as a platform for witnessing. Personal witness and discipleship, camps and Bible Study groups are the main opportunities for service. What wisdom, tact, courage and faith these servants of God need in the midst of frequent discouragements and insecurity! What sensitivity they need in tactfully helping the few groups of believers to maturity without dominating them! (3) *Literature in Arabic and especially Kabyle may not be imported.* The one Christian bookstore (United Bible Societies) may only sell literature in other languages. Pray for an end to restrictions and the wide dissemination of Christian literature, gospel cassettes and Bibles. Pray for those writing, printing and distributing literature among North Africans in Europe, and that some of this literature may be taken or sent to Algeria. (4) *Radio programs* prepared by GMU in Spain and NAM in France and transmitted by TWR in Monaco have proved the most widespread and effective means of evangelism and teaching of isolated believers. Possibly thousands have been converted in North Africa. Pray for the follow up through Radio School of the Bible (NAM), visitation, BCCs and literature. Pray that literature may not be intercepted in the post and that those receiving correspondence for Christians may be free from harassment. A BCC in Kabyle is an urgent need. The Kabyle radio programs are particularly effective.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

In shady, green pastures, so rich and so sweet,
God leads His dear children along;
Where the water's cool bathes the weary one's feet,
God leads His dear children along.
Some through the waters, some through the flood,
Some through the fire, but all through the blood;
Some through great sorrow, but God gives a song,
In the night season and all the day long.

WEEK ELEVEN

—Thursday—

*Only by laying your word on my heart
can I find comfort. Gladly do I do such
just now!*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I remember your ancient laws, O Lord, and I find comfort in them. Your decrees are the theme of my song wherever I lodge” (Psa. 119:52,54). “The comfort of the scriptures” is a New Testament concept. It is indeed a principle that shall always be true. What consolation is found in your laws! This is true only to the extent I am ready to make application of what you have said to my life. Dear Lord, I want to be open each day to receive your word with meekness. It is impressive to be able to read words that were written thousands of years ago! There are no other words available to me of such age. The preservation of your word speaks to my heart.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

In how very many places I have lodged in the past few years. I have stayed in no less than forty homes each year. The circumstances have been varied — but in no place have I failed to find this verse true: “Your decrees are (indeed) the theme of my song.” I must have a song before I can find a theme. I.e., I must feel like singing. My salvation has given me the song — each day a new theme is given to me to sing. There are endless applications of your word to my life — and I am glad to make each one.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

What a boon to the weary is memory! What a curse to the wicked! We can relive your goodness or our wickedness. It is so much better to remember some blessed promise of your word. Introspection and retrospection can produce depression and discouragement. I want to remember every promise of forgive-

ness and grace. I do not ignore my sin — I confess it and forgive it! “Saints find horror in sin, and harmony in holiness. The wicked shun the law, and the righteous sing of it” (*ibid*). It is such a comfort to know I can find forgiveness and a song any time any place.

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 song that Jesus gave me,
It was sent from heaven above;
There never was a sweeter melody,
'Tis a melody of love.
In my heart there rings a melody,
There rings a melody with heaven's harmony;
In my heart there rings a melody,
There rings a melody of love.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁴I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. ¹⁵That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome. —Romans 1:14,15, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Paul speaks out of his heart to our hearts. We have the same obligation he had. He had been sent by our Lord to the Gentiles. Some among them were wise and some were foolish, but he like our selves was obligated to all of them. The debt Paul had was to tell them of Jesus and his love. If we have a debt and the means to pay it does seem ridiculous not to pay it. Paul was not hesitant or reluctant — he was *eager* to meet his obligation.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

What is *embezzlement*? It is to spend money intended for one purpose on some other purpose. When we have the good news and we sing it — teach it — preach it to each other it does seem to me we are blood guilty of misappropriation of heavenly currency. How is it we can spend so much of our time, thought, talent and energy on ourselves and let the world go to hell? We seem eager to do almost anything but get the word to those for whom it was intended. I do believe it is much easier to speak to the wise and foolish in our generation than it was for one in Rome. Dear Lord, forgive our apathy!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the divine obligation we presently hold in our hands. (2) Thank you for the power in the message we tell. (3) Thank you for the adaptability of your word to the needs of the Greeks as well as the barbarians. (4) Thank you for your definition as to who is wise and who is foolish. (5) Thank you for the eagerness of Paul — what a challenge to all of us. (6) Thank you that there are more to be won today than when Paul was alive — what an opportunity!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel to you who are at Rome.” Paul’s obligation reached out in several directions: (1) It was first of all to his wonderful Lord. Because of the incredible price Jesus paid to save the world, Paul felt an obligation to let everyone know. Perhaps primary in his feeling of debt was the authority of his Lord. He had all authority and he had commanded world evangelism. (2) Paul was obligated to the lost — their need called out from him a response. (3) Paul was obligated to his own conscience — “woe is me if I preach not the gospel.”

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Our debt to our Lord, to the world, to ourselves, has not lessened — but our need for prayer has increased: (1) Bring into my experience those influences that will remind me again of the opportunities for evangelism all about me. (2) Remove from my heart the fear of men’s approval or disapproval. (3) Teach me all over again of the need for you in the hearts of all people — especially those I meet. (4) I want heaven’s eagerness in my own heart. (5) Give me your wisdom in communicating your message — I want it to be what it is: “good news.”

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As I want ears to be open to your message so I want my ears open to what you are saying to me in these verses: (1) “What shall I do with those who make no attempt to pay their debt to me and the lost?” (2) “Eagerness comes from devotion.” (3) “My message has not lost its power — but I have lost many messengers.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Andorra (Co-principality in the Pyrenees Mountains between France and Spain) — Points for prayer: (1) There is not one known Andorran 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. 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

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but Thou art mighty;
Hold me with Thy powerful hand;
Bread of heaven, Bread of heaven,
Feed me till I want no more,
Feed me till I want no more.
Open now the crystal fountain,
Whence the healing stream doth flow;
Let the fire and cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through;
Strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer,
Be Thou still my strength and shield,
Be Thou still my strength and shield.
When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Bear me through the swelling current,
Land me safe on Canaan’s side;
Songs of praises, songs of praises
I will ever give to Thee,
I will ever give to Thee.

WEEK ELEVEN

—Friday—

I thank you — I learn from you — you are my closest friend! I enter worship gladly!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“At midnight I rise to give you thanks for your righteous laws. I am a friend to all who fear you, to all who follow your precepts. The earth is filled with your love, O Lord; teach me your decrees” (Psa. 119:62-64). Why would anyone rise at midnight to give thanks? In particular: why would King David set this time aside? He had evidently retired earlier and awakens on purpose. He gets out of bed — perhaps to kneel as he prays. As busy as was King David he yet felt personal devotion required a prominent place in his life. I am so glad a true consideration of yourself yet produces such a response.

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

When we spend our nights in prayer and praise we will spend our days with your people. How easy it is to become very selective in our choice of companions. David said he was a friend to *all* who feared you. Dear Lord, thank you for opening my heart to this truth. If the king could companion with the rich and the poor, with the obscure and the famous, it ill behooves me to do less. I am to be able to identify your goodness in the earth about me. I am to see expressions of your love in the created world. Dear Lord, open 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

I have often risen while it was still dark — but not at midnight. I have had no occasion for such a time of worship. Open my heart to consider this as a real possibility. It is far too easy for me to withdraw and seek my own company and not share with *all* of your children — forgive this yet another expression of my selfishness. How easy it is to step out into your world

and not see it. I can have ears and not hear the sounds you have placed all about me to tell me of your love — forgive me! I am glad for this renewal of my mind as related to your mercies.

What personal sins do you want to confess? There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Out in the highways and byways of life,
Many are weary and sad;
Carry the sunshine where darkness is rife,
Making the sorrowing glad.
Make me a blessing,
Make me a blessing —
Out of my life
May Jesus shine;
Make me a blessing, O Savior, I pray,
Make me a blessing to someone today.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁶I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.
—Romans 1:16, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

There could hardly be a more climactic, pivotal verse than this one. Paul was hindered in coming to Rome — but it was not due to any embarrassment on his part with the message he had to bring. Far from it! He was proud of it and eager to tell it. The good news of our Lord's death, burial and resurrection is the very power of heaven for man's salvation. Romans were impressed with their power to conquer the world of their day. In the midst of this world Paul introduces your world saving power: your good news!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Salvation has roots — it is your grace — salvation has fruit — justification, sanctification, glorification — but the trunk of this tree is *living faith!* The belief here stated is more, much more than mere mental assent. It is trust, confidence, obedience. What is meant can best be seen in the lives of those who expressed it in the book of Acts. It was indeed to the Jews first — as on Pentecost and the temple in Jerusalem — and then to the Gentiles in Antioch and the ends of the earth — even to Rome!

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 power of the good news observed in the life of Paul. (2) Thank you that this good news is ever fresh and new. (3) Thank you for your personal interest and investment in the good news. (4) Thank you for every Christian's part in sharing the good news. (5) Thank you for the eternal record of the success of the good news as found in your word. (6) Thank you for the present need met by the good news.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . for the Jew, then for the Gentile.” How very interesting is a consideration of your own priorities. It would seem the rule “to whom much is given much is required” applies in every realm of human existence. You chose to work through one family — i.e., Abraham — one race — the Jews — one man — your Son. The principle of reaching those who are the most responsive also seems to be in action here. Among the common people of the Jewish nation our Lord was heard gladly — but those who made decisions for the nation rejected him. And so it has always been.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Lead me into a prayer time based on this incredibly important verse: (1) How do you look at America as related to world evangelism? If we will not evangelize those next door we can not fulfill your worldwide mandate in any sense. Burden my heart! (2) If we do not teach and preach the good news are we not also ashamed of it? (3) How many have been saved in the last month because I have told the good news? Does this mean anything to you? Open the eyes of my heart. (4) The Jews rejected your Son — you turned to the Gentiles — does this apply to our country? (5) Keep me full of the joy of salvation or I can not share it with anyone.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me with this power packed verse: (1) “Shame is expressed in hiding and inaction.” (2) “I see through all your excuses — and yet I love you and seek your service for me.” (3) “The whole world can be saved by any generation that takes my commission seriously.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Angola — Points for prayer: (1) *Pray for the peace of this unhappy land.* Many areas 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 freedom for the gospel and a government that honors 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 spiritual needs in Namibia; most of the refugees are being evangelized for the first time. Efforts are being made for the evangelization of the refugees in Zambia; there are over 50 assemblies of Chokwe refugees among them! (3) *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. (4) *Some missionaries of Africa Evangelical Fellowship, African Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Brethren still work in the country, but often with restrictions on their ministry.* In some areas they may not preach; in others they face danger in traveling in war zones, shortages and many trials. Pray for them, and pray for reinforcements and the issuing of necessary visas. The number of workers needed will greatly increase should peace come to the land. (5) *Radio broadcasts reach the land in three languages from TWR in Swaziland.*

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of His grace.
Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease,
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life and health and peace.
He breaks the power of canceled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood availed for me.
Hear Him, ye deaf; His praise, ye dumb,
Your loosened tongues employ;
Ye blind, behold your Savior come;
And leap, ye lame, for joy.
My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad,
The honors of Thy name.

WEEK ELEVEN

—Saturday—

It was good for me to be afflicted. I am learning this more and more in worship of you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word. You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees. It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees. The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold” (Psa. 119:67,68; 71,72). “Often our trials act as a thorn hedge to keep us in the good pasture, but our prosperity is a gap through which we go astray. If any of us remember a time in which we had no trouble, we also probably recollect that then grace was law, and temptation was strong” (*ibid*).

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

The qualities of yourself in these verses are indeed valuable: (1) You can turn affliction to our good and your glory. (2) Goodness is the essence of your very being. (3) You are a teacher — your decrees are what is taught. (4) You have a personal interest in each one who is being taught. (5) You can help us to appreciate the value of your law. In each of these attributes I want to lift my heart in praise. Give me the wisdom to make application of your word and your providence to my own life. Whatever I decide I *know* you are good and goodness is the purpose in all your ways.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

It would seem to me that I have gone astray afflicted or not. However — you know just how much affliction is good for each of us. My life has not been one of affliction — at least from my evaluation. I know you know my deepest needs and it is enough. Forgive

my laxness even in affliction — to say nothing of times of prosperity. I do want to learn from every experience of life something new about your decrees. There are times when I forget and my heart becomes callous — the sharp pain of affliction gets my attention. Thank you — but forgive the need for it.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to Thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁷For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.” —Romans 1:17, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, you know I tremble within to attempt any kind of interpretation of this great verse. I simply cast myself upon you and ask that I might understand just a little of all involved in the provision and promise made here. In the good news is a means of provision for your righteousness and ours. You can be both just or righteous and a justifier — One who declares as righteous. The promise of right standing before you is appropriated by our faith. Faith is the center and circumference of our righteousness. Our whole life with you is dependent on our faith.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

If there ever was a verse to lift the heart this is it! In my personal acceptance of the death of Christ for my sins is a means by which I can stand before you just as if I had never sinned. This does *not* free me from the responsibility of living for him who died for me — indeed it motivates me to do all I can to please him — out of sheer gratitude if for no other reason. It is from my personal faith I receive all I have in my standing before you. My whole life in your presence comes from faith. Needless to say this is a living, active, obedient faith — there is no other kind. 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 first of all and most of all for the good news — without it we would have nothing and be nothing. (2) Thank you for the freedom we have in knowing we can be righteous in your sight — and in our own conscience. (3) Thank you for the wonderful letter of Paul on the subject of justification by faith — even his epistle to the Romans — yea, to all Christians. (4) Thank you for the constant revelation of righteousness — ever before me and above me and within me. (5) Thank you that even now I live by faith.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“The righteous will live by faith.” What a wonder: to be alive and righteous! We are alive from our death in trespasses and sins. We stand before your bar of justice in the righteousness of your Son. We do feel like the prodigal son who came home. The father of that beautiful story well represents us when he says: “my son who was dead is alive.” We have on our backs the best robe in the father’s house. The crimson robe of righteousness. We have on our hand the ring of recognition in the form of the Holy Spirit. It is surely right to be glad and celebrate!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What requests can I make in the presence of such love? (1) Enable me to every day relive the power of the good news in my own life. (2) I want the wisdom to be a messenger of this good news to all my friends. (3) It is a deep source of comfort to know you look on me as righteous and retain your own righteousness. May I be able to express this to you in praise. (4) I believe; help my unbelief — it is almost too good to be true! (5) I want to enter into the joy of being alive from eternal death!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

If ever there was one verse that could speak to my heart it would be this one: (1) “Do you really know what a treasure you have in the gospel?” (2) “Why do you fluctuate in your attitude toward me? I do not do that with my attitude toward you.” (3) “Do you think you should be happier than Lazarus who was raised from physical death? Then act like it!”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Angola — Points for prayer: (1) *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. (2) *The churches in the war-ravaged center and south* continue to meet together. Many have to function in incredibly difficult situations — famine, destruction, loss of believers who “disappear” to fight, lack of leaders, lack of money to buy Bibles, etc. A few Bible schools still manage to carry on. (3) *Literature and Bibles are scarce* and in great demand. Pray for the supplies entering from Namibia, Canada, Portugal and Brazil, that these books and Bibles may reach those who need them. Many Spanish Bibles have also been taken in for distribution among the Cubans.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

The love of God is greater far
Than tongue or pen can ever tell,
It goes beyond the highest star
And reaches to the lowest hell;
The guilty pair, bowed down with care,
God gave His Son to win:
His erring child He reconciled
And pardoned from his sin.
When years of time shall pass away
And earthly thrones and kingdoms fall,
When men, who here refuse to pray,
On rocks and hills and mountains call,
God’s love so sure shall still endure,
All measureless and strong:
Redeeming grace to Adam’s race —
The saints’ and angels’ song.
Could we with ink the ocean fill
And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill
And every man a scribe by trade,
To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry,
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky.

WEEK TWELVE

—Sunday—

*Jesus never fails — and you love me —
how welcome I must be in your
presence!*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“May your unfailing love be my comfort, according to your promise to your servant, Let your compassion come to me that I may live, for your law is my delight” (Psa. 119:76,77). You are the fountain of everlasting love — and a love expressed in such a way as to give personal comfort to each of your children.

This quality is expressed in other translations as “merciful kindness.” These words are a happy combination — “They express exactly what we need in affliction: mercy to forgive sin, and kindness to sustain under sorrow. With these we can be comfortable in the cloudy and dark days, and without them we are wretched indeed” (*ibid*).

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

The King James version calls “compassion” “tender mercies.” This is a dear sweet expression. David was hard pressed in his life when he wrote these words. He despaired of his very life and felt if you did not intervene he would die. Is this not my condition each day? I do live by your tender mercies. I find peace in looking up to you as One who looks upon me with deep compassionate interest. It is out of your word I will find the source of delight. “To delight in the word when it rebukes us, is proof that we are profiting under it” (*ibid*).

How do you personally relate to the tender mercies of God, and God who is Compassion? 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 accept your unfailing love and find comfort in such a position. At the same time am I ready to serve you, or just to enjoy your gifts of mercy? If I am truly your servant then I must believe you expect me to take an interest in what pleases you. I

belong to you. The conduct of my life speaks loud and clear that full many a time I act as if I belonged to myself and none other. Dear Lord, forgive. A servant has but one master — else both he and his master suffer. The master I must overcome before I can serve you adequately is my own self. 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

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

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

HIS WORD

¹⁸The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, —Romans 1:18, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

“The whole world lieth in the evil one.” Indeed the description given in verses 18 through 32 pictures the Gentile world in which we live. Such sins are not ignored by yourself. Your judgment is already being expressed against them — and shall be expressed on the last day. Nothing happens on earth that is not known in heaven. Your disapproval of sin is built right into the act of sinning — sin is self destructive. There are only two types of sin, “ungodliness” — i.e., sin against your Person — and “unrighteousness” i.e., sin against your law.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Man today wants to leave you and your law out of his life. I believe your truth — i.e., the truth of your very being is implicit in man — indeed a part of the image of yourself man's right of creation. It is possible to suppress this fact — and men do it constantly. Not without the aid of the evil one. This is the antithesis of what I want to do. I want to include you in all of my life — every minute of it. I want to constantly meditate on your law — day and night. I want your truth to be heralded forth from my life. Break all the shackles of hesitancy and give me the liberty of speech and thought!

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 assurance that there will be a balance in good and evil. (2) Thank you that heaven does not ignore sin and evil. (3) Thank you for the solid assurance that evil is self-defeating. (4) Thank you for the desire to worship — a part of the nature of all men. (5) Thank you for your word that tells me where to direct my worship. (6) Thank you that the truth can never be finally suppressed.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... who suppress the truth by their wickedness.” If one knows the truth and yet acts contrary to it they themselves will feel a sense of suppression. Far from being ignorantly innocent these persons act against their own conscience. It is impossible to suppress the truth if one does not have the truth. A continual practice of such suppression will produce a callousness and indifference to truth. Continued long enough rationalization sets in and they exchange the truth of God for a lie. Professing themselves to be wise they become fools.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Surely there is much cause for prayer here. (1) Keep me aware that your wrath is just as real as your love. (2) Since your word contains a record of this revelation of your wrath open my eyes to see it. (3) May we be as impressed with your greatness on earth as the angels are in heaven. (4) Keep me constantly aware that no sin is ignored by you. (5) Sensitize my heart to the terribleness of the sin of irreverence.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me from your word and heaven: (1) “My wrath is being revealed from heaven against sin right

now — i.e., if you have eyes to see it.” (2) “The one primary sin is leaving me out of life.” (3) “My truth is always ready to be released.”

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. Pray for a fervent evangelistic spirit among the believers and a willingness to witness to the Roman Catholic majority. (3) *Leadership training* — there is a need for godly theologians and pastors who will stand for the truth in the Argentinian context. Many theological colleges emphasize humanism, liberation theology and social action rather than the preaching of the Word. The Protestant Church is largely evangelical, but could be influenced by such teaching. (4) *Missions.* The greatest need is for mature missionaries able to assist the Church in Bible teaching, church planting and imparting a missionary vision. (5) *The missionary vision of the Argentinian Church is small but growing.* A number of evangelical and Pentecostal churches support missionaries in Argentina and abroad. Pray for this vision to grow despite the economic difficulties in the land.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home!
Under the shadow of Thy throne
Thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
And our defense is sure.
Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting Thou art God,
To endless years the same.
A thousand ages in Thy sight
Are like an evening gone;
Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun,
Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly, forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the op'ning day.
O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while life shall last,
And our eternal home.

WEEK TWELVE

—Monday—

Your mercy and goodness is new every morning — and every time I enter the closet of prayer.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“My eyes fail, looking for your promise; I say, ‘When will you comfort me?’ Though I am like a wineskin in the smoke, I do not forget your decrees” (Psa. 119:82,83). Dear Lord, I praise you for those in years gone by who praised you in such beautiful words: “To read this word till the eyes can no longer see is but a small thing compared with watching for the fulfillment of the promise till the inner eyes of expectancy begin to grow dim with hope deferred. . . . this experience of waiting and fainting is well known by full-grown saints, and it teaches them many precious lessons which they would never learn by any other means” (ibid).

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

“The skins used for containing wine, when emptied, were hung up in the tent, and when the tent reeked with smoke the skins grew black and sooty, and in the heat they became wrinkled and worn. The Psalmist’s face through sorrow had become dark and dismal, furrowed and lined; indeed his whole body had so sympathized with his sorrowing mind as to have lost its native moisture, and to have become like a skin dried and tanned” (ibid). Is David using poetic license to describe something that really never happened? Is he only piously exaggerating? Dear Lord, no, no! We are so far below the measure of his devotion we are confused with such love. Forgive me!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

“What a metaphor for a man to use who was certainly a poet, a divine, and a master in Israel, if not a king, and a man after God’s own heart! It is little

wonder if we, commoner folk, are made to think very little of ourselves, and are filled with darkness of mind” (ibid). Yea, I am indeed filled with distress of mind that I was not filled with much more distress of mind. My eyes have often turned away to other things if I did not see almost an immediate fulfillment of your promise. Dear Lord, what a terrible sin — forgive me. I do want to remember your decrees — often today may I do it!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see
And in Thy presence rest.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁹since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. ²⁰For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. —Romans 1:19,20, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

“Even entirely apart from special revelation through the gospel, which ever so many Gentiles have never heard, God has made himself known and continues to do so by means of his general revelation in nature, history, and conscience; here, as the sequel indicates, with emphasis on God’s revelation in nature: that is, in ‘creation.’ ” (Hendricksen). If Gentiles without your word are without excuse what shall we say of us Gentiles who have both revelations of yourself? There

are three things about yourself I can know from what you have created: (1) You are invisible; (2) you have eternal power; (3) you are divine, i.e., far above and apart from man.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Lord I want to learn all I can by my observation of your handiwork. Tonight I want to contemplate the heavens and think again how vast — how immeasurably immense is the cosmos in which we are but an infinitesimal speck! Turn my eyes downward to the grass under my feet. I want to lift one blade of grass and pause to think of the One who could fashion such a lovely thing! What of the mystery of growth from the seed to this plant? What of the marvelous means you have for watering such a plant? Dear Lord, I worship in wonder before you.

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you that your invisible qualities have always been knowable. (2) Thank you that even now I can appreciate these lovely qualities of yourself. (3) Thank you for the concern you have for all men of all time inasmuch you have given them two revelations of yourself. (4) Thank you for your incredible eternal power — observable anytime I want to look. (5) Thank you for your “other worldly” nature — it gives me hope and peace. (6) Thank you that you have left us with evidence and no excuses.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . so that these people are without excuse.” Is Paul saying that the whole world is without excuse for their sin? There hardly seems to be another conclusion. If the wages of sin is eternal death then indeed the world is lost! Even at the best when these Gentiles who have not the law do by nature things required by the law they do not obey perfectly and therefore sin and are therefore lost. How very much is the gospel needed! What a debt we have to pay! Dear Lord, open our hearts!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the face of this overwhelming need what are my requests? (1) Only in the good news do we find your dynamic for salvation — I want to tell it today — give me the opportunity. (2) Deepen my appreciation of the revelation of yourself in my observation of your handiwork. (3) I need wisdom in telling others of your eternal power. (4) If you said “men are without excuse” then they are without excuse — crystalize my

convictions on this truth. (5) How much more meaningful is the message of the gospel when we consider how many men do not have it. Keep this fact up front in my mind.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to my conscience with this text: (1) “More truth is being suppressed today than when Paul wrote these words — there are more men.” (2) “In the face of this need what will you do?” (3) “You have less excuse than many men.”

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 of believers’ children to the world. (3) *The “Allianza Cristiana 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.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

This is my Father’s world,
And to my listening 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.
This is my Father’s world,
The birds their carols raise,
The morning light, the lily white,
Declare their Maker’s praise.
This is my Father’s world:
He shines in all that’s fair;
In the rustling grass I hear Him pass,
He speaks to me everywhere.

WEEK TWELVE

—Tuesday—

Salvation — right here and right now are mine. Renew this blessed fact.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Save me, for I am yours; I have sought out your precepts. The wicked are waiting to destroy me, but I will ponder your statutes” (Psa. 119:94,95). We are yours by creation, election, redemption, surrender, and acceptance; and therefore our hope is firm that you will save us. “A man will surely save his own child: Lord save me” (*ibid*). This one grand quality of yourself is ever before us: you are the total source of our salvation. Saving is inseparately linked with seeking. I have a strong desire to open your word and meditate upon your precepts. Indeed even now I am doing so. This but indicates my need and your interest in me, yea, your *love* 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

There is such comfort and encouragement in repeating this blessed little phrase: “*I am yours . . .*” I praise you and thank you for all it means. In how many ways I do belong to you. Bless your name! I am not ignoring the efforts of the wicked. They do wait to destroy me. The psalmist was so calm in face of such danger he could ‘ponder’ your word; he was so victorious over all their plots that he did not allow them to drive him from his devotion or contemplation.” (*Ibid*). Dear Lord, may I follow in his train! I believe in your precepts I will find my salvation.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

There are times I do not want to be saved, i.e., my selfishness is my preoccupation and I resent your interruption. Dear Lord, what a sad confession — but it is true. How like a spoiled child I have acted! But still I am reminded that I am your child and I do want to

claim my heritage. How good it would be if I but had the same desire to seek your precepts or to ponder your statutes that I have just now — but it is not always so. Forgive me. Remember that I am dust. Renew my mind and transform my attitudes.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

O to 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.
O to be like Thee! O to be like Thee,
Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art!
Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fulness;
Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart.

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

HIS WORD

²¹For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²²Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. —Romans 1:21-23, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Here is an explanation as to how the Gentiles have suppressed the truth. Such persons knew there was a God and also knew you were powerful and super-human. However you were not at all honored as such and no thanks was given to you. The fundamental sin of man is to posit a position that leaves you out. Any such position produces futility. How true is this principle in all of life. Such persons are identified by

yourself as fools! The longer one pursues such a course the more foolish and darkened is their mind. Their wisdom is turned into foolishness.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

It would be easy to relegate all these words to someone else and forget that this attitude can be practiced by anyone. Do I always glorify you as God and give thanks? Where is the unbroken fellowship I long to share with you? Dear Lord, deliver me from any claim of wisdom except it be in you and your word. The word "glory" as used here is so important. It refers to your essential being. You are traded for idols — images of man, birds, beasts and snakes. It seems hard to believe — but it is so tragically true! The heart as described in your word is my mind; my emotions; my will and my conscience. Enlighten it with your word!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you that I can and do know you — I want to honor you with my whole heart. (2) Deepen my appreciation for yourself — I thank you for what I now know. (3) Thank you that my thinking can have eternal meaning. (4) Thank you for your identity of the fools of this earth. (5) Thank you that your foolishness is wiser than all the wisdom of men. (6) Thank you for your essential Being — what a joy to worship you. (7) Thank you that I can identify the real value of your creation.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images . . .” What a sad choice! “They exchanged their glory — God was Israel’s glory — for the image of an ox that munches grass” (Psalm 106:20). The prophet Jeremiah said: “Has any nation ever changed (its) gods, though they were not (even) gods? But my people have changed their glory for something that is of no benefit whatsoever” (Jeremiah 2:11). (After Hendricksen.) There is a nation much closer to home who has done the same thing. The images we have are of men or what men can give. Sex, food and money are our gods. Of themselves they can not satisfy.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

If I am ever to know you I must be honest with myself. I come to you in prayer seeking such honesty: (1) I do know you intellectually — I want to know you with my total self. (2) I want to let you be God — i.e., in every sense of the word. (3) My thankful

praise does arise before you from my heart. (4) Give me the courage to accept your definition of a fool. (5) Wisdom comes down from yourself — I want that wisdom — I ask believing you want to give it to me. (6) Deliver me from all idols.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

If ever I needed to hear your voice through your word it is now! (1) “You glorify me when my attributes are seen in your character.” (2) “You are unavoidably a reflection of the one you truly worship.” (3) “Worship requires time, thought, talent, energy, whatever receives such is your God.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Argentina — Points for prayer: (1) *The immigrant minority Churches* make up approx. 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. (2) *The less evangelized peoples and areas:* a) The sparsely inhabited Patagonia in the south, and the north and west of Argentina. b) The 500,000 Jews, most of whom live in the environs of Buenos Aires. c) The urban slum areas. (3) *The Amerindians of the Chaco in the north have been responding to the gospel.* Pockets of animism remain. Pray for Bible translation work in nine of the 21 Indian languages. Pray for effective integration of these Christians into national life. Gospel Recordings International has recordings in all nine languages.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Day by day and with each passing moment,
Strength I find to meet my trials here;
Trusting in my Father’s wise bestowment,
I’ve no cause for worry or for fear.
He whose heart is kind beyond all measure
Gives unto each day what He deems best —
Lovingly, its part of pain and pleasure,
Mingling toil with peace and rest.
Every day the Lord Himself is near me
With a special mercy for each hour;
All my cares He fain would bear, and cheer me,
He whose name is Counsellor and Power.
The protection of His child and treasure
Is a charge that on Himself He laid;
“As your days, your strength shall be in measure,”
This the pledge to me He made.

WEEK TWELVE

—Wednesday—

I am so encouraged with your invitation to ask and receive abundant wisdom. I do so just now.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts” (Psa.

119:98,100). The commands were his book, but God was his teacher . . . wisdom is knowledge put to practical use. Wisdom comes to us through *obedience* . . . “If any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine” (*ibid*). Indeed, indeed, I have found this true! My enemies are ever with me — but you are always closer than my enemies. Thank you for being One who is always with me and always ready to direct my feet.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

I recognize the meaning of the term “ancients” or “elders” as here used. If one much younger and inexperienced can by your precepts be more understanding than these men — what does this say about them? It says quite plainly that they do not know or meditate upon your word. Once again understanding stands on the other side of obedience. If I were to choose one quality out of these two verses and lift it up to you in praise it would be that you are an intelligent Being. All the knowledge or wisdom of men is but a faint and poor reflection of yourself. Praise your name.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

My confession, like my praise is single: I fail to obey your precepts — I refuse to follow your statutes. As a result you appear distant and unreal to me. As a result I do not have your light on my path — there is no illumination on my way. Forgive me. I am learning — but I have yet much to learn. Such learning is for my own protection; without it I am open to my

enemy. Forgive me for following the poor example of those who we assume should know when the clear evidence is they do not. Worse than this; forgive me for justifying my actions because of others.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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.
Glory to His name,
Glory to His name!
There to my heart was the blood applied;
Glory to His name.

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

HIS WORD

²⁴Therefore God gave them over to the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁵They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator — who is forever praised. Amen. —Romans 1:24,25, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

There is a very close connection between idolatry and immorality. When one chooses to worship himself sex is not far under the surface. Paul’s word speaks so directly to our society. There is something separately serious about the little phrase “God gave them over” — repeated three times (24,26,28). It is not without great reluctance you do this. The example of those in the days of Noah or even the notorious Jezebel all testify to your longsuffering patience. The beautiful expression in I Peter 3:20 speaks to this point: “*the patience of God waited.*” Thank you for your patience.

May it not become a license for licentiousness.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

In my need I want to be reminded often of the other side of the coin. *There is an end to your waiting!* "Mercy unrequited produces wrath." The awesome fact is that vile passions can become an uncontrollable monster. The wrath of yourself here and hereafter is promised as a result of such sin. I want to read again and again Col. 3:5,6, as well as: II Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 5:3; I Thess. 4:7. Dear Lord, *this is serious — deadly — damning* — may I treat it as such!

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 unambiguous statement that there is an end to your mercy — sinful desires *can* overcome our whole life. (2) Thank you that you consider sexual impurity to be just that: *impure — dirty*. Man calling dirty clean does not change it. (3) Thank you for the plain promise that such sexual practice will degrade our bodies — what a warning! (4) Thank you for the clear delineation of responsibility — a choice was made — "the truth of God for a lie." (5) Thank you that I can learn, if I will, from this sinful spectacle.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... *the Creator — who is blessed forever — or forever blessed. Amen.*" How very interesting is the designation "Creator." This is much more than just deity. Here is One who originates; here is where thought becomes fact. We are considering One who lives forever — and who deserves our praise — our worship throughout eternity. This portion of the verse is a benediction — one I gladly lift up before you. In all these thoughts I can gladly concur. I therefore say with Paul a hearty "Amen," i.e., "so be it." It is a settled fact you are the Creator of all things — you deserve our adoration forever.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How shall I pray through these verses? (1) Open my understanding as to the connection between the conscious and the subconscious as related to sin. (2) Show me again what terrible futility results in the worship of the creature. (3) Impress me again with the satisfaction I find in worshipping yourself. (4) Our bodies and ourselves are separate — but cannot be separated in either sin or service. Keep me aware of this fact. (5) Teach me how to more adequately express my praise for your creative nature.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

If ever there was a contemporary word it is here: (1) "Sexual impurity always degraded those who practiced it — and it always will." (2) "You can now make the happy exchange of a lie for the truth." (3) "Worship is service — action, decision."

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. (3) *The Evangelicals are strong in the Sydney Anglican diocese*, and in the mainline churches, several have evangelical majorities while all 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. (4) *The witness among the 332,000 students in the 79 universities and colleges*. Various groups are active — AFES (IFES), Student Life, Navigators, etc., and few colleges are without witnessing fellowships. Pray for these key ministries. Pray for witness among overseas students; one of the most active is the Overseas Chinese Fellowship. (5) *Young people*. The Inter-Schools Christian Fellowship has a valuable ministry in secondary schools. Many groups, such as Youth For Christ, God Squad, etc., are now evangelizing among young people.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down;
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,
All Thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.
Come, almighty to deliver,
Let us all Thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Nevermore Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray and praise Thee without ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.

WEEK TWELVE

—Thursday—

Please, please direct my anger — to evil — to the enemy — relax my relationship with those I love.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path. I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws. Accept, O Lord, the willing praise of my mouth, and teach me your laws” (Psa. 119:104,106,108). There would be no understanding for us if it did not begin in yourself. “If the Lawgiver were foolish his laws would be the same. We are wise if we obey and we grow wiser by our obedience” (*ibid*). It is not enough to know that wrong is wrong — I must *hate it!* Only when I develop strong aversion to sin will I respond properly in temptation.

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

Mistrusting my fickle mind I pledge myself to the vows my Lord has placed upon me. My baptism declares that I have died and have been buried — his Supper tells the world that I accept his death for my death. My acceptance of my Lord was an enlistment in his army — a declaration that we are bound to be loyal soldiers throughout the war. How beautiful is this little phrase “the *willing* praise of my mouth.” By a multitude of motivations you have indeed made me a willing, glad, eager worshipper of yourself. Blessed be your name.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

My understanding of your precepts is surely lacking if it does not develop within me a continual hatred of *every wrong path*. Such has not always happened — forgive me. My Lord warned me as to the danger of taking oaths — he has already bound me to himself by all he has done for me. Or has he? Your mercies

have not always led me to present my body as a living sacrifice. Dear Lord, why is it? Forgive me and deepen my love! I am not at all willing — I am very unwilling — such is my honest confession of stubborn selfishness. Forgive me — I am glad I can and do improve — but most of all for your cleansing!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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.
Precious name, O how sweet!
Hope of earth and joy of heaven,
Precious name, O how sweet —
Hope of earth and joy of heaven.

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

HIS WORD

²⁶Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. —Romans 1:26,27, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

These words represent many people in Paul's day — they also describe your action toward all those since the first century. How many are involved today in such a condition only you would know. At what point in time did you decide “enough is enough”? The record of your patience as found in your word is our only reliable criterion. It would seem that Paul felt

lesbianism was an extreme form of "shameful lusts." Should we have a different attitude about this sin than the one here adopted by yourself?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Are homosexuals happy? Is there anything gay about such a lifestyle? The "due penalty" in themselves is found in : guilt, sleeplessness, emotional stress and depression. The epidemic of venereal disease is also a very real part of the penalty due. Sin, particularly in this area, is self-destructive. At the same time we need to remember Paul wrote this letter from one of the centers of such practices — i.e., Corinth — and he says of them: "*but such were some of you*" — but you were washed, you were justified; you were sanctified. If it could happen then and there it can happen here and now! Praise your powerful 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 we can be ashamed — in this we can find change. (2) Thank you for the strong desires that can be directed toward you instead of sin. (3) Thank you for the clear cut heterosexual statement in this text. (4) Thank you for the joy of sex in marriage — and the warning of the shame that comes from sex outside of marriage. (5) Thank you for your definition of perversion. (6) Thank you for this warning of love.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... receiving in themselves the due penalty of their perversion." Your laws have a way of fulfilling themselves. Perversion *does* have a penalty. There is no payment more severe than the one paid by the spirit — or within the spirit of man. Perhaps the most obvious form is *guilt*. Men and women are today running in the excess of immorality and are denying they feel any guilt at all. We must accept the fact that your presence and greatness are a part of man's essential being. Naturally the term "guilt" would not be used — but there is an uneasiness — a futility — a depression — an anger that can be defined in no other way but *guilt*.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How can I pray for the tragic circumstance found here? (1) I do not want to be ashamed — it is a sad feeling — give me the liberty of forgiveness. (2) Turn all my strong desires to you and your Son. (3) How beautiful is everyone and all of life when you are in it. (4) Sex of itself is clean and good — open my heart

— yea, the eyes of my heart to see it that way. (5) Homosexuality is here plainly called perversion and sin, and yet I am to love such sinners — even as you do. Help me. (6) Sensitize my memory that I may know all your laws have payments — good and bad.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Surely there are messages in these verses for me: (1) "I will give people over — even today to their sin — i.e., if they insist on it." (2) "Sex is pure and a joy with no guilt to those who love me." (3) "You can see about you and within you the immutable operation of my word."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Australia — Points for prayer: (1) *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. (2) *The 166,000 indigenous Aborigines* have suffered much in their contacts with Western culture, and their political and land rights have become a major political issue. Some have adapted and have been absorbed into the life of the nation, but many have sunk into moral and spiritual degradation, and others have retreated into the more inaccessible and inhospitable parts of the country. Yet in the last eight years an indigenous revival movement in the north has spread through parts of the west and center of the country with thousands being soundly converted. (3) *Christian radio and television* could be more effectively utilized by Evangelicals through the national and local broadcasting networks, who are required, by law, to give a percentage of time weekly to religious broadcasts.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
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.
Let every kindred, every tribe,
On this terrestrial ball;
To Him all majesty ascribe,
And crown Him Lord of all.
O that with yonder sacred throng
We at His feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song,
And crown Him Lord of all.

WEEK TWELVE

—Friday—

Only you can give me a willingness — I bow to receive your gracious gift.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Accept, O Lord, the willing praise of my mouth, and teach me your laws. My heart is set on keeping your decrees to the end. Uphold me, and I will be delivered; I will always have regard for your decrees” (Psa. 119:108,112,117). It is one thing to praise you — it is something else to be eager to do so. “God’s revenues are not derived from forced taxation; but from freewill gifts. There can be no acceptance where there is no willingness; there is no work of free grace where there is no fruit of free will” (*ibid*). When such an attitude prevails then it is easy for you to be our teacher. How glad I am for this clear view of how to learn from yourself.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

We could say of David as we want to say of ourselves: “He had by prayer, and meditation, and resolution made his whole being lean towards God’s commands; or as we would say in other words — the grace of God had inclined him to incline his heart in a sanctified direction” (*ibid*). Dear Lord, I want to do the same! A very few months ago I thought my end had arrived. I am glad to say my heart was set on keeping your laws. Dear Lord, uphold me that when the end of my life does arrive I will be delivered into your eternal presence.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Accept, O Lord, the willing confession of my mouth that I have not been at all willing to praise you at all times. I want to, but I am distracted by the “this” and the “that” of living. Forgive me. My heart does so fluctuate that there are indeed times when it is not at all set on keeping your statutes. I will be saved out

of your mercy or not saved at all. I know your grace — I claim your righteousness — offered freely — but not cheaply. Unless you lift me up I shall be utterly cast down. I lift up the banner of love and stand under it.

What personal sins do you want to confess? There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Under His wings I am safely abiding,
Though the night deepens and tempests are wild;
Still I can trust Him — I know He will keep me,
He has redeemed me and I am His child.
Under His wings, under His wings,
Who from His love can sever?
Under His wings my soul shall abide,
Safely abide forever.

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

HIS WORD

²⁸Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.
—Romans 1:28, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

There is something so fundamental here that I want to pause long to assimilate it. You are being left out of man’s thinking. This is a very serious choice — when such happens the mind becomes depraved. This is the third and last time the expression “God gave them over” appears. Until you are admitted to the citadel of the mind you have no influence in the life. It would seem that ordinarily you are in the business of moving the thoughts of men in the right direction — but here we learn there comes a time when we are left to ourselves and Satan.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

This is surely one awesome thought. I do not even like to entertain it — but it is so very obviously true. The depraved mind is the mind without yourself. The mind that operates for years without you becomes set or turned in such a manner that it is almost impossible to influence it. But it all began with a choice. Was it the parents who made this terrible choice for their children? The denigrating of the Bible and God in our humanistic culture is the environment out of which such a condition comes.

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

Only in a reversal of such a verse can we lift up our hearts in thanksgiving: (1) Thank you I have been shown time after time how good it is to have you up front in my thinking. (2) Thank you that you expect us to use our minds in your praise and service. (3) Thank you that you are always at work in the “little things” of life to turn our hearts to you. (4) Thank you that sin is here described as subnormal or abnormal. (5) Thank you that the true balance of life is found when you are in our thoughts.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.” It is most remarkable that you do tell us through your inspired writers what ought, and ought not, to be done. At the same time all actions proceed from the mind. So if we do what is right it is because our thinking is right — if we do what ought not to be done it is because our thinking is wrong. So we become fully responsible for our actions. We need to not discount Satan in all this discussion. The evil one has no more influence over us than we are ready to give him. A refusal to have you in our thinking is tantamount to having Satan direct our lives.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In this one verse there is a multitude of requests: (1) I want to review often the benefits of having you in my mind. (2) Increase my knowledge of yourself — even this day. (3) Please interfere with Satan’s efforts to get my mind off yourself. (4) If I do not give you over in preference to Satan you will never give me over to my choice — what a comforting thought! (5) It is also a comfort to know I can do the things I ought do, i.e., just for today.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me from these sobering words: (1) “A high

estimate of Me is essential to a high estimate of life.” (2) “I live in your body in the Person of the Holy Spirit — but I operate through your mind.” (3) “As a man thinketh in his heart so he is.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Australia — Point for prayer: *Unreached peoples* — both among the indigenous inhabitants and the four million non-British post-war immigrants and their families. Pray for these local churches with an active ministry to such communities and also for the work of ECM among the European minorities. a) *Aborigine tribes* — only a few isolated groups have failed to respond to the very considerable missionary effort now being made all over the country. b) *Many people in the working-class urban areas* and in isolated mining and farming communities in the vast interior, north-west and north have had no contact with the true gospel c) *Muslims* — around 300,000, with 200,000 living in the Sydney area. The majority of this diverse community is Arab-speaking; 200,000 from Lebanon, Egypt, etc.; others are Turkish (30,000), Yugoslav, etc. Small beginnings are being made to reach these peoples, and there are Arabic and Turkish-speaking groups of believers. d) *Chinese* 160,000 (30,000 being refugees from Vietnam). About 20% of the Chinese are Christian in name, others are secular or adhere to the various Chinese traditional religions. There are lively groups of believers in the cities and among overseas Chinese students in universities. Pray for a complete evangelization of the non-Christians and the newly arrived refugees. e) *Vietnamese* 28,000. Mostly refugees recently arrived. There are a few Christian congregations. Asia Evangelistic Fellowship is expanding a ministry to meet the spiritual needs of Asian communities in each state. f) *The Yugoslavs* are ethnically diverse, and most still retain the use of their mother tongue; Croation 70,000; Serbian 35,000; Macedonian 70,000; etc. They originate from one of Europe’s least evangelized countries. There are very few believers among them. g) *Jews* (78,000) — half live in Melbourne, but relatively few have become Christian. h) *Southern Europeans*. Many second and third generation settlers have assimilated into English-speaking Australian society. Many, however, still use their original languages: Italian 450,000; Greek 230,000; Polish 90,000; Spanish 60,000; Maltese 60,000. These represent strategic minorities that, if evangelized and motivated, could make a decisive impact for God on their lands of origin. [Note: these population figures are now a few years old, and may have changed considerably among the Asian refugees.]

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Christ has for sin atonement made —
What a wonderful Savior!
We are redeemed, the price is paid —
What a wonderful Savior!

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

WEEK TWELVE

—Saturday—

Fear and hope are my honest estimate of your greatness and my weakness — most of all my need!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“My flesh trembles in fear of you; I stand in awe of your laws. I am your servant; give me discernment that I may understand your statutes. Because I love your commands more than gold, more than pure gold, and because I consider all your precepts right, I hate every wrong path” (Psa. 119:120,125,127,128).

“True worship consists in a proper mixture of *fear* of God, and *hope* in his mercy; and whenever either of these is entirely wanting, there can be no true worship” (Edward Payson). It is indeed true here what God has joined together we must not put asunder.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

I have examined and wondered at your power and mercy. Just here I read of your ability to give me understanding. Out of your love you can teach me. Indeed such instruction is being accomplished day by day as I pause here before you and your word in worship. I can not read it enough: “*Because I love your commands more than gold . . . I hate every wrong path.*” If I do not hate the wrong path it is because I do not love as I ought. Thank you for this insight — which seems so obvious and yet is neglected.

How do you personally relate to the right paths 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 tremble here and now what will happen at judgment? Indeed when I consider your laws there is nothing else I can do but tremble. I have not kept them. I do love them but I also fail in keeping them. It is only out of your love I will be taught any thing. I must cast myself on your mercy. It is a lack of constant consideration of your precepts that causes me to take a wrong path. For today I shall renew my loving examination of your word. I want just the balance

your wisdom can give me between justice and mercy — law and grace. Help me.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Come, Thou Fount of 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

²⁹They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. —Romans 1:29-31, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Here is a list of twenty-one sins. I agree with many others who have looked lovingly at your word: there are three groups. The first of four sins: (1) unrighteousness, (2) wickedness, (3) greed, (4) depravity. Then a group of five: (1) envy, (2) murder, (3) strife, (4) deceit and (5) malice. And finally a group of twelve: (1) gossips, (2) slanderers, (3) haters of God, (4) insolent, (5) arrogant, (6) boastful, (7) inventors of new ways of doing evil, (8) disobedient to parents, (9) senseless, (10) faithless, (11) loveless, (12) pitiless. It does become interesting when we look in vain for one sexual sin in this list. Such has been treated earlier. I

want to look at each one and ask: "Lord, is it I?"

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

It will not be difficult to identify with these sinners — and their sins. I am not at all involved in some of these sins some of the time, but I am at least implicitly involved in some of them some of the time. Dear Lord, speak to my conscience! Wickedness refers to persons who take some kind of delight in doing what is wrong — have I ever found such delight? I am covetous at times and only awaken to it later. We are repulsed by the word "depravity" as if we are not the fallen sons of Adam. Super criticism of another belies our envy of that very person. As so it is with the whole list — may such thoughts purify my motives!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

I can indeed thank you for the antitheses of each of these sins: (1) Thank you for love — your kind of love the opposite of murder. (2) Thank you I can be a peace maker and avoid strife. (3) Thank you for the beauty of transparent honesty. (4) Thank you I can develop the desire to help not hurt. (5) Thank you I can whisper love into the hearts of my fellow travelers — not slander. (6) Thank you I can compliment in public those who help me — or hurt me. (7) Thank you I can love you fervently from the heart.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of novel forms of evil, disobedient to their parents, senseless, faithless, loveless, pitiless." This is a list of the refinements of Satan's efforts. Such qualities lie just beneath the surface of many hearts. Insolence is such a repulsive sin. Such persons look down on all others and count them as nothing. The arrogant are the super race — i.e., in their own estimate. Back of all these sins is the sin of pride — the insolent and arrogant are often full of boastful words. There are men who spend long hours planning how they can hurt their fellow men — in one way or another. May I look long at these qualities and be shocked by what I see.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In these twenty-one sins I can find many requests: (1) I am delighted with your righteousness — and not my own. (2) I want to be careful to do what pleases you for this day. (3) Deliver me, guard my heart from all forms of greed. (4) How easy it is to envy — protect me from this sin today. (5) There are persons who will

not agree with anything — I do not want to be like them. (6) Keep me honest — open — candid. (7) I want heaven's uncommon sense.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to my conscience through these verses: (1) "You can be filled with the fruit of the Spirit not the works of the flesh." (2) "I have delivered men from every one of these sins into the freedom of my truth." (3) "His you are whom you serve — if you serve sin you belong to death — if you serve me you belong to life."

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 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. (3) *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. (4) *The Austrians are keen readers, so literature is a vital means of witness.* Pray for the Scripture distribution of the Bible Society and the literature ministries of Austrian Bible Mission and Christian Literature Crusade.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

All praise to Him who reigns above
 In majesty supreme,
 Who gave His Son for man to die,
 That He might man redeem!
 Blessed be the name, blessed be the name,
 Blessed be the name of the Lord;
 Blessed be the name, blessed be the name,
 Blessed be the name of the Lord.
 His name shall be the Counsellor,
 The mighty Prince of Peace,
 Of all earth's kingdoms Conqueror,
 Whose reign shall never cease.

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Sunday—

*I want to weep over the sins of others —
I want to be like David — and your
Son.*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Make your face shine upon your servant and teach me your decrees. Streams of tears flow from my eyes, for your law is not obeyed. Righteous are you, O Lord, and your laws are right” (Psa. 119:135-137).

What pleasure we take in the smile of approval from those we love and respect. This is a plea from a dull scholar. I have so often failed to do what I know is right. Yet I plead with you to not turn away from me — smile upon me and teach me yet again.

David was free of emotion and shed many tears over those who disobeyed your laws. Did he cry also for himself?

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

“He wept in sympathy with God to see his holy law despised and broken. He wept in pity for men who were thus drawing down upon themselves the fiery wrath of God” (*ibid*). How exaggerated all this seems to us before we remember another — the son of David who wept much over the sins of men. Is not the psalmist like your very Self — You have no pleasure (only grief) in the death of the wicked. Dear Lord, such compassion and pure love are above me. Help me — forgive 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

It does hurt my conscience to pronounce your righteousness and the correctness of your laws. I am not right or righteous. Only by your imputed righteousness can I stand before you. I weep — but not in the broken-hearted tears of my Lord over the sins of others — or over the lost condition of men — but over my own transgressions. How utterly selfish! I want to smile at you and find my happiness returned.

I can only do this out of your forgiveness and mercy. I praise your very Self that I can claim such pleasure from you.

What personal sins do you want to confess? There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

All for Jesus, all for Jesus!
All my being's ransomed powers:
All my thoughts and words and doings,
All my days and all my hours;
All for Jesus! all for Jesus!
All my days and all my hours;
All for Jesus! all for Jesus!
All my days and all my hours.

HIS WORD

³²*Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them. —Romans 1:32, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

We have reached the end of the chapter, but not the end of man's need. Indeed we have only begun to appreciate how lost the world is in which we live. The men here described are all made personally responsible for their sins. None are innocent or so far removed from yourself that they do not know right from wrong. It is very good for me to accept your understanding of the large Gentile world who has never heard of your Son or yourself. The last persons described are the worst of all offenders — they are not only involved in such sins but promoters of them.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Open my heart that I might see that only when men

know they are lost can they be saved. Keep me from ever thinking of myself as removed from these sins and somewhat immune from them. My only protection is yourself. Indeed, you are my refuge from the evil one. The "death" here promised fills me with fear — amazement. It is the eternal, second death of the lake of fire. You have only one punishment for sin — hell — only one reason for hell — sin. Dear Lord, sensitize my heart!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you that your word is always right regardless of the test put to it. (2) Thank you that you have spoken in permanent written form that we might read and understand your will. (3) Thank you for the fairness of your judgment. There will be no excuses on judgment day. (4) Thank you we are saved by your grace and our life style — not our moral perfection. (5) Thank you for the escape from the second death. (6) Thank you for the newness of life!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them." This is the ultimate of disobedience. It is one thing to become addicted to drugs, it is another thing to become a "pusher" or salesman of the very thing that enslaves you. Such were these persons. We recognize pornography and a billion dollar industry as an example of this principle. We can apply this same rule to our Lord and his service. When we have given ourselves to him and continue to do so it isn't long until we want others to join us. We do indeed "approve" of those who follow him.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How can I pray over this verse and seek fulfillment in my life? (1) When I am tempted I want to recognize the source of temptation — you are not in any way responsible for my desire to sin. (2) Your word is good and righteous in every way — I need wisdom to see the application of this truth in my life today. (3) Open my heart to recognize the awfulness of the eternal penalty of sin. (4) May I never treat lightly the power of evil. (5) In the midst of wickedness give me the inward purity of heart to see yourself.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In the words of this verse speak to my heart: (1) "Men know they are lost — i.e., some of them —

reach them before it becomes a reality." (2) "Have you ever considered the awfulness of hell? Do it again." (3) "Sin is a way of life with most of the world — but I can change it!"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Austria — Points for prayer: (1) *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. (2) *The evangelical witness is small but growing*. There are about 200 Bible study or church groups meeting regularly — most being very new. Pray for the growth of this church planting ministry. The first Austrian evangelical, interdenominational Bible school in Ampflwang opened in 1984; graduates from this school could be a decisive factor for church growth in coming years. (3) *The believers need prayer* — for there is not sufficient concern for the evangelization of the lost, and they are too conscious of being a small and despised minority within the Roman Catholic majority. There are too few young Austrians coming forward for full-time service. The Lutheran and the free churches worked together for a special year of evangelism in Austria in 1985. (4) *There is a growing missionary force*. Pray that these missionaries may adapt well to the Austrian situation. Most missionaries are involved in evangelism and church-planting.

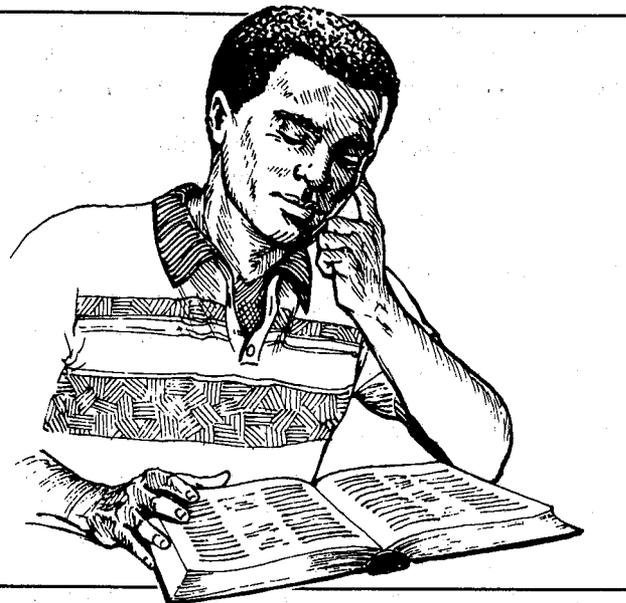
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see
And in Thy presence rest.
No voice can sing, no heart can frame,
Nor can the memory find
A sweeter sound than Thy blest name,
O Savior of mankind.
O hope of every contrite heart,
O joy of all the meek,
To those who fall, how kind Thou art!
How good to those who seek!
But what to those who find? Ah, this
No tongue nor pen can show;
The love of Jesus, what it is
None but His loved ones know.
Jesus, our only joy be Thou,
As Thou our prize wilt be;
Jesus, be Thou our glory now
And thru eternity.

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Monday—

All you tell me has been "thoroughly tested." I lean my whole self upon what you say to me just now!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

"The statutes you have laid down are righteous; they are fully trustworthy. Your promises have been thoroughly tested, and your servant loves them" (Psa. 119:138,140). "All that which God hath testified in his word (even yourself and your word) is right and truthful. It is righteous and may be relied upon for the present; it is faithful, and may be trusted in for the future. About every portion of the inspired testimonies there is divine authority, they are issued and published by God's *command*, and they bear the impress of the royal style which carries omnipotence about it" (*ibid*). I could not agree more, praise your wonderful name.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

The testing of your word in the lives of millions of people over thousands of years has shown how *pure* or *whole* is the word you have spoken. "It is truth distilled, holiness in its quintessence. In the word of God there is no admixture of error or sin. It is pure in its sense, pure in its language, pure in its spirit, pure in its influence, and in all this to the very highest degree — *very pure*" (*ibid*). I have found all these words fulfilled in my own experience and therefore indeed I do *love* your word. I love you more because you are the source of such truth. Dear Lord, I have not exhausted my love — increase it!

How do you personally relate to the trustworthiness of God and his word? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

I had not known sin except your law had said: "You shall not covet." But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from the law sin is

dead" (Rom. 7:7,8). This could also be said of the command not to lie or commit adultery — or any of your other commands. Your statutes are indeed righteous — but of myself I am not at all righteous. I must in the face of these facts cast myself on your mercy. Even so I yet find progress (nothing like perfect obedience) in following your word. In all of this rambling I am seeking your grace and forgiveness. I claim your promise and rejoice in it!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

2 You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.
—Romans 2:1, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How easy it is to admit guilt in one area and totally ignore it in another. We are all *generally* guilty but *specifically* innocent! Dear Lord, deliver me from such an attitude. Deliver me because I am the sinner in this principle. Do I condemn impatience in others and excuse it in myself? Do I speak against harshness

in non-church people and yet exercise it on church members? Forgive me! Any sin we see in another is smoldering just beneath the surface of our own head. I do need to once and for all commit all judgment to yourself.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

This does *not* mean I will ignore the condemnation found in your word such as: Rom. 13:13; I Cor. 5:9-11; 6:9,10; II Cor. 12:20,21; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 4:19; 5:3-5; Col. 3:5-9; I Thess. 2:3; 4:3-7; I Tim. 1:9,10; 6:4,5; II Tim. 3:2-5; Titus 3:3,9,10. Nay, I find *myself* very much involved in these lists of sins. But I will look to myself first and ask others to do what I must do: cast themselves on your grace and trust in your power to overcome. I recognize the Jewish first century context of this verse, but I see like the morning sun the application of it to my own situation. Forgive and empower 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 personalness of your word — it speaks to *me*. (2) Thank you for the universal application of your word — it speaks to *all*. (3) Thank you for the completeness of what you have said — it leaves none of us with an excuse. (4) Thank you for the sober warning against acting as a judge. (5) Thank you that all men will be judged fairly by yourself. (6) Thank you for the probing power of your law and my conscience — you have given both.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, . . .” We do have such penchant to condemn in others what we find in ourselves. This only aggravates our problem since all such matters belong to yourself. We excuse in ourselves what we condemn in others. We somehow imagine that the circumstance of our sin are such that we cannot be held responsible. Isn't Paul too all inclusive in his blanket statement of this verse? Is it possible that such a principle applies to all men? Yes, yes it does indeed! Implicitly if not explicitly all such sins are a part of all men.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Under such need I want to pray and ask your help: (1) I give my heart to you — I cannot without your power control it. (2) Remove my desire to excuse my sin — I want to confess it and be forgiven. (3) How glad I am that one day all inequities will be balanced

— keep me patient until that day. (4) I want the peace of heart that comes from committing all judgment to yourself. (5) Self condemnation is such a destructive practice — deliver me from it. (6) Praise your name for your amazing grace.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

This verse has already spoken eloquently to my heart — speak to me again: (1) “I did not send my Son into the world to condemn but to save.” (2) “Peace, not condemnation is what I want for you and all men.” (3) “No one is capable of perfect judgment — i.e., except myself.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Austria — Points for prayer: (1) *The cults are aggressive and growing in numbers.* There are more active followers of the Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons than committed evangelical believers. Their pervasive influence complicates any evangelistic outreach. Many young people are led astray by modern Eastern and Western youth cults. (2) *The witness among students* is one of the most fruitful in the land today. There are strong groups in the seven universities, and the groups are growing in depth and outreach. Pray that these young Christians may have an impact on the land and its churches. (3) *Migrant laborers* — little has yet been done for the Muslim Turks. There is one small Yugoslav church in Vienna, but most of this large community has yet to be evangelized. They could prove strategic for the evangelizing of Yugoslavia.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Praise Him! praise Him!
Jesus, our blessed Redeemer!
Sing, O Earth, His wonderful love proclaim!
Hail Him! hail Him! highest archangels in glory;
Strength and honor give to His holy name!
Like a shepherd Jesus will guard His children,
In His arms He carries them all day long:
Praise Him! praise Him!
tell of His excellent greatness;
Praise Him! praise Him! ever in joyful song.
Praise Him! praise Him! Jesus our blessed Redeemer!
For our sins He suffered, and bled and died;
He our Rock, our hope of eternal salvation,
Hail Him! hail Him! Jesus the crucified.
Sound His praises! Jesus who bore our sorrows;
Love unbounded, wonderful, deep and strong:
Praise Him! praise Him!
tell of His excellent greatness;
Praise Him! praise Him! ever in joyful song.

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Tuesday—

I believe I could “delight” in you every day if I would — I want to just now!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Trouble and distress have come upon me, but your commands are my delight. Your statutes are forever right; give me understanding that I may live” (Psa. 119:143,144). How well does verse 143 state our perpetual problem — we are indeed troubled from without and from within and yet are delighted with what we find in your word. We are delighted and yet distressed; we feel the pleasure of your commands and also the power of our enemy. The solution is in finding more joy in your will than sorrow over our opposition.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

I know I will live or die by or through understanding your word. Such is the vast importance of such understanding. I must first establish in my heart of hearts that your word is “forever right.” “God’s testimonies to man cannot (and must not) be assailed, they are righteous from beginning to end; and although ungodly men have opposed the divine justice, especially in the plan of salvation, they have always failed to establish any charge against the Most High” (*ibid*). The rod and staff of life is in yourself through my understanding of what you have said — therefore I do seek such wisdom as fine gold.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is *not* true that every time distress or trouble come upon me I took a delight in your word and found there my answer. This is the practice of my Lord — but I must confess I allow trouble to so depress me that in my discouragement I turn to many sources for help before I remember your word. It is hard to make

such a confession — but it also defines the problem. When trouble and distress *are not* upon me I want to so increase my delight in your word that I will be well prepared for the next onslaught of the enemy. Give me grace in this resolve.

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, every soul by sin oppressed,
There’s mercy with the Lord;
And He will surely give you rest
By trusting in His word.
Only trust Him, only trust Him,
Only trust Him now;
He will save you, He will save you,
He will save you now.

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

HIS WORD

²Now we know that God’s judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. ³So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God’s judgment? —Romans 2:2,3, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Your judgment will be in perfect balance with reality or truth. What an awesome verse is II Cor. 5:10: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.” Am I ready for such a judgment? Not of myself am I at all ready. If the result of one sin is eternal death then there is no hope for me. I am condemned to hell a thousand fold! If I judge by comparison and not truth I condemn myself, for there is always someone better than myself. I am glad, so glad that there

is therefore *now* no condemnation to those who are in your Son (Rom. 8:1).

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Isn't it strange that we are so blind to our own faults and yet can see the smallest error in the conduct of another? Somehow we use two measurements — one for others and another for ourselves. This should point out one real obvious lesson: I am out of place on the judgment seat! The Jewish reader was ever before the mind of Paul as he penned these words. He knew such people so well — *he was one of them!* The attitude of such religious persons is a common malady; we have it with us today. We shall not, we cannot escape your judgment. By our own mouths we are condemned. By your grace and your grace alone we are saved.

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 eternal truth — in your Son and your word. (2) Thank you that no one will ever “get away” with sin — there *will be* judgment — fair and complete. (3) Thank you for the peace produced by my committing *all* judgment to yourself. (4) Thank you that your word identifies me as “a mere man” i.e., as compared with yourself. (5) Thank you for the escape I have in your mercy and grace. (6) Thank you for this review of my need for you.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... *do you think you will escape the judgment of God?*” Men have tried over the centuries to answer in the affirmative to this question. Not one of the billions of persons who have passed from this life will escape the judgment. “After death cometh the judgment.” Not one of us alive escapes your judgment right here and now: “as a man soweth so shall he reap.” We can not sow to the flesh and reap anything but corruption. When we sow to the wind we do indeed reap the whirlwind.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In these two verses are a multitude of requests. (1) Guard my heart of accusations against yourself for I know the source of such accusations. (2) Keep me aware that there will be a great day of equity. (3) I want to claim right now my standing outside of judgment — I have passed from death to life. (4) I want the peace that comes in committing all judgment to yourself. (5) May I once again read the words “a mere man” and recognize my limitations.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me yet again from these words: (1) “I have all the facts on all people all the time.” (2) “I am love, therefore I cannot ignore any fact in judgment.” (3) “The greatest fact of all time is my judgment on my Son for your redemption.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Bahamas — Points for prayer: (1) *Christianity is a cultural veneer to most.* It is reckoned that 90% of Bahamians rarely attend church. Confused family relationships, lax morality and increasing crime are rife. Pray for a surge of new life and revival through the churches. Pray for the young people and children — many are turning away because of the inconsistent lives of their elders and the turmoil in their own hearts. (2) *Christian literature.* High illiteracy rates and lack of reading materials at affordable prices is a challenge. The enormous problems for publishing and distributing literature in the Caribbean are created by the difficulties of communication, inflation and lack of foreign exchange in the widely scattered islands. Christian Literature Crusade'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.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

One day when heaven was filled with His praises,
One day when sin was as black as could be,
Jesus came forth to be born of a virgin,
Dwelt among men — my example is He!
One day they led Him up Calvary's mountain,
One day they nailed Him to die on the tree;
Suffering anguish, despised and rejected,
Bearing our sins, my Redeemer is He!
One day they left Him alone in the garden,
One day He rested, from suffering free;
Angels came down o'er His tomb to keep vigil —
Hope of the hopeless, my Savior is He!
One day the grave could conceal Him no longer,
One day the stone rolled away from the door;
Then He arose, over death He had conquered,
Now is ascended, my Lord evermore!
One day the trumpet will sound for His coming,
One day the skies with His glory will shine;
Wonderful day, my beloved ones bringing!
Glorious Savior, this Jesus is mine!
Living, He loved me, dying, He saved me,
Buried, He carried my sins far away,
Rising, He justified, freely forever,
One day, He's coming, oh, glorious day!

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Wednesday—

*Your love and your laws are my hope
and strength — make it so today!*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Hear my voice in accordance with your love; renew my life, O Lord, according to your laws. Look upon my suffering and deliver me, for I have not forgotten your law” (Psa. 119:149,153). There would be no reason at all to hear my voice were it not for your love. Often, very often this aspect of your character comes to the surface of these songs. Yea, it harbors just under the surface of every thought and action of yourself. It is only out of your love that my spiritual life is at all renewed. Your word promises over and over again a renewal of our relationship. Praise your name!

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

We are accustomed to reading in your word in the New Testament that you are touched with the feeling of our infirmities — but here I am face to face with it in the O.T. You look upon my sufferings and are moved to do something about what you see. In ways that are best known to you — and seldom known to me — you send a deliverance. There are many ways of delivering me *through* my sufferings or sometimes *from* such sufferings. But in each action you are behind it. Praise is surely appropriate!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

If your deliverance was always contingent upon my obedience to your laws I would have no hope at all. You hear me because you love me; you help me because of my need. Yet, I do not want to use such goodness to lead me away from your laws or your statutes. I have not forgotten your law — but I have ignored it — I have been very apathetic toward it.

Forgive me. It is in the cleansing of forgiveness that my life is renewed. Each day I can find the joy of the newness of life. 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

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.
He leadeth me, He leadeth me,
By His own hand He leadeth me;
His faithful follower I would be,
For by His hand He leadeth me.

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

HIS WORD

“Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?” —Romans 2:4, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

There are three qualities here mentioned that describe your essential being: (1) kindness; (2) tolerance; (3) patience. Kindness, the last quality, is to sum up the other two, and yet remains a separate quality. In each of these qualities of yourself I am to find motivation for a total change of my mind — yea, my *life!* I can and do show contempt for these qualities when I continue in any known sin. Willful rebellion is contempt for yourself. I am glad to affirm that your kindness has led me often to change my mind and follow your Son.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How exceeding tolerant you have been to me! Yet, if I only see in this an opportunity to remain a little longer in my selfishness than I am no better than the Jews here to receive your condemnation. The repentance here described is much more than a casual change of mind — it is a true conversion or it is ineffective. Stubbornness is such a common sin. Why am I so unwilling to change? Dear Lord, show me your love and judgment that I can turn and live!

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 exceeding richness of your kindness to me. (2) Thank you for the clear indication of your purpose in your kindness. (3) Thank you for your tolerance — without it I would not last one moment in your presence. (4) Thank you for your daily expression of patience — I do want to identify such expressions this day. (5) Thank you that it is possible to make choices in the area of your goodness. (6) Thank you that I can look up into the face of One who is the total essence of kindness or goodness.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness?” I do need to understand these persons as well as is at all possible. Here are not men of indifference or apathy. They are full of aggressive rebellion. God is not ignored — he is ridiculed. These persons show contempt for God’s law. Not only so, they are rebelling and resisting his goodness or kindness. The particular expression of such contempt is most interesting. I do need to remember that all such consideration is from God’s perspective. Because they were judging and condemning others they are so described. The Jews had a strange capacity for misreading your kindness. Dear Lord, it is quite possible to do the same thing today.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Lead me into requests that speak to my heart’s need. (1) When I ignore the needs of others I am showing contempt for you. Open my heart to the lost world in which I live. (2) Enlarge my understanding as to the tremendous treasure I have in your providential care of my life. (3) Give me the same kind of tolerance toward others that you have toward me. (4) Patience is such a beautiful virtue — may I give as I have received. (5) In all your love you are leading me to a constant change of mind — I want to not at all resist your purpose.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In this one verse is such a wealth of application — speak to my deepest needs: (1) “If I am tolerant with you how is it you are impatient with others?” (2) “My patience in your life would have been exhausted long ago if you were in my place.” (3) “My kindness has followed you all the days of your life — and will continue to do so until we meet in my house.”

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. (3) *Half the labor force of 200,000 is foreign*, and includes people from 45 nations. Pray for Christians within some of these national groups, that in the prevailing concern for material things they may win people for Christ. Pray especially for the Iranians, Muslim Pakistanis, also Hindu and Muslim Indians from South India. (4) *FEBA Radio from the Seycheles is well received*. Pray for the financing and producing of Arabic broadcasts suitable for breaking down Islamic misconceptions of the gospel.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold:
“Peace on the earth, goodwill to men,
From heaven’s all-gracious King!”
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.
Still through the cloven skies they come
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats
O’er all the weary world:
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o’er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Thursday—

*Give me this whole day in praise to you.
It shall start just here!*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Your compassion is great, O Lord; renew my life according to your laws. See how I love your precepts; preserve my life, O Lord, according to your love” (Psa. 119:156,159). Such an expression of renewal is repeated (not in the same context) in your word. David felt as I do the continual need for renewal — he knew, as I want to increasingly know, that only in your Self and your word can I find renewal. If you were to measure my love for your precepts I wonder how it would compare with your love for me? There would be only a contrast! Preserve my life — i.e., my spiritual, emotional, mental, physical life according to your love.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

I do this day lift up before your throne the following qualities of yourself: (1) compassion; (2) your renewal capacity; (3) preservation; (4) love. How could I ever become discouraged or depressed when I worship you who are full of personal interest in my every need? How could I ever turn aside to learn things when you stand ready to renew my whole life? When I become impatient with some circumstance of life may I remember I would have no life at all without your mercy. When my love grows thin — as it often does — lead me to a view of your whole ocean of love toward me — and all men.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Your compassion indeed is great — far beyond anything my feeble brain can conceive — but I amaze myself at my lack of compassion — I suspect even those who have a need. Dear Lord, forgive me! There

are times when I do not want to be renewed! What an awful confession — but it is true. Dear Lord, you know my heart — make me willing to be willing. How dull I am at times to your tender mercies! You have delivered me from accident and heartache — do I appreciate it? I do want to look again at your keeping power — forgive my blindness. Just now I bow broken before your love. Cleanse my motives.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

⁵But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. ⁶God "will give to each person according to what he has done." ⁷To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. ⁸But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. —Romans 2:5-8, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I need to remember just who is being addressed in these verses. It is the Jew as will be seen in verse 17. It is *their* stubborn and unrepentant heart that is here

described. It is the religious person who is storing or piling up for himself wrath against the day of wrath in the revelation of your righteous judgment. He shall be saved out of your mercy and grace but it in no way negates my need for doing your will in my life. Here is a real examination of saving faith — a faith that adds on works is the only valid faith. In particular Paul speaks to the heart of those who had your law and claimed to believe it. Dear Lord, is it I?

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Open my conscience to receive with meekness this living word! I want to turn the coin over and read the other side. If I had a soft and pliable heart instead of a stubborn and rebellious one — will I not also be storing up blessings and treasures in heaven? Since all you can consider on judgment is my intentions — as expressed in my works — I do want to constantly purify them by your word. In my persistence in doing what is good I want also to seek *your* glory, *your* honor and your eternal presence. Lord, Lord, there hardly seems to be any place for compromise in light of your judgment — I want to be 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 for your continual condemnation of stubbornness. (2) Thank you for the daily possibility of repentance. (3) Thank you for the accumulation of blessings, ready to be enjoyed in the world to come. (4) Thank you for the promise of the revelation to all of your righteous judgment. (5) Thank you for the plain promise of rewards and punishments. (6) Thank you for the closeness of identity we have with these Jewish people of Paul's day.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life.” What a beautiful description of the attitude all Christians should have toward yourself! Our persistence in doing good is to be just like our Lord who “went about doing good.” Healing and teaching or teaching and healing was the *good* of Jesus — how it needs to be ours today! In our good we seek *your* glory (character), *your* honor, and ultimately *fellowship with you in the world to come*. To such persons you will give eternal life or all the joys of heaven.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How can I pray through these beautiful words? (1) Can I attribute all my sin to stubbornness and an unwillingness to repent? Not altogether — Satan must also be a very large factor. (2) Am I as afraid of your righteous judgment as I ought? Do I really believe there is a hell to shun? Dear Lord, deliver me from

Satan and his hell. (3) I treasure to my heart your promise of present acceptance in your Son — at the same time I want to regive myself to you since I know something of the power of sin. (4) Sin shall not have dominion over me — if it did sin (or Satan) would be my master — dear Lord, in ways I do not even know — deliver me!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Since I am the religious man of today — along with all others who claim you as Lord, I want to listen while you speak to the Jews — I know you are speaking also to me: (1) “Self-seeking is Satan's largest deceit — he makes it appear as if you were seeking me.” (2) “No one *must* sin — it is *always* a choice.” (3) “I am angry and full of wrath for those who will fully disobey.”

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 programs through Christian relief organizations. The inter-mission “HEED” Bangladesh, World Vision, TEAR Fund, etc. have opened hearts to the Christian message. Pray for all involved in decision making and implementing these programs. Pray for eternal fruit among tribals, Hindus and Muslims. These programs have been under increasing attack by the enemies of the gospel. b) *The openness of Muslims* in some areas to innovative methods of evangelism is encouraging. Pray for strong witnessing churches to be planted and for protection in persecution of all who follow Christ. c) *There are several Hindu castes that have showed marked response to the gospel* but only 4 of the 29 lower castes have shown any significant response.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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.
Precious name, O how sweet!
Hope of earth and joy of heav'n;
Precious name, O how sweet!
Hope of earth and joy of heav'n.

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Friday—

In the depths of my heart teach me your precepts! I enter into worship for that purpose.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“May my cry come before you, O Lord; give me understanding according to your word. May my supplication come before you, deliver me according to your promise. May my lips overflow with praise, for you teach me your decrees” (Psa. 119:169-171). Here I find such blessed qualities of yourself. You are the source of understanding for all men. You are indeed total understanding! What a comfort to know where to go for a grasp of all of life. Such knowledge comes from your word. Once more I want to praise you for preserving your word over all these centuries.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

You are also the source of deliverance! And this is in keeping with your promise. Dear wonderful Father, I claim this quality for myself. I have several areas of my life where I need deliverance — I lift them up to you even now. I understand a supplication is a particular or personal request — I do indeed supplicate for deliverance! I am at a total loss how best to praise you for teaching me your decrees! Dear Lord, you know I do sincerely *want* to be taught. Calm my spirit that I might not hinder the flow of your truth in my heart!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is difficult to admit that far too often my cry is *not* for understanding according to your word — but a complaint when I have not studied your word. Forgive me — I purpose a real improvement by your grace. Oh my Father, there are times when I do not want to be delivered! Too often I enjoy my own

selfishness — but there truly is no joy in such an attitude. Search my deepest motives and deliver me! I do not believe there have been many times when I did not want to be taught. Open my ears to your voice through your word!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

O soul, are you weary and troubled?
No light in the darkness you see?
There's light for a look at the Savior,
And life more abundant and free!
Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.

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

HIS WORD

⁹There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; ¹⁰but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. ¹¹For God does not show favoritism. —Romans 2:9-11, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Do we have in these verses and the preceding verses (i.e., vv. 5-8) a parallelism often found in the O.T.? We believe it is so. I want to examine it most carefully in your presence. It is impossible to read these words and not see the promise of a world and life to come. In this life the wages of sin is death — but far more so in the world beyond this one. “To whom much is given (the Jew and the Christian) much will be required.” You have a most interesting manner of placing the responsibility upon each of us and yet

remaining the sovereign ruler behind every man.
Praise and honor to your name!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Since you in no way will show favoritism it should place a responsibility before me to please you. I have no hope in form or ritual, you see and read my heart. Is not the promise of "glory, honor and peace" enough to lead me to give myself wholly to you? It is indeed! The four principles of judgment found in verses one through sixteen are the following (write them upon my heart). (1) According to truth (v. 2); (2) according to works (v. 6); (3) according to total impartiality (v. 11); (4) according to the gospel (v. 16). Dear Lord, am I ready for that day to come? I am learning how right now!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for including every human being in your judgment. (2) Thank you that there is in yourself a perfect balance of love and wrath. (3) Thank you for the promise here that one day we will be able to see and understand your essential being or character — i.e., in the world to come. (4) Thank you for the promise of honor to each man — the value and dignity of every man will be shown to him and to all on judgment. (5) Thank you for the ultimate promise of peace! What tranquility will flood our hearts!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"For God does not show favoritism." At no time in any place with anyone have you ever shown favoritism. This means that all your decisions are based squarely on fairness. If the Jews seemed to have more opportunity it is only because the Gentiles were unwilling to develop what opportunities they did have. Your plan has always included the whole human race. Your Son was sent because you loved "the world." He commissions his "sent ones" to "every nation" and "every creature" in every nation. On the day of equity everyone will receive just what he earned or has chosen during his lifetime.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I shall have no difficulty lifting my heart in requests from this text: (1) Move me out of the realm of trouble and distress into the glorious liberty I find in your Son. (2) It is for those who persist and insist on sin that your condemnation comes — I want to continue in love and worship of your very Self. (3) Open my heart to see areas of your character I never saw

yesterday. (4) I claim the tranquility of spirit I find in yourself — how I need your peace! (5) My confidence in your absolute balance is increasing according to my understanding of your word — Praise your name.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As you speak to the hearts of all men — speak to me! (1) "There will indeed be 'trouble and distress' for every human being who continues in sin." (2) "There will be glory, honor and peace for everyone who continues in doing good." (3) "My special blessing comes to those who especially love me and obey me."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Bangladesh — Point for prayer: *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. d) *The Rohingya Muslims* (250,000) (refugees from Burma in 1978) have never been evangelized. e) *The tribal peoples* — some have resisted the gospel, or have not had adequate opportunity to hear: the animist Mru (some are Baptists), the Buddhist Chakma (some are Baptists), Magh and Khyang. f) *The students* — only a small witness among the 272,000 tertiary (college and university) students. Pray for strong witnessing groups in the six universities.

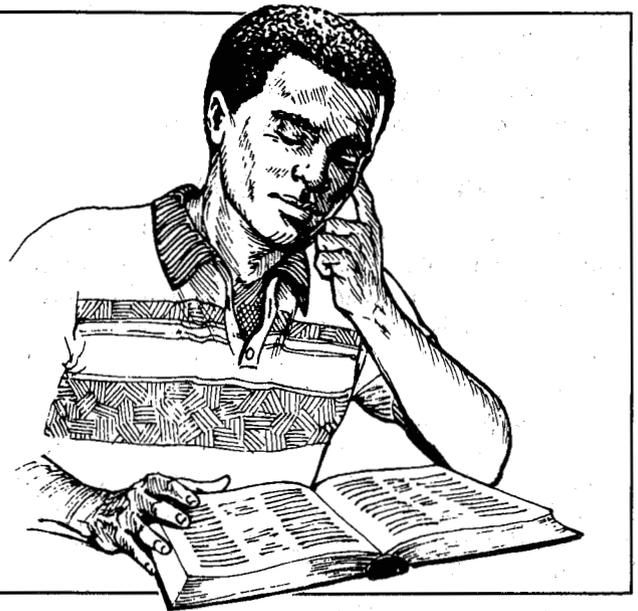
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing.
Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns;
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy.
He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love.

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Saturday—

*Why? — oh, why do I stray from you?
I am glad to come home!*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I long for your salvation, O Lord, and your law is my delight. Let me live that I might praise you, and may your laws sustain me. I have strayed like a lost sheep. Seek your servant, for I have not forgotten your commandments” (Psa. 119:174-176). Here are the blessed qualities for which I praise you: (1) A desire to worship you. It is of yourself that I want to worship you. (2) *Salvation* and *revelation* both find their origin in yourself. (3) *Life itself* comes from you — as well as the *preservation of life*. (4) You sustain me and all men by your laws — they hold us up and equip us for the battles of life.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

(5) *You are a shepherd* in search of this one lost sheep. How exceedingly precious is this quality of yourself. (6) *Memory* is part of your own nature you have given to man. Bless your wonderful name for the deep fulfillment I find in worshipping you. I like David do from the depths of my being long for a complete understanding of my salvation through your Son. It is a source of great wonder that you have given us in written form a full revelation of yourself. In each moment of this day I want to acknowledge your presence. I have already been sustained by your laws.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Indeed I am the sheep who went astray. But I am your servant — yea, your bondservant. I have been bought and paid for by yourself. Your commandments are your rod and staff to give me direction and correction. Forgive my unwillingness to long after your

salvation — I long to be lost not saved — dear Lord, how can it be? And yet it is sadly, tragically true — forgive me! As you give life to my mind and body today I want to lift up my heart in praise! How is it I am so hesitant and lacking in praise much of the time you have given? I have all the stupid qualities of a sheep — and yet — *I am* willing to be led. Sharpen my memory of your commandments.

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'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 every longing,
Keeps me singing as I go.

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

HIS WORD

¹²All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. ¹³For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.
—Romans 2:12,13, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It is one sobering fact to read here that all Gentiles who sin (and which one does not?) will perish — and all Jews who have your revelation in the form of your word and yet do not obey it will also perish — yea, your very law will be their judge. Lifestyle is the basis of judgment. A continuance in sin among the Gentiles as described in the first chapter will result in eternal

separation. As we look at those who have received your law and find them unwilling to live what they profess your judgment is upon them.

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 represent your word for just what you have spoken. Help me! I am sure you do not require or expect perfect obedience. None of us have such a capacity. And yet you do expect consistent living — i.e., loving, willing obedience to the word you have given us. What a challenge is in this little phrase: "For it is not those who hear (only) the law who are righteous in God's sight, . . ." I have heard your law — read your law — taught and preached your law over all these years — I want to do far more! I want to obey!

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 balance I see in your judgment of all men. (2) Thank you for reminding me again and again that you do have a place called *hell*! (3) Thank you that from our very hearts we have the resources for judgment. (4) Thank you for the assurance of "no condemnation" we have in your dear Son. (5) Thank you for the motivation to live for your Son and yourself found in the law of love. (6) Thank you for the promise of declaring me righteous.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

" . . . but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous." I am glad for the wording of this text. I am glad it does not say: ". . . but it is those who perfectly obey the law who will be given righteousness as their just dues." We do not earn righteousness. It is a declaration of our loving heavenly Father on the basis of our willing consistent obedience. This is no excuse at all for indulgence and indifference, but neither should it be intimidating to us. Indeed, after having done all we can (and really never knowing how much is "all") we must declare "we are unprofitable servants." It is out of unearned favor we are declared righteous.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I do want to word my requests in the light of these two powerful verses: (1) Set a guard on my conduct — i.e., that disobedience will not go unnoticed or unpunished. (2) I know I can really never live apart from law — it is either of sin or of love — give me grace to live by the law of love. (3) Since I will be judged by the light under which I live — I do want to

live joyously — I live by your grace and mercy. (4) Deliver me from taking satisfaction in these pious platitudes! It is a track record that counts with you. (5) For the wonderful provision and promise for my righteousness.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As I pause in your presence speak to my heart! (1) "You are righteous by what he did, even my Son, and not what you do — or not do." (2) "You are not righteous without a response on your part to the cross." (3) "Righteousness is a gift for those who obey."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Bangladesh — Points for prayer: (1) *The Church in Bengal has been plagued by nominalism*, spiritual shallowness, introspective inferiority (almost all are from low-caste Hinduism or minority tribal peoples), and dependence on missionary aid and initiative. There are too many unfortunate divisions between different sections of the Church. Pray for revival and maturity to make these churches a power for evangelism for all peoples in the country. (2) *Praise God for growth in some churches* — significant people movement ingatherings among the tribals. There is a rising confidence that there are going to be breakthroughs soon. Outreach by some churches is leading to growth. Pray for plans for growth in numbers and spirituality to be realized. The Church is growing now at twice the population rate. (3) *Missions* have been welcomed for their social uplift programs, hence the emphasis on institutions and aid programs. 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.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

The first Noel, the angel did say,
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.

And by the light of a star
The wise men came from country far;
To seek for a king was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went.
This star drew nigh to the northwest,
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
And there it did both stop and stay,
Right over the place where Jesus lay.

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
Born is the King of Israel.

If you have tried to maintain daily devotions and have failed – don't give up! There is a way that works.

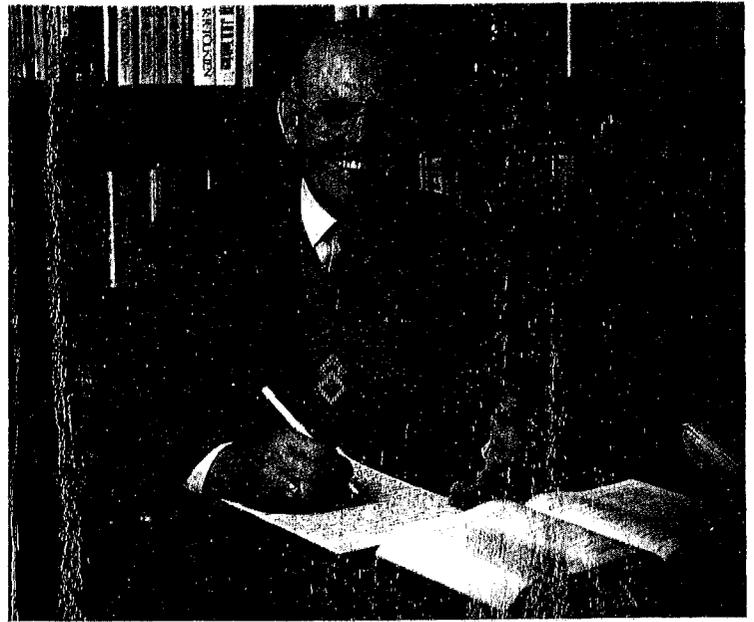
The simple effective method of daily devotions as described in **PERSONAL WORSHIP** can help you succeed where you have failed. You will know what it is to experience intimacy with God.

Discover How To:

- Overcome a wandering mind
- Establish the best time for your devotions
- Have a 100% record of success in daily devotions
- Overcome earlier failures
- Keep your personal devotional time as a regular commitment
- Produce your own prayer journal
- Write a prayer analysis of any Bible text.

When You Use This Proven Method You Will:

- Find more lesson and sermon ideas during your devotions than you ever found by using a direct approach
- Establish a personal relationship with your personal Savior
- Read more devotional comment on the Bible than you will find in any other source
- Discover that praise to God means so much more to you
- Become the spiritual example you always wanted to be



"Let my discovery work for you!"

I have been preaching and teaching for almost 50 years and I have observed the lives of thousands of Christians. I know how they have struggled to establish a regular daily time with God. I believe that the enemy attacks us in this area with all of his vigor.

It has been a struggle for me over the years to be faithful in my daily time with God. How I have longed for consistant personal worship with Him.

It took years but eventually I found the missing factor, and it has helped me more than I can express. I want to take you with me on my devotional journey. Come with me and find power in your daily time with the Lord. Come with me and rekindle your fire of spiritual zeal!

Yours in Christ,

Don DeWelt