

PERSONAL WORSHIP

VOLUME SIX

Intimacy With God

Don DeWalt



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Volume Six

Acts 5:40-18:10

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THE PRAYER LIFE OF JESUS

by Tommy Kelton

INTRODUCTION: WHY STUDY PRAYER?

Prayer is not very important to many of us that are members of the Lord's church. It is not as important as it was to Christ. We spend very little time praying in private; when we do pray, we have a lack of knowledge of how to pray or what to pray for.

In light of this, in the beginning of this study of the prayer life of Jesus, it would be good to think about some reasons why prayer is needful. If we can see the need, we will be willing to pay the price of studying the prayer life of Jesus in detail.

Prayer is important and very needful! When we understand this, we will want to learn all we can about it.

In Ephesians 6:18, Paul tells us to "pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints."

This constant, persistent, overcoming prayer is needful because:

1. There is a devil.

"For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12). To stand against the devil and his mighty wiles, we must put on the whole armor of God and pray (Eph. 6:13-18).

2. Prayer is God's appointed way for obtaining things, and the great secret of our lack in our life and in our work is neglect of prayer.

"We do not have because we do not ask" (James 4:2). The reason we see so little fruit from our labors is neglect of prayer.

3. Those men whom God set forth as a pattern of what He expected Christians to be — the apostles — regarded prayer as one of the most important businesses of their lives.

"We will devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4). It is also evident from what Paul wrote to the churches and to individuals about praying for them, that much of his time and strength and thought were given to prayer (Rom. 1:9; Eph. 1:15-16; Col. 1:9; I Thess. 3:10; II Tim. 1:3).

4. Prayer occupied a very prominent place and played a very important part in the earthly life of our Lord.

"And in the morning, a great while before day, He

rose and went to a lonely place, and there He prayed" (Mark 1:35). The preceding day had been a very busy one, but Jesus shortened the hours of needed sleep that He might arise early and give Himself to more sorely needed prayer.

"In those days He went out into the hills to pray; and all night He continued in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12). Our Savior found it necessary to pray when he was faced with the important decision of selecting the twelve.

The words "pray" and "prayer" are used at least twenty-five times in connection with our Lord in the brief record of His life found in the four gospels.

Evidently, prayer took much of the strength and time of Jesus.

5. Praying is the most important part of the present ministry of our risen Lord.

"Consequently, He is able for all times to save those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). This verse tells us for what purpose He now lives: "to make intercession for us," to pray. Praying is the principal thing He is now doing.

The same thought is found in Romans 8:34: "Who is to condemn? Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us?"

6. Prayer is the means that God has appointed for our receiving mercy, and obtaining grace to help in time of need.

"Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find help in time of trouble" (Heb. 4:16). These words make it very plain that God hath appointed a way by which we shall seek and obtain mercy and help. That way is prayer.

7. Prayer in the name of Jesus Christ is the way Jesus Christ Himself has appointed for His disciples to obtain fulness of joy.

"Hitherto you have asked nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24). Prayer in the name of Christ brings fulness of joy not only because we get what we want; but also because it makes God real. When God is real to us and we are in His presence we have "fulness of joy" (Psa. 16:11).

8. Prayer, in every care and anxiety and need of life, with thanksgiving, is the means that God has ap-

pointed for our obtaining freedom from all anxiety, and the peace of God which passes all understanding.

“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). Those persons who know the deep peace of God, the peace that passes all understanding, are men and women of prayer. Time spent in prayer is not wasted, but time invested at big interest.

9. Because of what prayer accomplishes in studying God’s word.

In answer to prayer, my eyes are opened to behold wondrous things out of God’s word (Psa. 119:18). In answer to prayer, I get wisdom (James 1:5).

These needs for prayer show why a comprehensive study of the prayer life of Jesus will be beneficial to all.

The study that follows is intended to focus on what God’s word has to say about the prayer life of Jesus. It is my prayer that He will serve as a guide to our prayer life.

AN OUTLINE OF THE PRAYER LIFE OF JESUS

Christ’s example in prayer is as comprehensive as His teaching about it.

When we remember that some scholars say that around 100 days of Christ’s life are recorded in the gospels the following references to prayer are very significant.

That Jesus taught the necessity of prayer by personal example is a striking feature of the gospels. He Himself prayed when on earth surrounded by our same circumstances and temptations.

Jesus’ life was filled with prayer. *“In the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to Him who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard for His godly fear”* (Heb. 5:7).

A careful reading of the prayer life of our Lord will convince us of the necessity of praying; we should realize how desperately we need to pray.

The following outline is intended to be an aid to those who want to study Jesus’ prayer life in detail:

I. SOME PRAYERS OF JESUS

- A. Christ began His earthly ministry praying after His baptism (Luke 3:21).
- B. Christ prayed during His early Galilean ministry (Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16).
- C. Christ prayed before He chose the twelve apostles (Luke 6:12-13).
- D. Christ was praying before Peter made the good confession (Luke 9:18-20).
- E. Christ prayed at the transfiguration (Luke 9:28-29).
- F. Christ thanked God that He had revealed His will to babes (Luke 10:21; Matt. 11:25).
- G. Christ was praying when the disciples asked

Him to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1).

H. Christ taught His disciples to pray (Matt. 6:5-15; Luke 11:2-4).

I. Christ prayed after feeding the 5,000 (Matt. 14:23).

J. Christ prayed at feeding the 4,000 (Mark 8:6).

K. Christ prayed when He raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:41-42).

L. Christ prayed in His hour of trial (John 12:27).

M. Christ prayed for self, disciples and all believers (John 17:1-26).

N. Christ prayed at the last supper (Matt. 26:26-27).

O. Christ prayed for Peter (Luke 22:31-32).

P. Christ prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36-46; Luke 22:39-46; Mark 14:32-42).

Q. Christ prayed at the cross (Matt. 27:46; Luke 23:34,46).

II. OBSERVATIONS ABOUT SOME OF CHRIST’S PRAYERS

A. Christ prayed before great events and crises of His life (Luke 3:21-22; 6:12-13; 9:18-21; Mark 1:35-38).

B. Christ prayed after achievements and important crises (Matt. 14:23; John 6:15).

C. Christ prayed before the great temptations of His life (Matt. 26:36).

D. Christ prayed when life was unusually busy (Luke 5:15-16).

E. Christ prayed in time of deep joy (Luke 10:21-22).

F. Christ prayed in time of deep anguish (Mark 14:33-42).

G. Christ gave thanks when food was served (Matt. 14:19; 26:26; Mark 8:6; John 6:11).

H. Christ prayed early in the morning and late at night (Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12).

I. Sometimes Christ prayed with His disciples, but mostly alone (Luke 9:29; Mark 6:46; Luke 9:18; Matt. 14:23).

III. SOME PERSONS AND THINGS JESUS PRAYED FOR

A. Jesus taught prayer was necessary on the part of the disciples for them to cast out evil spirits (Mark 9:29).

B. Jesus taught disciples they ought to pray always and not lose heart (Luke 18:1).

C. Jesus prayed for the comforter to come (John 14:16).

D. Jesus prayed for Peter (Luke 22:31-32).

E. Jesus prayed for Himself, His disciples and those of us who believe through their word (John 17:1-26).

F. Jesus tells us to pray the Lord of harvest to send forth reapers (Luke 10:2).

Jesus continually prayed and He knew that the Father heard Him when He prayed (John 11:41-42). He and the Father were in constant communication. He truly prayed always and never lost heart (Luke 18:1).

We Christians should have as our primary purpose in

life to be like Christ. He has left us an example that we should follow in His steps (I Pet. 2:21). We should do as He has done (John 13:15) and walk in the same way in which He walked (I John 2:6).

We are not like Christ unless we pray the way He did! I hope you will carefully study these scriptures on the prayer life of Jesus and propose to make prayer more a part of your life.

WHEN JESUS PRAYED

PRAYER AT THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized, and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form, as a dove, and a voice came from heaven, which said, "Thou art My beloved Son; with Thee I am well pleased" (Luke 3:21-22).

The public ministry of Jesus began with His baptism "to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15). It was not merely by chance that on such an occasion Jesus should pray. His baptism signified the act of supreme self-consecration, of submission to the Father's will. To successfully complete His mission, He had to depend on the power of God, so He prayed. His prayer was as significant as His baptism.

God was pleased with Christ praying as well as Him being baptized.

PRAYER DURING EARLY GALILEAN MINISTRY

And in the morning, a great while before day, He arose and went out to a lonely place, and there He prayed (Mark 1:35).

But He withdrew to the wilderness and prayed (Luke 5:16).

Jesus knew supremely well the value of private prayer. Christ died in solitude. He separated Himself from His exhausting, busy ministry and found help from His Father.

When it came time to commune with His Father, everybody and everything else could wait.

PRAYER BEFORE HE CHOSE THE TWELVE

In these days He went out into the hills to pray; and all night He continued in prayer to God and when it was day, He called His disciples, and chose from them twelve (Luke 6:12-13).

Jesus had to make one of the most important decisions of His ministry — the choosing of that close inner circle of men He would call apostles. Perhaps no choice between the Jordan River and the garden of Gethsemane was more significant than this one.

So He prayed. This time he did not merely get up early. This time He did not go to sleep at all. He spent the whole night praying.

PRAYER BEFORE PETER MADE THE GOOD CONFESSION

Now it happened that as He asked them, "Whom do

people say that I am?" And they answered, "John the Baptist; but others say Elijah; and others, that one of the prophets has arisen." And He said to them, "But whom do you say I am?" And Peter answered, "The Christ of God" (Luke 9:18-20).

This is one of the most crucial moments in the life of Jesus. He asked this question when He was already turning His face to go to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51). He well knew what awaited Him there, and the answer was of supreme importance. So He prayed before He asked this question of the apostles.

PRAYER AT THE TRANSFIGURATION

Now about eight days after these sayings He took with Him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And as He was praying, the appearance of His countenance was altered, and His raiment became dazzling white (Luke 9:28-29).

The praying of Jesus is the key to understanding His transfiguration. It was while Christ was praying that the great change took place which caused His face and garments to shine with splendor.

Christ received the approval of God as a result of His prayer and life (Luke 9:35).

PRAYER THAT GOD'S WILL HAD BEEN REVEALED TO BABES

In that same hour He rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding, and revealed them to babes, yea, Father, for such was Thy gracious will" (Luke 10:21).

Christ realized that His Father was the source of all blessings and therefore gave thanks and praise to Him (Mark 8:6; Matt. 26:27).

In the particular passage quoted here, He praised His Father as the Lord of creation, and He expressed His gratitude for His goodness and power which made possible the revelation of divine truth.

PRAYER WHEN THE DISCIPLES ASK JESUS TO TEACH THEM TO PRAY

He was praying in a certain place, and when He ceased, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples" (Luke 11:1).

The disciples had observed something astonishing about the way Jesus prayed and wished to be able to pray as He prayed. His praying was different from their traditions, different from the way they prayed. They wanted to learn to pray as Jesus prayed.

CHRIST TAUGHT HIS DISCIPLES TO PRAY

Father, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread; and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation (Luke 11:2-4; Matt. 6:9-15).

(This model prayer will be discussed in detail in another section.)

PRAYER AFTER FEEDING THE 5,000

And after He had dismissed the crowds, He went up into the hills by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone (Matt. 14:23).

After the important event of feeding the five thousand and the multitudes wanting to make Him king, Christ withdraws to Himself so He can commune with His Father. Our Savior needed time to be alone and pray.

PRAYER AT THE FEEDING OF THE 4,000

And He commanded the crowd to sit down on the ground; and He took the seven loaves, and having given thanks He broke them and gave them to His disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd (Mark 8:6).

This is another example of Jesus giving thanks to His Father. This time it is given for the food, as in Matthew 26:27.

PRAYER WHEN JESUS RAISED LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD

So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. I know that Thou hearest Me always, but I have said this on account of the people standing by, that they may believe that Thou didst send Me (John 11:41-42).

Jesus knew that God always heard Him when He prayed and was thankful for this. Here He calls upon God to raise Lazarus that the people might believe that His Father sent Him. This answer to Jesus' prayer was one of the greatest miracles He ever performed, and its results were among the most spectacular. Christ prayed and Lazarus was raised.

PRAYER IN CHRIST'S HOUR OF TRIAL

Now is My soul troubled and what shall I say? "Father, save me from this hour?" No, for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify Thy name (John 12:27).

Christ was almost under the shadow of the cross; the sins of mankind were about to be laid on Him; one of His twelve disciples was going to deny Him and swear he never knew Him; another was to sell Him for thirty pieces of silver; all were to forsake Him and flee.

In all of this, Jesus was troubled. Therefore, He prayed. Instead of praying for deliverance from this burden, He prayed that God would do that which would promote His glory regardless of the suffering of Himself.

This was equivalent to the prayer: "Not My will, but Thine be done" (Luke 22:42).

PRAYER FOR HIMSELF, THE APOSTLES AND ALL BELIEVERS

John 17 is the longest and most complete prayer of Jesus recorded in the New Testament.

The prayer breaks down into three sections: (1) Jesus' prayer for Himself (vs. 1-5); (2) Jesus' prayer for the apostles (vs. 6-19); and (3) Jesus' prayer for all

believers (vs. 20-26).

The section where Jesus prays for Himself (vs. 1-5) is highlighted by the word *glorify*. Jesus prayed for the Father to "*glorify Thy Son*" (v. 1) and for the Father to "*glorify Thou Me together with Thyself*" (v. 5).

In the section where Jesus prays for the apostles (vs. 6-19) He prayed for their oneness or unity (v. 11); their protection from evil (v. 15); and their sanctification (v. 17).

In the third section, Jesus prays for all who believe on Him through the word of the apostles (v. 20). He prayed that we all might be one as He and the Father are one (v. 20-23). He further prayed that we might behold His glory (v. 24).

This prayer is addressed to His Father. Six times He prays to God as His Father, twice He refers to Himself as the Son. However, His prayer goes far beyond this in being an intimate dialogue between the Son and the Father. In the twenty-six verses that make up this chapter of John's gospel, Jesus uses a personal pronoun (I, me, my) to refer to Himself over fifty times, and a personal pronoun (you, your) addresses His Father fifty times. Every verse averages almost five references by Jesus to Himself or His Father.

This prayer of Jesus is a personal prayer addressed to His Father in personal terms. It is a prayer built around the words "I" and "You." It is not a speech about God; it is a conversation with God. It is one person talking to another person, as an expression of their intimate relationship.

In this prayer, Christ made seven requests: one for Himself, four for His apostles and two for the disciples that would believe on their words. Six times in this prayer, He repeats that God had sent Him. He speaks of the world nine times, and makes mention of His apostles and those who believe on Him fifty times.

From this, it is apparent that His main concern was for His apostles and those that would believe on Him through their word.

This prayer in John 17 is a prayer that sums up His entire life of prayer. In it, we can feel the very heartbeat of the Master as He prays to His Father. It can serve as a model for us, as we pray in imitation of Christ.

PRAYER AT THE LAST SUPPER

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." And he took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you" (Matt. 26:26-27).

In instituting the Lord's Supper, Christ prayed for the bread and the fruit of the vine. He set the example of giving thanks when the bread and the cup are partaken.

PRAYER FOR PETER

"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).

Jesus did not pray that Peter be spared from the sifting. He did not pray that the trial would be brief. Instead, He prayed that Peter's faith not fail. He prayed that Peter's faith would come out whole on the other side to be used to fit his life back together.

PRAYER IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

And He came out, and went, as was His custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed Him. And when He came to the place He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, "Father if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done." And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down upon the ground. And when He arose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, and He said to them, "Why do you sleep? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation" (Luke 22:39-46).

Matthew quotes Jesus as saying, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death" (Matthew 26:38).

Mark says Jesus was "sore amazed" and "very heavy" (Mark 14:33). Luke in this reading says, "Being in agony . . . His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down upon the ground" (Luke 22:44).

In this deep agony, Jesus prayed three times for the cup to pass from His lips; but each time He added a qualification to His prayer: "Not my will, but Thine, be done." Above all else, His desire was to submit Himself completely and fully to the Father's will.

The book of Hebrews, referring to this experience in Christ's life, speaks of Him: "In the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to Him who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard for His godly fear. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered; and being made perfect He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Heb. 5:7-9).

Jesus' prayer in the Garden was a petition for strength to fulfill the purpose of His life. That prayer was heard and therefore He is the source of our salvation.

PRAYER FROM THE CROSS TO FORGIVE

And Jesus said, "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

Christ spoke from the cross seven times. Three of these utterances were prayers.

Jesus' first words from the cross were a prayer of forgiveness. This is one of the greatest prayers of the Bible. It shows the unlimited love that Christ has for all men, both friend and foe.

The people He prayed for were all gathered around watching the show. There were the religious leaders who had organized the crucifixion. There were the Roman soldiers who saw this as just one more execution, gambling over His clothing. There was the crowd that was standing by watching, doing nothing.

Jesus prayed for them all, for the soldiers, the religious leaders, and for the silent majority. He prayed for all those who were hurting Him. He asked God to forgive them.

PRAYER FROM THE CROSS ASKING WHY HE WAS FORSAKEN

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is to say, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46).

Jesus did not ask, "Have you forsaken me?" His plea was, "Why have you forsaken me?" God has turned away from Him. The One who knew no sin had been made sin (II Cor. 5:21) for all of us.

The forsaking of Christ by God because of our sins shows the great price that our Lord paid that we might be saved.

There is no deeper cry of despair than the question "Why?" shouted from one who already knows the answer. "Why . . . ? Why . . . ? Why have you forsaken me?"

The depth of meaning in this cry of deep anguish can never be fully understood by us mortals.

PRAYER FROM THE CROSS COMMITTING HIS SPIRIT TO GOD

Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit" (Luke 23:46).

Jesus began His earthly ministry in prayer, and now in prayer He ends it. He used His last breath to say a prayer of faith and commitment to His Father.

From the beginning to the end, the earthly life of Jesus was lived in a spirit of sincere, fervent, persistent, humble, trusting prayer. There is no doubt about it — our Lord was a man of prayer.

In every respect, with but one exception, Jesus is our example in prayer; He never petitioned God for the forgiveness of sins because He had no sin (I Pet. 2:22-23; II Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15).

The information we have given in this material concerning the prayer life of Jesus shows the significance of prayer to all Christians. May God help us to pray as He prayed.

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About the author:

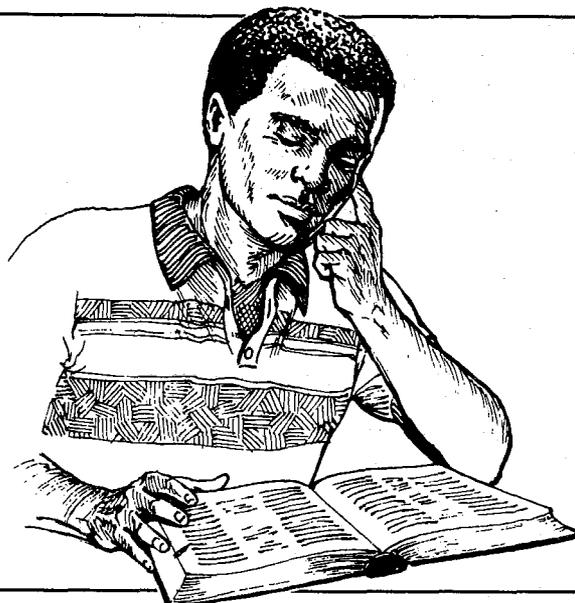
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Brother Kelton says anyone can use this material freely.

WEEK ONE

—Sunday—

You listen to our prayers because you love us and want to help. Gladly do I come to you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Listener. What a description of the very essence of your total being! To be sensitive to every move of every leaf — to be aware of every hurt of every man — to know the song of every bird. Oh, dear God, you listen! As compared with the best of men you so exceed them, there is only a contrast — men hard of hearing — your ears are always open. Thank you, praise you — oh, hear the deepest cry of 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

Listen to me — I could never talk too much or say too little. You hear without time, are concerned without interruption — and give total attention to all I say as long as I want to say it. This is one of the greatest qualities (if not the greatest) I have ever considered. Oh, bless and hallow your name! To hear me at the lowest and highest level — to hear me all the time — Oh, it is almost more than I can assimilate!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

You *know* — as no one else ever could — *my sin* — *my sins*. I hide them not for I cannot hide them. I am ashamed of them — I am confused and chagrined and overcome — and humbled and embarrassed — but I am not hidden. Do not only forgive but grant the inward healing that I sin no more. I want to consider carefully one specific sin each day and ask myself if such has stained my record. *Gossip*: a form of slander and lying. Oh, dear God, *guilty!* Forgive me! Oh, may I set your guard upon my lips .

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Far away in the depths of my spirit tonight
Rolls a melody deeper than psalm;
In celestial-like strains it unceasingly falls
O'er my soul like an infinite calm.
Peace! peace! wonderful peace,
Coming down from the Father above;
Sweep over my spirit forever, I pray,
In fathomless billows of love.

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

HIS WORD

⁴⁰His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

⁴¹The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. ⁴²Day after day, in the temple court and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the news that Jesus is the Christ.

—Acts 5:40-42, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How I want to express my wonder at what you had recorded in this text — “not to speak at all in the name of Jesus” — Oh, I want to remember how oppressive persecution could be right here in our own country. We are never worthy of *the Name* — but when we suffer for him we are so glad — because we are like him — who suffered for us — “Jesus is the Christ.” Dear God, give me an audience to whom I can tell the same glad tidings. “For his name’s sake” — what a lovely expression.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I do with joy and boldness enter into every word. Dear God, may I take the verbal flogging — or the

financial flogging — or the social flogging — with the same resigned joy, your joy — the unlettered fishermen did. May the day-by-day experiences of life show the same devotion. How beautiful to know there were many who wanted to hear. More than this, the experience of Jesus our Lord — my Savior — made it possible. Bleeding backs are an eloquent testimony!

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) That we can and must speak in the name of Jesus. (2) That there were (and are) men who count the reproach of our Lord a joy and privilege. Dear God, help me to be a part of that company. (3) That boldness in the face of opposition is a reality. (4) That houses were used as a place of testimony and teaching. (5) That both proclaiming and teaching are a part of the text — an example for us. (6) The same kind of people are here today to teach and be taught — to proclaim and to hear.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Let's gather around the questions and pray and think:

(1) Jealousy is the cause of so much arrest in God's work — in our own lives. Dear Lord, help me to *always* rejoice in the success and weep in the failures of another. (2) An angel — Dear God, to consider that there is an angel of the Lord even now ministering to me is a beautiful thought. (3) His message to them and his (their) message to me is "to speak all the words of *this* life." (4) The people — the silent "moral majority" were a real threat — they *are* today — praise the Lord! (5) What a wonderful accusation — of filling Jerusalem with the teaching of our Lord. Oh, that man might accept the blood guilt of the crucifixion — and the joy of forgiveness!

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I truly enjoy making my petitions an extension of your word: (1) Dear Lord, how would I react to a beating? (2) Dear Father, I want to be worthy to suffer and rejoice in it. (3) How can I better understand the fulness of joy found in your name? (4) Just where can I speak your name today? (5) I want to be your teacher — help me! (6) How can I communicate that what I preach is "good news"? (7) Is Jesus truly Lord in every part of my life — I want him to be!

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me in these verses: (1) "You will speak only what 'has your heart.'" (2) "I want you to speak for me every day." (3) "It is an honor to suffer for me."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

New Zealand — Points for prayer: (1) *The prevailing trend of New Zealand society is, as in many Western lands, secular materialism and a turning away from God.* Pray that the many believers may make a greater impact on society, its standards and its institutions. (2) *New Zealanders have an exciting record for missionary endeavor*, with missionaries serving all over the world. Pray that this vision be nurtured by pastors and leaders, and that the Church may continue to be outward looking. There are 9 Bible schools and seminaries in NZ; pray that missions may be fundamental to the instruction given. About 30% of all Bible school students are at the Bible College of New Zealand in Auckland. (3) *The Maori people* have begun to reassert themselves after years of cultural decline. Most are Christian in name, but the gospel needs to become more fully Maori yet true to Scripture. Traditional Protestant churches have been too superficial and there is little missionary vision. Syncretic sects (Ratana and Ringutu, etc.), and the Mormons have gained a large following. Too much initiative and leadership is still in non-Maori hands, and there is still no Maori Bible school.

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 ONE

—Monday—

You can make all of life a melody. I take time just now to make this a reality.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Music-maker. How well does this describe one of the most meaningful qualities of your self. You have made music since in the cool of the day your lovely presence was heard and felt in the garden of perfection. You inspired the first man to prepare a musical instrument. The capacity to enjoy music is a part of your very likeness. Indeed, the enjoyment of all the aesthetic is a further expression of your image. Praise your magnificent name or nature.

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

Music-maker for my life. My life would have no music at all without you. With you and in you I hear and revel in a harmony only you can produce. Dear Lord, it isn't that I haven't had a thousand days when I had nothing to sing about — it is rather that you were (and are, and do) work all of those days into the total score of harmony to show me and Satan and all angels and men that you can produce a symphony of joy out of all our poor efforts and mistakes. Praise your name!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

There is but little need to confess that I have sinned — we both know that — am I ever guilty of “lewd thoughts”? Why frame the sentence as a question? Only to hide my shame! Dear God, I do so need help here. I freely, openly, confess my sin — overcoming and stopping is what I need. I know — and claim the fact that habits are formed by repeating one act — one act here is to break the circumstances where lewd

thoughts begin — TV — movies — magazines, etc. To think on him who is love and light, even my blessed Lord — as found in the gospels. Forgive me and deepen my decisions.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I'm pressing on the upward way,
New heights I'm gaining ev'ry day;
Still praying as I'm onward bound,
“Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.”
Lord, lift me up and let me stand,
By faith, on Heaven's tableland,
A higher plain than I have found;
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.

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

HIS WORD

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against those of the Aramaic-speaking community because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. ²So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. ³Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.” ⁵This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. ⁶They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

⁷So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

⁸Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people. ⁹Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called).

—Acts 6:1-9a, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How gladly I relate this text to its ultimate author. How could you take an interest in such a mundane, incidental, personal subject as the feeding of widows? It is because *my* priorities of interests are mixed. You are always concerned with human need. Your concern and compassion was caught and reflected in the lives of the men your Son chose — and yet these men had their priorities straight — prayer and “the ministry of the word” were the most important.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How good to see the cooperation (and organization) of the body of our Lord in Jerusalem. I wish I knew each of the seven men — each of those twelve men — one day I shall know them — one day I shall see them — and then there will be also millions who have followed in their path — all those who have since that day “given themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word.” The ministry of the word was practically tantamount to the increase — the spread of the word — what I would call evangelism!

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

Praise you, thank you: (1) For the constant potential of the increasing of the members of your body. Disciplemaking can and does occur today! (2) That everyone can be, and should be, interested in human needs. (3) That there were and are men who are known to be “full of the Spirit and wisdom.” Stephen has his disciples — men who are “full of faith and the Holy Spirit.” (4) For Stephen — *God's full man*: (a) full of the Holy Spirit, (b) full of wisdom, (c) full of faith, (d) full of grace, (e) full of power. (5) For honest-hearted priests who were willing to risk all to accept our Lord.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Even God's full man faces opposition — why? Here are some possible reasons: (1) In a certain sense we are either full of the Holy Spirit or we are resisting him — there were these religious people who were afraid or jealous — or both — and resisted the Spirit. (2) We either evaluate the facts of life in the light of

heaven or by the flickering candle of this world — i.e., we either have heavenly wisdom or the wisdom of this world. These are set in opposition to each other. (3) We either believe God's word (against all odds) or we reject it and accept rational, humanistic “explanations.”

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How glad I am to relate all my requests to your word: (1) How easy it is to misunderstand. Help me to listen long enough to hear the whole story. (2) Should the church feed the poor among them? (3) Help me to identify today's “waiting on tables.” (4) How could I identify those who are “full of the Spirit”? (5) Give me the heaven-sent motivation to give myself to prayer. (6) What is obedience to the faith in becoming a Christian? (7) Why did Stephen perform miraculous signs among the people?

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me Lord! (1) “Let other people solve your problems.” (2) “Give yourself to prayer.” (3) “Give yourself to the ministry of the word.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Nicaragua — Points for prayer: (1) *Nicaragua is a land of agonizing contradictions.* The events surrounding and following the 1979 revolution are clouded by a miasma of propaganda. Christians inside and outside the country are divided and confused about their response. Pray for discernment. (2) *The turning to God since 1972 has been miraculous.* God has used many means: a) The devastating earthquakes that destroyed Managua brought evangelical churches and agencies together in a beautiful cooperation resulting in multiplied conversions. b) Aggressive evangelism through Evangelism in Depth, mass crusades (notably of Luis Palau and others), also church outreaches. c) The acute sufferings since 1977 due to war have made people seek after God. (3) *The attitude of Christians to politics is a burning issue.* Many are supportive of much good that the Sandinista government has done, others are opposed to their Marxist policies. Pray for unity among true believers and wisdom as to how to respond to efforts to politicize and even limit the activities of churches. Few Christians have faced up to the challenge posed by liberation theology.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK ONE

—Tuesday—

Dullness and monotony are from our enemy — variety and interest are from yourself — even our heavenly Father. I bow before you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Source of variety. How well does this describe our Heavenly Father — and how much variety you have created! All the complex beauty about us is but an extension of your own dear self. How I wonder and stand mute before such creative genius! And then to consider the variety of the men and women you have made — how many animals are there? How many butterflies? Birds? Fish?

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

If I am but willing and open I could see variety in a blade of grass! Consider how the light strikes it, how the dew condenses upon it, the several shades of green in it, how it compares with other blades of grass near it. I am overwhelmed at your essential Being, i.e., Spirit — spirit is the nature of man — how does man's spirit operate through his brain? How marvelously complex is man's eye, his ear, his hand. To think you are my Father is amazement beyond my expression.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear God, Creator, Father, only through my Savior can I approach you. How shall I confess my sins in a way I have not yet done? I have not yet committed a sin in the way I did yesterday, i.e., each sin needs to be confessed for itself — and forgiven for itself. I do fully, freely, confess, admit and accept responsibility for my sin, my latest sin.

Profanity is such a ridiculous sin. Why? Why? Pride and irritation. What should have taught me has been rejected — forgive me!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high;
Hide me, O my Savior, hide,
Till the storm of life is past;
Safe 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

Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia. These men began to argue with Stephen, ¹⁰but they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by which he spoke.

¹¹Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, "We have heard Stephen speak words of blasphemy against Moses and against God."

¹²So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. ¹³They procured false witnesses, who testified, "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law.

¹⁴For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us."

¹⁵All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Then the high priest asked him, "Are these charges true?"

²To this he replied: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he

WEEK ONE

—Wednesday—

*How precious is this time with yourself
— your Son and your word. This is the
wellspring of faith!*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Source of faith. How totally true this is. You have invaded the planet earth and we owe our faith to what you have said and done in the Person of your Son. You have spoken through the writers of your book the Bible. Faith comes by hearing, reading and believing your word. What an abundant source of faith, an abundant person you are, abundance is an essential part of your character. Praise, thanksgiving, wonder, deep satisfaction, are all mine because of my trust in you through your word.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

I know you are the ultimate source of faith, but your word is the immediate source. I want to thank you for my confidence in your providence. You are leading me in ways some people would call coincidences, but I see them as the expression of your concern in the little every day events of my life. You led me to a special book to confirm my faith. You led me to a medicine that will help my blood condition. Praise you for speaking in both your word and your daily care.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

That I have had hatred of one form or another in my heart toward men and women is true, but I want to be forgiven. I want real genuine love (described in I Cor. 13:3-8) in my mind, will and emotions. Please forgive me for any form of hatred. I have hated certain circumstances into which I put myself or others did — but ultimately it was hatred against you — and for this I am even more sorrowful. Oh, dear God, forgive me!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

O 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

“So he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. After the death of his father, God sent him to this land where you are now living. ⁵He gave him no inheritance here, not even a foot of ground. But God promised him that he and his descendants after him would possess the land, even though at that time Abraham had no child. ⁶God spoke to him in this way: ‘Your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. ⁷But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves,’ God said, ‘and afterward they will come out of that country and worship me in this place.’ ⁸Then he gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision. And Abraham became the father of Isaac and circumcised him eight days after his birth. Later Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob became the father of the twelve patriarchs.

“Because the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph, they sold him as a slave into Egypt. But God was with him, ¹⁰and rescued him from all his troubles. He gave Joseph wisdom and enabled him to gain the good will of Pharaoh king of Egypt; so he made him ruler over Egypt and all his palace.” —Acts 7:4-10, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How good to read again of the people — the family with whom you worked in days gone by — but every

one of these people is now alive with you — for you are the God of the living — Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph! Praise your name. What a strong encouragement it is to me to read your promises and to see them fulfilled. But there must be someone like Stephen to tell and retell these beautiful words if they are going to mean anything to succeeding generations.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear God, some of your promises will be fulfilled in second and third generations — help me to be patient. The mistreatment, or even enslavement of your people does not mean you have forsaken them or forgotten them (even if it lasts twice as long as America is old). Circumcision always seemed such a strange act and interest on the part of yourself, but sex is so fundamental to man — such a deep part of man. God wants recognition and acceptance in every area of life. From one son a tribe can arise, a whole nation may come.

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) That every place I live can be a place where God lives. (2) That God is sending me and calling me whether I can see or hear or not. He is more interested in my needs than I could ever be! (3) That God's covenants are all kept — but they have two sides — I do purpose to keep mine. I know he will keep his. (4) I want to worship him in every place I go. I thank you that I can. (5) For family, who become so near and dear to us. (6) That you are a part of our family and work even through family quarrels. (7) Your plans will not and cannot be thwarted.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“But God was with him, and rescued him from all his troubles.” If we would attribute every good thing that happened to us to yourself (as we indeed should) and every evil thing to the evil one (as we should) then we could say really often that you have rescued me from all my troubles. I and my brothers brought on all the troubles we are in. There are various ways of exalting man — indeed you have ways that seem the very opposite, but viewed from your perspective become a compliment not a complaint — man means it for evil but God means it for good!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

History is a good teacher — if we are willing to learn — I am: (1) Help me to never become so attached to this country that I could not leave it. (2) I want to ac-

cept the full impact of fulfilled prophecy. (3) I want to appreciate the Hebrew fathers, such as: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. (4) Such a good example I find in Joseph — I want to be like him. (5) In all of my life God is working something for my good. (6) Dear Lord, rescue me from my trouble. (7) What an outstanding example of devotion I see in Joseph — I want to know more by way of application.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me through this text: (1) “I am serious about my covenants.” (2) “My ways are not your ways, but I love you.” (3) “Use whatever I give you to bring honor to me.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Niger — Points for prayer: (1) *In only six peoples are there missionaries laboring.* Only among the Gurma (Baptists) and Hausa (SIM) have churches emerged. Pray for pioneering work among these and also: a) *The Tuareg*, once rich, but impoverished by the Sahel famine and dependent on aid. The selfless ministry of missionaries from SIM, Baptist International Missions and Sahara Desert Mission opened the hearts of some, and there are two or three small groups of believers. SIM missionaries are translating the Scriptures. b) *The Djerma* still 25% animist, with only 50 believers. Evangelical Baptist missionaries have labored long, but no breakthrough has yet come among these resistant people. c) *Maga (Kanuri)* in the east among whom SIM has a good entry and where there is the beginning of a response. SIL (Wycliffe) is translating the Scriptures for them. There are now about 10 believers. (2) *Unreached and unoccupied peoples are numerous.* a) *The Songhay, Kurfey, Wogo* (30,000), *Kado*, who are Muslims living along the Niger River in the southwest. b) *The Fulani* — both the settled Sokoto and nomadic Fulani of the west, and the less Islamized nomadic Fulani across the whole country. There are some believers in surrounding countries, but only 10 known in Niger. Radio ELWA broadcasts in Fulani, and one SIM couple is committed to this people. c) *Non-Muslim minorities:* *Kurfey* (50,000), *Maouri* (120,000) speak Hausa and are similar to the Maguzawa of Nigeria. SIM has some contact with them. d) *The nomadic people of the Sahara* notably the Tubu in the northeast, and Zaghawa near Lake Chad and west of Agades.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK ONE

—Thursday—

You are revealed in your Son. Your Son is revealed through us. Use this time of worship to give reality to this truth.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Revealer. My dear Father, you do indeed reveal all that man has ever known from the world of eternity. How much you have given us — “all things that relate to this life and the life to come” (II Pet. 1:3). Bless and adore your wonderful name. You also give wisdom (the best use of knowledge) which is a form of revelation. You have also revealed the secrets of men in times past and even now you do the same.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Revealer to me. I am so glad to know someone who knows all things — to you I can come for any and all answers. You have given me a book in which I have the sum total of your revelation and yet you uncover new concepts to me of the application of your word and for this form of revelation (wisdom) I thank and praise you. You show me the hidden secrets of my heart and how much I need your forgiveness.

How do you personally relate to the revelations of God, and God who is revealer? 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 angry out of frustrated selfishness? Dear Lord, please forgive. Dear God, let my anger be directed toward the evil one. At times my anger comes from a lack of rest — for one reason or another I have not kept my priorities straight. Dear Lord, forgive and cleanse. How strong and helpful to have the total washing away of all guilt and sin. Wonderful!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

¹¹“Then a famine struck all Egypt and Canaan, bringing great suffering, and our fathers could not find food. ¹²When Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers on their first visit. ¹³On their second visit, Joseph told his brothers who he was, and Pharaoh learned about Joseph’s family. ¹⁴After this, Joseph sent for his father Jacob and his whole family, seventy-five in all. ¹⁵Then Jacob went down to Egypt, where he and our fathers died. ¹⁶Their bodies were brought back to Shechem and placed in the tomb that Abraham had bought from the sons of Hamor at Shechem for a certain sum of money. ¹⁷“As the time drew near for God to fulfill his promise to Abraham, the number of our people in Egypt greatly increased. ¹⁸Then another king, who knew nothing about Joseph, became ruler of Egypt. ¹⁹He dealt treacherously with our people and oppressed our forefathers by forcing them to throw out their newborn babies so that they would die.” —Acts 7:11-19, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

That a famine would strike anytime, anywhere, is itself a tragic fact, but when you are in it, i.e., able to work through it and actually use it for your own advantage, it is a source of wonder. The record of your thoughts, purposes and actions in the life of Joseph is typical of your interest in every man’s life, i.e., if every man would be as responsive as your servant Joseph. Dear God, I want to be that man! You have and will and are fulfilling your promises today! Praise

your faithfulness.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

A famine has often struck my emotional nature, but you always have grain somewhere and you will lead me to it if I am only willing. What seems a cause of need becomes an occasion for blessing. There will always be rulers "who know not what gain in faith previous rulers have made," but at the same time there is being born someone who is "no ordinary child" — he will deliver!

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: (1) For the wonderful way you are able to work through every circumstance of life for our good. (2) For the beautiful story of Joseph — such a good man — one who has helped me often. (3) That I am not the body — the bodies were carried over to Shechem, but the men had been with you. (4) Your cause can and does increase — just the law of averages takes care of some of it. (5) While someone dies — at the same time someone is born — both are an essential part of life. (6) Treacherous rulers are no threat to you, but are a trial to your people. (7) Courage and boldness are always possible.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Let us gather around your word and pray and think: The Grecian Jews were complaining about the Aramaic-speaking Jews. There is no disagreement quite so heated as that between brothers, but love can solve it — let the Grecian Jews take the lead in a solution. Prayer — and the ministry of the word — "to give myself" to prayer means much — myself, my total being. Dear God, forgive that I fail here — time and thought and energy. There are five men here about whom we know nothing, but this is typical of all your work — each is known to you and a record can be written in heaven for all of them.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Stephen is speaking to me — I want to hear him: (1) Help me to go to the right man for food — one like Joseph, even your Son. (2) Give me the humble forgiving spirit of Joseph. (3) Help me to remember the commandment to "honor your father and mother" has not been repealed. (4) May I remember that one day all that physically identifies me will return to the Lord. (5) May I also remember there will be millions to follow me who have never heard of my God. (6) Whatever I am going to do for you must be

done now. (7) Give me a sensitive heart that I might see something special in every child born.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What are you saying especially to me? (1) "People are starving without the water of life and the bread from heaven." (2) "Forgive freely from the heart as you have been forgiven." (3) "There are evil men to whom human life means nothing."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Nigeria — Points for prayer: (1) *Praise God for the growth and dynamism of the Church in Nigeria.* There have been three great waves of growth: first in the last century on the coast through denominational missions; the second through predominantly interdenominational agencies in the Middle Belt; and since the '60s and '70s, among the more educated through a large number of indigenous denominations and independent fellowship groups. Much of the latter is Pentecostal/Charismatic in flavor, enthusiastically evangelistic and rejects deep-seated witchcraft practised by many who claim to be Christians. (2) *The political and economic crises of Nigeria* have brought frustration and despair to millions. Unless the hearts of men are changed, little improvement can be expected. Pray for a spiritual awakening in the country, and pray that Christians of exemplary life may become decisive in national life. Pray for a government that can unite the country, restore and maintain high ethical standards in all areas of administration, and deal impartially with both Muslims and Christians. (3) *Islam is seeking to gain full control of Nigeria.* The conversion of pagans by bribery or coercion and the limitation of Christian activities and outreach have increased in areas where there are Muslim rulers. In some areas of the north there has been intimidation of Christians and destruction of churches. Christians are both unsure how to react and unprepared for active, loving witness to Muslims.

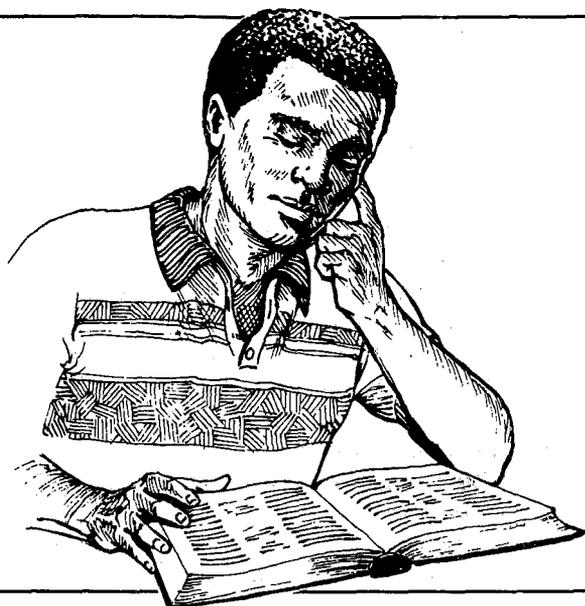
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK ONE

—Friday—

To take a personal constant interest in me is one amazing thought! But it is true! I hold up my heart to you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Personally interested. To believe you are personally interested in every living human being upon the surface of this planet is one awesome thought! Most especially when I consider the thousands upon hundreds of thousands I have seen in India, or Korea, or the Philippines — yet this I do believe and I'm glad I do! You know every thought and deed and at the same time the failures of each and all.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Personally interested in me. I represent all others, i.e., who are your children. I know you want *all* men to be your family, but I take great courage in this thought. I raise my prayer up as a true expression of wonder and praise. I do need so much your help in so many areas — indeed I want to give my whole self to you. That you think of me as an individual is such a strength.

How do you personally relate to the personal interest of God, and God who is personally interested? 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 do sin — I do not want to continue in sin! Do I have “wrath” as a sin? Yes, yes, but I have noticed lately a calming condition — I praise you for this. I want to show love which suffers long, with kindness — not impatient wrath which strikes out at any hindrance. Most of all I want to be clean within! Praise your name I accept such from you!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Fairest Lord Jesus!

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

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

HIS WORD

²⁰“At that time Moses was born, and he was no ordinary child. For three months he was cared for in his father's house. ²¹When he was placed outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him and brought him up as her own son. ²²Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.

²³“When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his fellow Israelites. ²⁴He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defense and avenged him by killing the Egyptian. ²⁵Moses thought that the people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not.” —Acts 7:20-25, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

You have set yourself among families — so very, very often you are involved with someone's son, father, mother, child or with many families. And always there is some really fine purpose behind your presence. Here we are in the house of Jocabed and her husband, but most of all with Moses. Indeed, “he was no ordinary child” born anywhere — everyone is someone special — thanks to your presence in the family.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

To see Moses “educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians — powerful in speech and action” — and yet devoted to you (or was he?) is a remarkable cir-

cumstance. He retained his racial identity, but trusted too much in himself. Dear God, may I see myself in this man Moses. I cannot do your work or carry out your will by human wisdom, speech or action, or by espousing a righteous cause. Without you and through yourself I can do nothing, utterly, totally, nothing.

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 I thank you: (1) For the family unit of which you are the best part. (2) For men like Stephen who know your word and its meaning. (3) For brave and humble Jocabed and all those who shared her devotion for the little one — who became such a great one. (4) For your presence at the Nile River on that most eventful day. (5) For Moses' compassion — backed with action — even when it was misplaced. (6) For your ways of humbling us. (7) That vengeance is your job.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Powerful in speech and action. Powerful by whose definition? Does God (through Stephen) say Moses was so gifted? We believe the answer is "yes," but because of selfish pride it was short-circuited — so with me — so with all who speak and act for God. However well trained and gifted we might be, without the inward, personal involvement with yourself, without the inward communion and Spirit's education, we say and do nothing that accomplishes your purpose. Your glory is eclipsed by our pride. Dear Lord, forgive!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Here are needs of mine that arise from this text: (1) How can I care for the new ones of your family? (2) What risks can I take today that will indicate my trust in you? (3) Lead me to someone with a tender heart who will hear your word. (4) Prepare me to live an entirely different lifestyle for you — if such is to be. (5) Where can I get more power in speech and action? From you, I know — but how? (6) Moses' life was divided into periods — what are the periods of my life — maybe there aren't any. (7) Help me to bear patiently with the misunderstanding of men.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me through these verses: (1) "I risked all on one man, Moses." (2) "I work through unbelievers for my purposes." (3) "The wrath of men never works my righteousness."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Nigeria — Points for prayer: (1) *The Nigerian church* has grown with an influx of millions of non-Christians over the past 30 years. Pray for the correction of inherent dangers: a) *Massive evangelism without adequate discipling and biblical teaching.* Witchcraft, polygamy, tribalism and secret societies are serious problems which have not been adequately faced. b) *Materialism, position and power seeking, and selfishness* have further harmed the spiritual impact of churches. Divisions, fragmentation and a profusion of indigenous denominations and sects are the results. c) *Second generation nominalism* in both traditional and younger churches is becoming a problem of enormous proportions. Where the Holy Spirit has not broken through, immorality, corruption and sin can be just as prevalent among "Christians" as among the unsaved. d) *The rapid growth of the Aladura Churches* and other syncretistic, indigenous churches is a challenge for Bible-believing Christians. (2) *Praise God for Nigerian leadership* that has emerged for churches and a multiplicity of agencies and ministries. Almost all foreign mission work is under the supervision of local leadership. Yet the rapid growth of the Church and the enormous social and economic changes over the past 20 years have placed great strains on the leadership. a) *There are not enough mature, qualified leaders.* So pray for the 45+ seminaries and Bible schools and the expanding TEE programs run by many churches. b) *There is a serious generation gap.* Many older pastors are not able to meet the needs of better educated congregations, and few churches can meet the needs of young people who are often more at ease in English.

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.
It's just like Jesus to roll the clouds away,
It's just like Jesus to keep me day by day,
It's just like Jesus all along the way,
It's just like His great love.

WEEK ONE

—Saturday—

I want to develop your own hatred for sin. Help me just now as I worship you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Hate. I know you have an abhorrence of evil — that you hate sin because of what it does to man. Not that you are hate *per se*, but directed toward what hurts and hinders us. I'm so glad you do hate sin and all that makes us less than we could be. No variance in your love, this is but the other side of the same quality. Praise your name that you protect us from what would destroy us.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

You hate the evil in my life, not me. You purpose to develop all the qualities of eternal purpose and oppose all those which only hinder and defeat. I'm delighted you have decided in your word just what is and is not to be opposed. I want to develop the same abhorrence for evil. I want to truly *hate* sin and *love* righteousness.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is curious that I should now here relate to the reverse of righteous hatred and talk about, pray about, and confess to my righteous Father my need to be forgiven of "railing." It would seem that one form or another of this sin appears so very often — we rail at one another and at you. Cutting one another down in a false form of humor is one expression of this sin. Dear Lord, give me the deep love I want for all and most of all for you.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

A mighty fortress is our God,
A bulwark never failing;
Our helper He, amid the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great,
And, armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

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

HIS WORD

²⁶“The next day Moses came upon two Israelites who were fighting. He tried to reconcile them by saying, ‘Men, you are brothers; why do you want to hurt each other?’

²⁷“But the man who was mistreating the other pushed Moses aside and said, ‘Who made you ruler and judge over us?’ ²⁸Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?’ ²⁹When Moses heard this, he fled to Midian, where he settled as a foreigner and had two sons.

³⁰“After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai. ³¹When he saw this, he was amazed at the sight. As he went over to look more closely, he heard the Lord's voice: ³²‘I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.’ Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look. ³³“Then the Lord said to him, ‘Take off your sandals, the place where you are standing is holy ground. ³⁴I have indeed seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their groaning and have come down to set them free. Now come, I will send you back to Egypt.’

³⁵“This is the same Moses whom they had rejected with the words, ‘Who made you ruler and judge?’ He was sent to be their ruler and deliverer by God himself, through the angel who appeared to him in

the bush. ³⁶He led them out of Egypt and did wonders and miraculous signs in Egypt at the Red Sea and for forty years in the desert." — *Acts 7:26-36, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

The hatred and frustration and impatience of man — the abuse and misuse of time and body — no worship and total selfish interest — how odious all this must be to you, and yet you are at work. There is a message in all this for us. There is a pattern in all man's mistreatment of himself and his fellowman. Did you decide Moses must flee and leave instead of staying and opposing? "After forty years had passed" — I'm sure you know how many days and weeks and months are in forty years, but not one word about one day of the 14,600 days in the forty years.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I see myself a good deal like Moses — a late starter — how late to start we all are in so many areas. I have preached and taught 40 years from June 1939 to June 1979. There are so many lessons to learn, and so many I did, but many more I did not. After 40 years an angel of God appeared to him in the flames of a burning bush. Dear God, please appear to me in the mundane of this day. May some common thing I have seen a thousand times suddenly ignite and burn with your power and beauty and warmth. Dear God, may I have eyes to see and ears to hear!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Indeed, indeed I do: (1) For perception for evaluation of what I should decide — you decide, through me. (2) That all men *are* brothers. Oh, oh, that we might claim this blessed truth! (3) That what is done in secret will be proclaimed in public. (4) That time is not at all a part of eternity — and yet so precious to man. (5) That you and your communication are a flame in a bush — so like me me — and all us preachers. (6) Dear God, you are not dead. You see and hear our groanings! (7) He who men reject can be accepted and used of God.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Who made you a ruler and judge?" Man resents deeply any man anytime assuming rights not given — yet God *has* set and sent men over other men as rulers and *deliverers* (not *judges* in the sense of condemnation). And who does God use? Look — (1) A tonguetied old man. (2) A misfit from Egypt. (3) A Jew who lived like the Gentiles. (4) A man with a story no one would believe. (5) One who established a deep, deep reverence for God. (6) One who lost all confidence in

himself and gained it all back a thousandfold as he placed his confidence in God. (7) One who obeyed God's words in spite of everything and everyone.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Requests from Hebrew history: (1) May I wait upon your timing. (2) Give me the humility to recognize your negative answers. (3) Help me to see that inactivity can be productive. (4) Speak to me today in the ordinary circumstances of my life. (5) Give me a compassionate heart for those who suffer. (6) Where is the "Red Sea" in my life? (7) Open my eyes to follow our prophet, my Lord.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What does the record of Moses say to me? (1) "Stand still and see the salvation of your God." (2) "I speak today in my holy word." (3) "Men still await a deliverer."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Nigeria — Points for prayer: (1) *The Southeast — this region was pioneered by Presbyterians, Catholics, QIM, etc.* The Christians are in a large majority. The civil war was a harrowing time, and through the suffering came spiritual deepening and revival to many congregations. Outreach has been vigorous. (2) *Unreached peoples and areas in the SE.* The Igala to the north, and some peoples of the Niger River and Delta, and Cameroon border areas are less evangelized. The need must be better researched, and local believers mobilized for cross-cultural outreach, church planting and Bible translation to those groups who are more needy. (3) *The Southwest — the Christian majority is predominantly Anglican, Methodist and Baptist,* the result of mission endeavor in the last century, and also major indigenous denominations. It is respectable to be a Christian, but occultic influences, the Ogbuni cult, secret societies, as well as worldliness, stagnation and lack of outreach are common among Christians. (4) *The Muslim Yoruba* are a large minority in the cities and northern part of the SW region. Few Christians have sought to evangelize them.

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

—Sunday—

Teach me in this time with you that you only hate that which hurts and hinders. I open my mind to receive your instruction.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Wrath. This would be hate expressed. I would soon lose heart if I only emphasized this aspect of your character, but I *must* face the fact and it is that you hate sin and do express your hate in wrath or punishment — no sin escapes — I do not say *sinner*, because many of us have cast ourselves upon your mercy — for you are not totally wrath. Great, wonderful, dear God. I am full of 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

Wrath against my sin, because it hurts as much as it offends your character. Dear God, I must not allow your mercy and grace to outweigh other qualities. You do hate my sin and express your wrath against it. Not only my sin but the sin of the whole world. Oh great God, Creator and Ruler of all, who can stand before your wrath? No one, nothing!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

How I waste the precious time you give me looking at TV — do you want me to rid myself of the set or looking at it? Dear Lord, forgive me, forgive all my rationalizations for my sin, deepen my love for you. “Shameful speaking” — dear Lord, forgive me, cleanse me.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Are you weary, are you heavy-hearted?
Tell it to Jesus,
Tell it to Jesus;

Are you grieving over joys departed?
Tell it to Jesus alone.
Tell it to Jesus, tell it to Jesus,
He is a friend that's well-known;
You've no other such a friend or brother,
Tell it to Jesus alone.

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

HIS WORD

³⁷“This is what Moses told the Israelites, ‘God will send you a prophet like me from your own people.’

³⁸He was in the congregation in the desert, with our fathers and with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai; and he received living words to pass on to us.

³⁹“But our fathers refused to obey him. Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt.

⁴⁰They told Aaron, ‘Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who led us out of Egypt — we don’t know what has happened to him!’ ⁴¹That was the time they made an idol in the form of a calf. They brought sacrifices to it and held a celebration in honor of what their hands had made. ⁴²But God turned away and gave them over to the worship of the heavenly bodies. This agrees with what is written in the book of the prophets:

‘Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings forty years in the desert, O house of Israel?

⁴³You have lifted up the shrine of Moloch and the star of your god Rephan, the idols you made to worship.

Therefore I will send you into exile beyond Babylon.’

⁴⁴“Our forefathers had the tabernacle of Testimony with them in the desert. It had been made as God directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen.

⁴⁵Having received the tabernacle, our fathers under Joshua brought it with them when they took the land from the nations God drove out before them. It remained in the land until the time of David, ⁴⁶who enjoyed God’s favor and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. ⁴⁷But it was

Solomon who built the house for him.

⁴⁸“However, the Most High does not live in houses made by men. As the prophet says:

⁴⁹“Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me?”

says the Lord

Or where will my resting place be?

⁵⁰“Has not my hand made all these things?”

⁵¹“You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit! ⁵²Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him — ⁵³you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it.” — *Acts 7:37-53, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How wonderful is your promise of “a prophet like Moses” — how gloriously did you keep that promise:

(1) Born under tyrants. (2) Persecuted in infancy. (3) Hid by loved ones. (4) Rejected by their own. (5) Prepared in seclusion. (6) Given divine credentials of miraculous signs. (7) Delivered people through death. Oh, wonder of wonders! Moses and our Lord were in the congregation (of men) in the wilderness with the fathers of Israel and with holy angels. Oh, oh, how solicitous angels must have been with our Lord!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Oh, speak to me dear Lord — bless your name — you already have! As Moses received the “living words” so have I. Let them burn and warm and come alive in my total being! Dear Lord, that we might not repeat the sin of idolatry today — of apostasy — of sensualism — of admiration for the works of man’s hands. Dear Lord, the most beautiful house you have on earth today is the body of man — together making up the body of your dear Son. Dear Father, deliver me from “stubbornness” — unclean mind — will — emotions — conscience — unclean hearing and seeing and speaking. Oh, oh, may I not resist the blessed Holy Spirit — in every way let me be submissive.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving from this word: (1) That Jesus even my present living Lord is my prophet, i.e., teacher. (2) He is with me now, inside in the person of the Holy Comforter. (3) In this desert wilderness he is my cloud by day and fire by night. (4) Dear Lord, I thank you for every time I have been willing to heed your word — and ask forgiveness for all the times I have resisted you. (5) Thank you, thank you, thank you that I am out of Egypt and hate the very thought of returning. (6) Thank you that I envision Jesus, oh, blessed Savior, on the throne of my heart. (7) Thank you for the mind-boggling display in the galaxies of planets and stars testifying of your everlasting power and super-human qualities.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“*The Tabernacle of Testimony.*” — what an intriguing name! A dwelling place for God — note: (1) Covered with skin like your body and mine. (2) Totally dark inside except for the golden lampstand which had to be replenished each day, morning and evening. Oh, oh, how I want to let the light of your word permeate each day every dark recess of my heart and life. (3) Inside was the table of the Lord — where he could share a meal with us. Dear blessed Jesus sup with me as I do with you. (4) Oh, how I want to spend time with you “ministering in the Holy Place,” and you with me.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Petitions from Stephen’s defense: (1) Dear Lord, may I hear your prophet Jesus. (2) May your word relate to all of life — all of my life. (3) Help me not to try your patience in my repentance. (4) May I treat your tabernacle — even my body — in a way that brings honor to you. (5) Lift my eyes above the ordinary to see your eternal purpose at work. (6) May I in no way resist the Holy Spirit. (7) Give me the courage to rebuke sin when it will help.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me: (1) “Keep your heart out of Egypt.” (2) “Burn up all your idols.” (3) “The most high does not live in houses made by hands.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Nigeria — Points for prayer: (1) *The Middle Belt* was pioneered at great cost in the early years of this century. The ministries of the early missions have been merged with, or absorbed by, their large daughter churches. Pray for the continuing work of the missionaries in their self-effacing ministry of support and help to these churches in their maturation and outreach. (2) *Muslim missionary activity* has been most marked in this region. Considerable efforts are made to win over pagans and backsliding Christians. Pray that these attempts may be frustrated by conversions to Christ. Pray that Christians may overcome historic hatreds and personal fears for courageous witnessing to Muslims in love. (3) *The North* — there have been great gospel advances into this Muslim area over the last 20 years. There is a slow but steady trickle of Muslims being converted and churches planted.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine,
For Thee all the follies of sin I resign;
My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

WEEK TWO

—Monday—

“Fill me with fire, where once I burned with shame; grant my desire to magnify thy name.”



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Fire. A fire is not only destructive. But you *do* destroy as well as build up. A fire — even yourself — can and does warm those who are cold. How cold life is without you, and there are two billion people who have never heard of you or your Son! A fire offers light and you do indeed supply such light!

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

Fire for me! Burn out all my dross! Warm the very depths of my total inward being, enlighten me in every area of need. Dear God, become fire for me, to me. How I want you to accomplish in me all of yourself, all of your personal qualities. Consume the chaff of this life in me.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

How many unnecessary besetting sins I have — I know you hate them, your wrath is against them — only because they *hurt me*. Dear God, I do, I do want to lay them aside. I openly, fully, candidly, name my personal sins — “shameful speaking” — get it out of my mouth and clear the record — “passion” — immoral thoughts expressed in some form of “passion.” Oh, God, 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 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

⁵⁴When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. ⁵⁵But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

⁵⁶“Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

⁵⁷At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, ⁵⁸dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

⁵⁹While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” ⁶⁰Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.

And Saul was there, giving approval to his death. **8** On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. ²Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him.

—Acts 7:54-8:2, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

When your servant Stephen looked up into your presence what did he see? He saw because he was full of the Holy Spirit — he saw a revelation of a part of your very person, your character, your total being. But oh, oh, he saw Jesus standing at your right hand! I do not know if there was any materialization of yourself. Whatever it was, it was a great source of strength for Stephen. He did not fear the face of man

when he had looked into *your* face.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Lord, help me to believe that in every death there is a purpose we cannot see — in the streets of Calcutta, or the homes of Kanpur, or an apartment in Tokyo, someone, several someones have died — one every two seconds dies — most all of them with no knowledge of you whatsoever! Dear God, is there any purpose in their death? While my Lord lived 18 years in Joseph's home and worked in the carpenter's shop, men and women and boys and girls died and went to torment or comfort for what purpose? It was for a reasonable, altogether good purpose, which you will explain as soon as I die.

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: (1) For a heaven into which I can look. (2) For another real world (of the Spirit) which is much more real than the one I am in. (3) That no one can challenge Jesus' claim of Lordship. (4) That death is an open door, not a blind alley. (5) For someone who died like my Lord, i.e., in the same frame of mind. (6) That Saul saw beyond the stones and carnage. (7) That I can commit myself to the same Lord and faith for today.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Let's gather around his word and think and pray: Moses was taken care of for three months by someone else — even great Moses was once a helpless babe — so also was my Lord, and, so was I. Pharaoh's daughter had a mother's heart of love and concern — there are some today among the rich and powerful. A secular education does not need to corrupt you if you are taught by your mother. A visit to some people will not turn out like you think it will — some will love you — many will listen — some will hate you. But deliverance in the name and attitude of our Lord is yet our purpose in life.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Stephen speaks to my heart: (1) Give me a new, fresh look at the character of God. (2) How I need to more freely understand the authority of my Lord. (3) Keep me more aware of your presence than the presence of men. (4) Remind me again and again that: "no word of God is void of power." (5) Give me the unselfish love of my Lord and Stephen for those who hated them. (6) May I be more aware of the world beyond. (7) Thank you for godly men, wherever I find them.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I hear you say: (1) "Love me in life — meet me in death." (2) "I give a hope both sure and steadfast." (3) "Persecution is not all bad."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Norway — Points for prayer: (1) *There is much spiritual life in Norway* through the influence of Pietism, prayer and revival movements within the State Church over the past 300 years, which have left a strong evangelical heritage. Yet today believers long for revival. Pray for a fresh outpouring of the Spirit that will thrust out more soul-winners and evangelists. (2) *The Lutheran Church* is unique in Europe, for although it is the State Church, most of the pastors are theologically evangelical. Most Norwegians, though, have little understanding of the new-birth. Many volunteer organizations have sprung up within the Church with a burden for home and overseas evangelism. Pray that this large Church may not be moved from its biblical basis, and may be continually freshened by the work of the Holy Spirit. (3) *The Free Churches* are a small but significant minority, yet only a few of the Pentecostal groups and Baptists are showing any growth at all. Pray that this stagnation may end, and that a new vision for evangelism may emerge.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK TWO

—Tuesday—

You are wholly other and at the same time intimately personal. I am full of wonder before you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Holy-Pure. Dear Lord, holiness is a foreboding word, but this is one of the most attractive qualities of yourself! That you can be morally perfect as well as intellectually perfect is a wonderful quality — to know and worship Someone who has never made a mistake (intellectually or morally) and never will is a thought of solid comfort. Eternal security is your very nature.

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

Holy and pure for *me*. I could be terribly intimidated by such a thought, but the other qualities of yourself prevent this. I am instead full of admiration and wonder. You can and do impute this holiness and purity to me. Praise your holiness and purity.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

When I consider my sin and ignorance and your holiness and purity I am overwhelmed, but I am also cleansed because you are total forgiveness and mercy. It is indeed not only good but needed. Dear God, I want to learn more fully how to repent and how to adequately confess my sins.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

'Tis the 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!

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

HIS WORD

³But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.

⁴Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. ⁵Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there. ⁶When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said.

⁷With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed. —Acts 8:3-7, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How delighted I am to share your word — to contemplate the activities of your servant Saul. I know of the personal interest you had in his life (and every man — but as a servant of yours for a particular task.) Dear God, how the example of those who were scattered blesses my life. To think that everywhere they went they were moved to tell of your love. Thank you, thank you for moving Dr. Luke to tell of Philip — he was only one among a multitude who told — but his bold, glad witness is such a help. Was it because the apostles laid their hands upon his head that he was able to do the miraculous signs?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

It was through the Holy Spirit that such signs were

done — it was to confirm his word. The great joy in the city of Samaria was due to the good news as well as the healings and exorcism. Dear God, do you want us to do this today? Is not your word already confirmed by the complete record before us? Is the attention and interest of persons today to be secured by the supernatural? “Many paralytics and cripples were healed.” Why? As signs — to cause wonder and interest — would not such interest and wonder be caused by the same signs now? Is your word adequate today? How many signs will convince people? What did our Lord mean by his words: “*a wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign*”?

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 when persecution comes you offer special help in signs and wonders — in the midst of ignorance and unbelief attention is polarized by the miraculous. (2) Thank you that the good news was so deeply implemented that those under stress were not discouraged, i.e., about the good news. (3) Thank you that there were those who so trusted your power and interest they were willing to accept difficulty as a purpose of your direction. (4) Thank you that the Samaritans were no longer despised. (5) Thank you that evil spirits can be overcome. (6) The joy of salvation and your interest in our lives is yet with us. (7) Thank you that Jesus is right now ready and listening even as I write these words.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“*Philip proclaimed the Christ*” — the power of *desire must* be present first. Why did Philip feel he *must* do this? (1) Our Lord told the apostles and they told Philip (and others) to do it. (2) It was too good to keep to himself. (3) He loved the people and wanted to meet their needs. A person to a person is God’s way of communicating the good news. “*Great joy*” is an awesome thought!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Requests amid opposition: (1) I need the zeal for truth Saul had for error. (2) I need the lifestyle evangelism of those in Jerusalem. (3) I want to be an evangelist like deacon Philip. (4) Make me ready to accept without qualification the evidence of Philip’s signs. (5) How can I overcome evil with good? (6) Lead me to the “greater works” promised by my Lord. (7) Give me the joy of my salvation.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I want to hear from you: (1) “Preach the word

wherever you go.” (2) “You have the product advertised by Philip’s signs.” (3) “Great joy only awaits great preaching.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Oman — Points for prayer: (1) *Rapid social growth* together with war and tensions in the gulf have begun to break up the stability of the old traditional culture. May this make people receptive to the gospel. (2) *Indigenous Christians* may number 40 in two small Arabic-speaking groups. There are no known believers among any of the minority groups indigenous to Oman; the Mahri villages of Dhofar, Baluchi of the eastern coast or the Indian middle-class traders. (3) *Almost all Christians are among the expatriate work force* — Westerners, Pakistanis and Indians. Pray for a pure life style and glowing witness for believers to their own communities, as well as to indigenous groups. There are several Western and Indian pastors serving these fellowships. (4) *Cross-cultural outreach* must be through Christian “tentmakers” in the future. The Reformed Church of America has maintained a good medical work since 1890. Samuel Zwemer, the famous missionary to Muslims, began his mission work in Oman at that time. The hospital, clinics and missionary workers have been incorporated into the government health service. Pray that by some means the gospel may be proclaimed.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK TWO

—Wednesday—

It is because you speak to me every day through your word — your teachers — in answer to prayer that I bow before you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Speaker. That you have spoken in times past is the record of your word — that you can speak is a part of your nature — that you are speaking to us through your word — and through nature is gloriously true! But do you speak to us in any other way? To listen to the multitude of conflicting reports will do us no good! I am very much content to open up your word and hear your voice. Dear God, speak, your servant is listening. Dear Father, I want to open my inner ear!

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

Speaking is accomplished through words. How precious and eternally important is every word you have said — and written. Your words are full of yourself, for they are indeed the expression of your heart. A speaker is of no value without a listener, and one who truly has ears to hear. I propose to be that listener. Dear God, in the inwardness of my being I want to hear your voice as I read your word.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear interested, listening Father, forgive my foolish, willful, ignorant, sins. *Covetousness* — have I wanted that which belongs to another? Dear Lord, forgive! It becomes a bore to confess over and over again the same sin, i.e., unless there is true repentance also present — 70×7 with true repentance is acceptable — if for men, it must be increasingly true for God. I do repent. I do confess. I am forgiven! Praise your name and blood!

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

There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

⁹Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, ¹⁰and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, “This man is the divine power known as the Great Power.” ¹¹They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his magic. ¹²But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. ¹³Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.
—Acts 8:9-13, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Praise you for the conquest of Simon the sorcerer — a trophy for yourself and your Son. Dear, dear Lord, deliver me from repeating his sin — we are not, have not seen and never will be any great one! You are the great One — just by your very nature as creator and sustainer, you are the true and only source of greatness — all others are but a poor reflection — sometimes on and sometimes of yourself. People are gullible and are like sheep — and do follow. But they will also believe Philip — if Philip is around to tell them.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Do you see the words here on the page? The most unlikely persons can and do follow our Lord, but there *must* be a preacher. Will you be that preacher or will you train others that they might be the ones to bring the good news concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of the Lord Jesus? Philip must have preached something about baptism here (even as he did later to the eunuch) or men and women would not have been baptized. I am also astonished at the great signs and miracles he did. I know they confirmed the truthfulness of what he preached — my question is: “Do we need such confirmation today?” What would be confirmed that needs confirmation?

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: (1) That sorcery is so far inferior to the power of God. (2) That people will heed and listen and believe and follow. (3) That there is in man (*all men*) an innate desire to worship, to be amazed. (4) Praise your omnipotent name that you totally satisfy and never disappoint this desire to worship. (5) Belief comes by hearing — not through some other means. (6) It is good news for God to rule — it is good news that we can submit to the Lordship of Jesus. (7) Even Simon believed and was baptized and was saved — and continued in his Christian life for a period of time.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

The conquest of Simon. Note he: (1) Had a deep attachment to a position of recognition. (2) Had established himself for years and years. (3) Must have been in league with Satan and manifest lying wonders. (4) Had some disdain for the dupes who followed him. (5) Could be impressed with the real thing! (6) Did believe that Jesus was the Messiah and Savior — and that Philip was God’s spokesman (and not himself). (7) Went under the water to wash away his sins in the blood of Jesus. (8) Took a back seat and followed instead of leading.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Asking and receiving: (1) Give me the boldness of our Lord and his servants. (2) Deliver me from thinking of myself as “some great one.” (3) May men hear the same message from me they heard from Philip. (4) Give me those who will believe and be baptized and be saved. (5) Give me heaven’s confidence that delivers me from fear. (6) Even men like the sorcerer can be saved — help me to believe. (7) Thank you for the prejudice overcome by the Jews with the Samaritans.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak Lord, thy servant is listening: (1) “The power called great is my great power.” (2) “The Samaritans were saved as an example for all men.” (3) “Being with God’s servants does not make you a servant of God.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Pakistan — Points for prayer: (1) *Pakistan is one of the most open Muslim lands for the gospel.* Despite Islamization, Pakistanis are proud of their record of religious freedom and tolerance. Commonwealth citizens are free to live in Pakistan and serve the Lord, but few have taken up the opportunity. Many missions are asking for workers. Pray that the door may remain open; Islamic fundamentalism or Communist plottings from Afghanistan could limit the present freedom. (2) *Muslims have never been so open to the Good News as now.* Pakistan’s turbulent recent history, military setbacks and secularism have made many receptive to new ideas. Islamization was instituted to unite the nation, but it has increased sectarian violence. Many are disquieted and disillusioned, and fear the full implementation of Islamic law and practices. Yet despite openness, social pressures limit conversions from among Muslims.

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 TWO

—Thursday—

You design all of life — and yet some things — yea — all things are designed for death and then life. I ask for wisdom.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Designer. Oh, bless your Holy Name. How delighted I am to acknowledge and praise you for all the tremendous designs I see all about me. The design in the flowers, in the rocks, in the trees, in all of physical creation — your own handiwork. How I do worship before you. The intricate design in the human body is a total amazement, but the designing of human lives and destinies is your greatest work!

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

Designer for me — Oh, dear God, wonderful heavenly Father! The ways you plan my life are beyond my understanding — the detail and interest you have in every area of my life is deeply appreciated — and acknowledged! Oh, that today I might cooperate with your design for just today. Bless your name that you have a plan for today. Oh, dear Lord, all your plans are good, and therefore it is relaxing to place one's self in the hands of One who does all things well.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

To confess is one thing; to forsake is quite another. As you know, I want to do both. Since we are in the presence of absolutes it is difficult to know how to do more than admit I am but a poor, weak, ignorant, willful sinner! I am most willful or I would not repeat my sin. But I do confess and I *do want* to forsake my sin. I do indeed claim the forgiveness, the freedom, the wholeness of forgiveness.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I've found a Friend, oh, such a Friend!
He loved me ere I knew Him;
He drew me with the cords of love,
And thus He bound me to Him.
And round my heart still closely twine
Those ties which naught can sever,
For I am His, and He is mine,
Forever and forever.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁴When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. ¹⁵When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, ¹⁶because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, ¹⁹“Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.”

²⁰Peter answered: “May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!” — *Acts 8:14-20, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Oh, there are ten thousand Samaritans that would receive the word today if we would go and tell them — perhaps you will need to scatter us — arrange for our persecution so we will be ready to share — but on second thought those who were scattered were filling Jerusalem with their teaching words before they went to Samaria — and it really was only *one* man, i.e., Philip who did it — but perhaps he was only representative. How I delight in the devotion of your servants!

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

It was no easier then than now — we can — and will share the word for the Lord today. Right now, I recommit myself to the spread of your good news. If the Samaritans were baptized believers (and they were), then they received the Holy Spirit — the new birth includes the gift of the Holy Spirit. We can't begin in the Christian life without him (Holy Spirit) but his supernatural powers had not been given. Simon *saw* something supernatural and wanted it! I say all this because I need to think carefully here lest tradition become truth.

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Thank you: (1) For the willingness of Peter and John to be those who were sent rather than the senders. (2) For your power through humble men. (3) That all knew it was your power and not man's that moved men and women. (4) For the "coming on" of the Holy Spirit — was it relegated only to the hands of the apostles? (5) Simon wanted an ability illegitimately. I want to learn of its true source: "the gift of God." (6) For the courage of Peter — his direct application of truth to life. (7) That Simon was given a chance to be saved — i.e., to repent.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Prayer and the laying on of hands. In what sense did Peter and John pray that the Samaritans should receive the Holy Spirit? Can there be anyone anywhere who was saved or "born again" *without* the Holy Spirit? Weren't *all* Corinthian Christians the temples or sanctuaries of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6:19, 20)? Didn't *all* the Christians (saints) at Rome have the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9)? Didn't *all* the Galatian Christians receive the Holy Spirit at the preaching of the faith (Gal. 3:1-5)? The answer is obvious. Since the Samaritans (including Simon) had believed and had been baptized they all had the Holy Spirit, but he had not "come upon" them. We must say this is a reference to the spiritual gifts for equipping the Samaritans to carry on the work of the Lord in the soon coming absence of Philip.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Petitions from Samaria: (1) May I be as responsive to needs as Peter and John. (2) Open my mind as to the meaning of the little phrase, "the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them." (3) Doesn't the Holy Spirit come with the baptism Jesus commanded? (4) Can one be saved without the Holy Spirit? (5) What did Simon see? (6) Give me the same holy honesty shown by Peter. (7) Keep me free from bribery.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak Lord: (1) "The 'coming upon' of the Holy Spirit is different from the Holy Spirit as a gift." (2) "Money will never buy the gifts of God." (3) "Men do go to hell."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Pakistan — Point for prayer: *Unevangelized peoples and areas abound.* Pray for: a) *Baluchi and Brahui.* 75% of the 4,500,000 Baluch live in Pakistan. There are only about 10 known Christian Baluch in the world. Seven hundred thousand live and work in Karachi; Baluchistan is largely desert and not open for expatriate workers. There are no known Christians among the Brahui, who live among them. b) *The peoples of the N.W. Frontier* on the Afghan border are predominantly Pushtu, and famed for their warlikeness. There are only a few believers and no known churches of Pushtu speakers. Over one million Pushtu-speaking people live in Karachi. c) *The mountain tribes of the northern mountains and Pakistani Kashmir.* Over 27 small peoples live in the districts of Kohistan, Swat, Dir, Chitral and Gilgit. For years no Christian witness was possible, but now pioneer thrusts are being made into the region through medical workers. The 3,000 Kalash are largely animist, but turning to Islam since 1975. All the other peoples are Muslim.

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 TWO

—Friday—

*Here am I Lord, send me — just here
and now show me where and when.*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Sender. In times past you sent so many men (and women) to so many places — you are yet in the sending business. “Here am I, send me” should be the attitude of every man and woman on earth. In spite of reluctance, and downright refusal, you are still sending men to tell the glad tidings — our son is an example. Praise your wonderful name — I join the ranks — I did more than 40 years ago. You sent your Son as the first missionary — “the apostle and high-priest of our calling.”

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

Sender of me. Dear Lord, whereas I have been sent, and a good number of times I have responded to your call, there are many more times when I have refused, excused and rationalized until I did not go. I am so glad to read that when the church at Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas out amid prayer and fasting and laying on of hands, I yet read that it was by the Holy Spirit they were sent forth (Acts 13:1-4). I take courage in this inasmuch as the efforts of men can be the means of your sending today.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

My sin, my pride, my ignorance, my lies — forgive them. Deeply convict me, cleanse me wholly, move me to love, to joy, to acknowledgment of my cleanness. Oh, praise your name! Thank you for freedom, liberty! Open my inner heart to receive the blood and Spirit.

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

than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Jesus is all the world to me,
My 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.

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

HIS WORD

²¹“You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. ²²Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. ²³For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin.”

²⁴Then Simon answered, “Pray to the Lord for me that nothing you have said may happen to me.”

²⁵When they had testified and proclaimed the word of the Lord, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages.

—Acts 8:21-25, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Could Simon have had a part in the ministry of healing and preaching? i.e., if his heart was right with you? Perhaps it is idle to ask — the answer is not there. Dear, dear God, I want, oh how I want, my heart to be right with you. No bitterness, no bondage. Is bitterness the root and bondage the fruit? I believe it is! But the real root cause is “*thought*.” Am I bitter about *anything*, or *anyone*? Dear Lord, deliver me! Forgive me! Cleanse me, move me to the deepest repentance. That you should so clearly reveal what is needed for release and liberty and cleansing is so much appreciated.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How often I kneel with Simon to piously prattle the empty words, "Pray to the Lord for me." Dear God, I want to pray, repent, yield myself to you! That Peter and John proclaimed the word of the Lord is a wonderful evidence of your power and love, of the transformation you can perform in the lives of your servants. Peter and John were commercial fishermen of years and years of experience. They had no formal training, but oh, oh, they had been with our Lord — what a difference being with him makes! He captured the depths of the hearts — they *must* tell of him! The suffering servant of Isaiah — the worship of the eunuch was not left in the Temple of Jerusalem. Dear God, while I travel today may I read from memory your word and worship your Son and yourself!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Dear Lord I could really never thank you enough: (1) For the tremendous change in the "sons of thunder" that they are now ready to speak to the villages — to tell the good news that Jesus saves — not destroys. (2) For the total honesty of Peter in defining the sin of Simon to his face. (3) That my heart — that anyone's heart — *can* be right with you. (4) That repentance is possible and for the renewal of repentance. (5) That his forgiveness is *not* automatic, it is conditioned on sincere sorrow that leads to a real change of mind. (6) That peace and acceptance instead of bitterness and bondage can be mine. (7) That I want to repent and pray for myself (not that I do not appreciate the prayers of others).

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Shall we (you and I) gather around the word and think and pray and praise together. Saul went from house to house dragging and committing in prison — what a reverse example for me in evangelism — if Saul had such zeal for opposition who am I to have less for saving men and women. Dear Lord, I am *not* like Philip (or like others who were scattered). Do I speak the word wherever I go? I.e., spontaneously? I do if it is expected or assigned, yes, but otherwise? No! God forgive. Thank you for speaking to me. Simon was a real convert! Bless your name! Wonderful Jesus accepted a man who was a eunuch and did not consider him anyone else.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Out of these verses arises the following requests: (1) Keep my heart ever right before you. (2) Teach me true repentance. (3) Give me a tender heart free of bitterness. (4) Make me a captive of yourself. (5)

Open my mouth to testify and proclaim your word. (6) Break down all race prejudice in my heart. (7) Keep me excited about the "good news."

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) "You cannot serve God and money." (2) "You can be totally ineffective through bitterness." (3) "Sin is a terrible master."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Pakistan — Point for prayer: More Unevangelized peoples and areas: a) The Sindhi and Punjabi majority on the Indus plain. Christians are almost exclusively from the Hindu minorities that were originally at the bottom of the social order. Few Muslims have been evangelized. There is no known ethnic Sindhi church. b) Karachi is a city of many languages and peoples. Every community in Pakistan is represented, and this is one of the key areas for the evangelization of the non-Christian majority of Pakistan. Pray for workers to be set apart for each community in the city. The few Protestant churches cater to the needs of the Punjabis and other minority groups; they are small and the Christians discouraged. c) Afghan refugees have been pouring out of their land since 1978 and probably number four million. The 330 refugee camps house mostly women and children as the majority of the men are looking for work or fighting in Afghanistan. They are mainly Dari speaking, but many Pushtu, Uzbeks and other ethnic groups are represented. Never have Afghans been so open for and to the gospel, but only a few Christian workers are permitted to give material and spiritual aid to them. d) The 3,500,000 Ahmaddiya Muslim sect is militantly missionary minded. Few have ever come to Christ.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK TWO

—Saturday—

I am so glad you have a perfect record of every life — and its importance. Open my mind to this thought.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Historian. Historian seems an unusual designation, but in a wonderful way you are the greatest of historians for you have a record of *everyone's* life — no life is unimportant — it will be possible in the world to come to ask you for the record of anyone and learn all about them — *some* bright morning this *will* happen. You have given us a book predominantly full of history as an indication of your interest in the subject.

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

Historian for me. I am glad you are keeping a record for I have forgotten most of what has happened with me. But nothing, utterly *nothing* is unimportant with you — all has been kept and one glad day I will be able to relive those things that have eternal meaning from my life. It is because of the elusive transitory nature of all we do that I began writing — and encouraged others to do so — but if nothing is preserved here, *all* is preserved in the new world.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Idolatry — am I guilty? Whatever gets my attention — time, energy, talent — that ought to go to you is idolatry. In the area of evangelism I feel like a miserable sinner. Dear God, move into my mind and will and emotions and memory and let me see myself as you do — selfish and willful — please change me! Forgive me — open my heart to you, to the lost world.

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

²⁶Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road — the desert road — that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." ²⁷So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet.
—Acts 8:26-28, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

That you would send an angel to instruct one of your servants is wondrously encouraging since I know they minister to me — and all others who shall inherit salvation (Heb. 1:14). You gave directions, and such strange directions they were. But you have ways and people not known to us, but so well known to you! You are interested in people not geography — only as it relates to people — and your purpose for them. Your purpose is to save the eunuch (and his queen through him), Dear, dear God, may I somehow capture your concern and establish your priorities as mine!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I do expect to meet this man in the world and life to come, and he will speak to me and tell me of the joy he found in finding the Messiah. There are many

more men just like him that I want to meet 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

Thank you: (1) For each serving angel who speeds on errands for each Christian. (2) For obedient Philip — it must have been quite a shock to hear these instructions — no hesitancy, no arguments, no rationalizations, just “So he started out.” (3) For humble-minded people in high places. (4) For the fact that eunuchs can be true servants and totally accepted by you — even if sometimes rejected of men. (5) That there is really nowhere convenient and no place inconvenient for the message of salvation. (6) That we have the same book of Isaiah to read today. (7) That angels are not commissioned to preach the glad tidings of great joy — we are!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

An Ethiopian eunuch — the most unlikely candidate for salvation, i.e., by men’s standards. Consider: (1) Wrong race — since they are not *our race*, you know they are of the wrong race. Praise God, he has no race that is right or wrong. (2) Wrong color — he had more pigment in his skin and therefore was wrong. Oh, oh, how shortsighted, how ignorant and bigoted. Praise your wonderful name, you are color-blind, i.e., see no skin color but only heart condition. (3) Wrong sexually — he was either born this way, made this way by man, or chose to be this way himself (i.e., according to our Lord in Matt. 19:10-12).

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Requests from the experience of Philip: (1) May I be as responsive to your word as was Philip. (2) May I see opportunity in desert places in my life. (3) Break down my hesitancy in speaking to important people. (4) I want to believe there are some men in high places who are as open to the gospel as the eunuch. (5) Use me to reach just those people you want me to reach. (6) May I use travel as a way to reach the lost. (7) Let me see men as you see them.

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) “I can appeal to all men.” (2) “Eunuchs are prospects for salvation the same as all men.” (3) “I am interested in religious people today.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Pakistan — Points for prayer: (1) *Christian missions*

have been working in the land since 1833. Christian standards and institutions have had a deep impact on the country. There was a great turning to the Lord from six of the 30 scheduled Hindu castes between 1890 and 1930. This was accompanied by revival in 1904. Other missions, predominantly evangelical, entered Pakistan at or after independence. The great majority of missionaries are serving within the existing church structures; only a minority in pioneer evangelism and church planting. Most missionaries are from the West, but an increasing number come from Asian lands. (2) *The Christians are almost all Punjabi-speaking* of Hindu derivation. Many are still illiterate. Most are second, third and fourth generation Christians who lack spiritual life and teaching. Tragically, some churches are riven by leadership struggles, court cases, factionalism and schism. Some Christians are drifting away from the churches, adopting Muslim customs and marrying Muslim partners.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

We gather together to ask the Lord’s blessing, He chastens and hastens His word to make known; The wicked oppressing cease them from distressing, Sing praises to His name, He forgets not His own.

WEEK THREE

—Sunday—

*How good — how comforting to know
Someone who is always right! Keep me
close enough to hear what you say.*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Righteous. It is good to know someone who is indeed always right. On any subject, at any time, you can and will always say the right thing. In every situation with anyone you will always do the right thing. Absolute and total knowledge and unlimited, never tiring energy to use it — an absolute love and compassion — not to mention grace and mercy to apply such knowledge and energy. Your righteousness then becomes such a tremendous blessing to all.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Righteousness to me! To contemplate the giving or imputing of such righteousness to me is one awesome thought! That I can consider *my* standing as always right with you because I am in you and your Son — “He has become my righteousness.” In the good news that Christ died for my sins and rose for my justification is the righteousness of God seen. His hatred for sin, his infinite love for the sinner — he has become at the same time both just and a justifier. Praise his name — which is his authority to declare me righteous.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

I do, without hesitancy, name each and every sin of which I am guilty — not only admit them, but truly sorrow over them. I am hurt that you are hurt. I do wonder how demons relate to temptation, but I give Satan no more advantage than he already has. I resist him, reject him, hate him. I at the same time claim the cleansing blood and a totally clean record for this new beginning! Praise your wonderful 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

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.

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

HIS WORD

²⁹The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”

³⁰Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked.

³¹“How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. —Acts 8:29-31, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear angel of God who appeared to Philip “the evangelist” — the servant at Jerusalem — appear to me. Perhaps someone more impressive than this angelic being has already spoken to me about every road in this town and every person in every house. When you asked Philip to “go to *that* chariot and stay near it,” he acted and came running! May I recognize your voice in the reading of your word. Dear God, sharpen my sense of hearing. May I see through your eyes those who would want to listen. Give me wisdom to be able to say the very most appropriate thing to give you the greatest advantage.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Can I ask Philip to stand aside and let me take his place? Dear Lord, would I be as immediately responsive? Would I think of my wife and daughters? Would I worry about my job? Would I question the choice of the Spirit for a candidate for conversion? Would I wonder why we were out here in this uninhabited territory? To all these questions I am much afraid I would answer "yes." Dear God, I want to learn better — Philip is teaching me — or you are through Philip. Would I be as well prepared to tell the story of the death and resurrection of God's Lamb? I believe I would, but I ask for an increase in my desire and 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

How gladly do I approach this section each day. Thank you: (1) For Philip who listened and heard, who ran and found, who heard and related. (2) For a rich man who read the scriptures. (3) That you expect us to tell others what you mean in your word. (4) For the limitless possibilities of where we can tell the story of our Lord. (5) For transportation to move us from place to place that we might carry the word of life. (6) For a desert place where we can meditate and understand your word. (7) That we want to be that "someone" who can and will explain what the prophet meant.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Going down from Jerusalem to Gaza. Let us think and pray in wonder and praise. (1) God sees possibilities where others see nothing. (2) Jerusalem must be left — not entered — to meet the Ethiopian. (3) God has a particular chariot as well as a road for us to "stay near." (4) Questions in the mind and heart of Philip were answered by obedience. (5) It is right sometimes to interrupt and insist on an audience. (6) Kindness and unselfish interest are always rewarded (at least by our Lord). (7) Religious people are lost too — and some are the best prospects for salvation.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How shall I ask from these verses? (1) Dear Lord, make me as sensitive to the Spirit's words in his book as was Philip when he spoke to him. (2) Let me run to do your will today — whatever it is. (3) Teach me to be silent when you want me to. (4) May I see or make opportunities to speak for you today. (5) Make me a good teacher of your word. (6) Teach me from the gospel prophet, Isaiah. (7) Bring an open hearted sinner into my experience.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I am listening — What do you say? (1) "Go, and I will go with you." (2) "Faith comes from hearing my word." (3) "There are many who will believe if they hear."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Panama — Points for prayer: (1) *The famous canal dominates the politics and economy of this "cross-roads" nation.* Nominally Catholic, Catholicism is an irrelevant cultural heritage, and spiritual lethargy is widespread, secularism increasing and sectarian groups active. (2) *Growth among Spanish-speaking churches* was good between 1935 and 1960, but has slowed considerably since. Denominational rivalries, a paucity of mature national leadership in many churches, and a lack of solid Bible teaching and sustained evangelism in congregations are areas of weakness. (3) *The most recent political strife*, too recent to be included in the Operation World book, should lead us to pray earnestly for this troubled land. (4) *Christian literature* is distributed by the Bible Society and a dozen bookstores, almost all in the Canal Zone. Poverty, illiteracy, and low interest in reading limit the impact.

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 THREE

—Monday—

What a lifting — life-giving description of yourself is in the one word “majestic”! I gladly worship you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Majestic. Oh, dear, wonderful Father, how good it is to worship before you this morning! Majestic and mighty is your name throughout all the earth. I like this term in description of you. It suggests exaltation, wonder, beauty, and you are the sum total of all this and more! We expand our thinking way, way beyond the limitations of this little, very little planet upon which we live to the infinite wide expanse of the total of all galaxies — beyond that, you are! Total power and immensity is your name. Majestic!

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

How everlastingly good it is to be related to such a One, to know that I am your son, that you have made me, indeed all men, in your image! Not physically or outwardly but inwardly — and according to my spirit. I shall one day be liberated from this humiliating house and enter into an appreciation of your true Self. Man is majestic in his capacities and identities. But to me your majesty is exciting and mind expanding! Praise you!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

I want to admit and yield up all my limitations to you. Therefore, I shall confess all the particular sins I can bring to memory, but also review the ones you have listed in your word and relate them to myself. “Jealousy” — dear God, I do not want to be jealous — it is such an unhappy quality! such a negative attitude! It is a competitive world. I do not like it and do not even want to think about it. Is this because I am guilty of it? If so, please 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

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

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

HIS WORD

³¹“How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

³²The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture: “He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

³³In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.

Who can speak of his descendants?

For his life was taken from the earth.”

³⁴The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?”

³⁵Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

³⁶As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. Why shouldn’t I be baptized?” ³⁸And he ordered the chariot to stop. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

—Acts 8:31-38, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

The arrangement you have made to tell your message

of glad tidings to all the world is seen right here — one-on-one — if at any time we could sustain this desire into action 16 or 18 generations of it would convert the world in 30-33 years. How profoundly simple are all your plans for success. “The good news about Jesus” is just that, “good news,” but man is so very hesitant to express the joys of heaven. Dear Lord, deliver us from our earth-bound perspective. Why did the eunuch want to be baptized? Because preaching Jesus as God’s Lamb includes the need to be baptized to receive him. It is no accident, and I praise you for showing me that the convert rejoiced after he was baptized.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

My blessed Lord was “like a sheep to the slaughter” — what a thought! Sheep are dumb animals. He truly emptied himself when he became flesh for me. He became a sheep — and what pain and suffering he endured for me. He was physically abused and mistreated, all for me. He was like a lamb to be shorn — meekly and silently awaiting the rough hands of man to cut for profit what belonged only to God. He was oppressed and given no fair trial. It was all for my sin. He was God’s lamb to take away my sin.

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

Gratitude — real personal thanksgiving is such an attractive quality! How I do thank you: (1) For those who would invite us to teach if we would ask them. How many are there who will never be taught because we have never asked them? (2) For the Holy Spirit who knows just whom we should ask. (3) For the privilege of interpreting or explaining your word to men who want to know. It is up to us to tell “of whom the prophet spoke.” (4) For the full wonderful meaning of baptizing anyone — going down into the water to be “buried with Christ in baptism, to be raised to walk in a new life.” (5) For the meaning baptism has for the preacher as well as the baptized — it helps him in a way he needs so much. (6) For the great universal church of which Philip and the eunuch were members. (7) That the very same joy of the eunuch is mine!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“He ordered the chariot to stop.” How often have I wanted the chariot of life to stop, to stop long enough to fully appreciate the joy of telling the good news, to think as deeply as I could and should about my Lord, the Lamb of whom Isaiah spoke. How much do I want the chariot of the daily routine to stop — stop — wait — change. If we stop, perhaps we will see a lovely expanse of water and it will

become a grave for our old and a resurrection for the new — or we will at least see the ordinary in a new light with a new meaning, if we will only “order the chariot to stop.”

Dear God, I want the chariot in which ride all the relationships I have with other people to stop — wait — let me change them — let me baptize them into the love of God — into the compassion of my Lord — into the reality of the value of our soul. Oh, chariot, stop! stop!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

It is so good to ask from your word: (1) Where are the open-hearted students of the word today? (2) Humble my spirit as I consider your Lamb! (3) May I never again complain about mistreatment in your service. (4) Should I include baptism in the preaching of the cross? (5) I want to baptize people in the same way and for the same reason as Philip — help me! (6) Why not baptize the chariot driver? Was it because he was not disciplined? (7) How did Philip know the eunuch was to be taught baptism? Did he learn it from the apostles?

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What do you say to me in these verses? (1) “Preach the death, burial and resurrection of my Son.” (2) “Please tell people what Philip did to be saved.” (3) “Remember the words of my Son, ‘He that believes and is baptized shall be saved’ ” (Mark 16:16).

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Papua New Guinea — Point for prayer: *The government faces a daunting task* in welding such a diverse and potentially explosive variety of tribes into a single nation. Tribal fighting and revenge killings are still fairly frequent occurrences, and the social dislocation caused by half-educated young people flocking to the cities has bred serious urban violence. Pray for the leaders of this land, and pray that they may seek the guidance of God in the affairs of their nation.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK THREE

—Tuesday—

*You live in the midst of your children.
You walk and talk and eat and enjoy
our company. Gladly do we worship
you.*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Social Being. How wonderful it is dear Father to know you *want* me to come to you — you have created me, and all men, for your own self — for mutual sharing! Society — all of it, should be a theocracy — an absolute theocracy. At the same time there is a marvelous interaction of an equal level. I want to be like you want me to. How good it is to talk with you and know you hear and care — to come into the oneness of spirit — into an awesomeness of your personal interest in all I do and in all I am. 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

To be the Creator who made me for yourself — what a lovely thought! Today in my conversations with others I do not want to forget to include you. In riding from place to place I want you in the car. When we sit down to the meal we not only thank you for it, we want to share it with you. In our task of teaching and preaching may we do it before you and be constantly conscious of your presence with us and in us.

How do you personally relate to the sociableness of God, and God who is a social Being? Speak it out or write it out.

CONFESSION OF SIN

To imagine or believe the end justifies the means is a constant temptation and source of sin (occasion). Dear God, purify my motives, guard my mouth, forgive my sin. I'm glad to say that "fits of rage" do not occur too often, but I am not immune. Dear Lord, "lead me not into temptation." The tenderness and kindness of my Lord — how I want it! It is good to come away from this time of prayer clean and pure and whole — 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

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," every day the same;
"Jesus," let all saints proclaim
Its worthy praise forever.

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

HIS WORD

³⁹When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.

⁴⁰Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea. —Acts 8:39,40, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What unusual action for the Holy Spirit! Are we right in assuming the person of Philip was suddenly gone, i.e., in a supernatural sense? Or were some sudden instructions given which directed him to Azotus? In whatever circumstance (and your ways are past tracing out) the eunuch was so very, very glad and I am too. What a testimony of devotion that Philip continued to preach and work among the despised Samaritans — perhaps they were more prepared to hear than the house of Israel.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I do, I do want to feed my soul on these two verses — when we all come out of the water we need to re-

joyce like the eunuch. After all we do have a similar experience. We are traveling through life — someone preaches Jesus to us. We learn of our need to be baptized. Since the suffering Savior was what was preached to us, salvation must also be involved in the purpose of our baptism, but what do we feel and know as we come out of the water? A great deep cause of joy begins in our innermost being — the blessed Holy Spirit takes up residence in us — we have found the cause and purpose of life indeed! Salvation!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Thank you, thank you: (1) For the confidence you place on the self-sufficiency of the eunuch and his spiritual development or the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in his life. (2) For your exciting and unaccountable actions — we will know why one day — it is enough to thank you that we must trust. (3) That Philip didn't miss any towns of the Samaritans. (4) That he seems to establish a base for service in Caesarea (since he and his family were here twenty years later — Acts 21:7-9). (5) That the eunuch was also a preacher in Ethiopia. (6) That it is easier to preach and teach in every village, town and city of our state than it was in Philip's day. (7) That you left this permanent record for our following.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"When they came up out of the water. . . ." How significant — the Spirit of God worked when they both came up out of the water. He works today in entering the lives of his servants when we baptize the lost. He went on his way rejoicing when they both came up out of the water — there is no joy at all like that of the lifesaver or the freshly saved — they both continued in the service of God.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

There is so much for which I can ask you from this text: (1) May your Spirit be very much a part of my work for you today. (2) I want to rejoice in my salvation for the same reasons the eunuch did. (3) As I move from place to place may I deliver the good news. (4) Help me to remember your work continues long after I have left the place of preaching. (5) Who labors for you in Ethiopia today? Surround them with your love. (6) May a door be opened for the preaching of the word in Samaria. (7) Break me out of the mold of American churchianity!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What are you saying to me here? (1) "I can act suddenly as well as slowly." (2) "Man can only truly rejoice in me." (3) "Ethiopia is still stretching out her hands to me."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Papua New Guinea — Points for prayer: (1) The initial penetration of most tribes is complete. Massive people movements have resulted in a nominal and superficial Christianization of the majority, without achieving their deliverance from witchcraft, spirit and ancestor worship. Fears and superstitions have dominated them for millenia. (2) The PNG church has, generally speaking, not understood the missionary challenge. Some have become cross-cultural missionaries in church planting and Bible translation in PNG, but far more should catch the vision. Only about 10 Protestant missionaries have left PNG for other lands. (3) Bible translation is the major incomplete missionary task. The profusion of small languages and extreme difficulty of travel make this a difficult and demanding task. The widespread use of trade languages in churches hinders the realization of the need and blunts the urgency.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK THREE

—Wednesday—

Gladly do I bow before you — through tears and pain I bow. But in this I learn as at no other time.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Chastener. Dear Lord, how very, very effective you are as a chastener! I can speak from experience — and I know I am typical of all your children — at least in the basic areas. How tender, kind and persistent you are — how you have pursued me and found me — not to my hurt — but for my correction, for my maturing. So do you chasten all your children. All the lovely qualities of a mother are in you. All the strong qualities of an infinitely wise father are yours. With tender, constant attention you come to us — and we are corrected on our course — we are turned into a way of profit and peace.

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 can say from much experience that *no* chastening for the moment seem joyous — but grievous — but I surely do not wish to regard it lightly and call it “tough luck” — when all the while you are trying to get my attention, trying to reach my conscience. Dear God, you know I love you and respect your interest, your deep interest in my total life. Neither do I want “to faint” when I am reproved by you. I want to learn by this experience. I do want to love you from the heart — the compass of all my being. Chasten me today as seems good to you.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Confession of my sin — of my need. “Selfish ambition” is such a besetting sin of mine! Dear Lord, I hesitate to say this — for fear I will be prevented from pursuing my own ambition — Oh, Lord, purify my motives but increase the drive, energy, eagerness

within my total being — but humble my purpose, my direction. Oh, dear Lord, how I want to help here. My goals and projects need your hand upon them. Forgive me, cleanse me — Amen!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

9 Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. —Acts 9:1,2, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Saul of Tarsus — what a man! How I look forward — when my mind is totally enlightened, when I have no other interest, when I have lost all selfishness, to talking with him, but much more his talking with me — of being so much enlightened by his words, by his presence. It will be so wonderful to have omnipresence and be able to talk and relate to multitudes all at the same time. How else would we be able to talk to Saul? “Letters to the synagogues in Damascus” — someone's name and the names of their loved ones would be in those letters — this

means arrest, imprisonment, removal from all that was dear to them — but God had another plan for Saul. How much are we saved from of which we will never know? Praise your name!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How wrong can one sincere man be? How moved I am to know God's hand is not shortened — nor his power limited by man's inability. It is very, very possible to be religiously wrong. Dear God, open my eyes, but you must first make me blind. How beautiful to be called "one who belongs to the Way." I gladly admit this position, this direction, this happy fact. I have found the way of gladness. I have found the way of joy, the way who is a person, even my Lord!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Thank you, dear Lord: (1) For the high priest who could be personally introduced to the power of God — did it make any difference in his life — no matter — it does make a difference in mine. He was given the opportunity to see and know. So have I — am I responding? adequately? commensurately? (2) For the letters — God's roll of the faithful. No doubt some of these very people became the dearest friends of the one who came to take them prisoners. (3) For every one who journeyed with Saul — how many became Christians? (4) For the same road today — everyone has his own road to Damascus.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

My road to Damascus for today — consider: (1) We are either persecuting him or serving him; we are never neutral. If we are not aggressively for him we are positively against him — to hurt his body through neglect is to hurt him. (2) God reads the names of every church roll — not only here but in the prison camps and cells of suffering in places we will never know. God knows every one. (3) We never travel alone. He sees us and wants us to see him.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Here are my requests from Acts 9:1,2: (1) Give me the zeal of love — the fervency of concern. (2) I want to make more and more learners of you — help me. (3) Send me to the religiously confused — today! (4) How can I let men see "the way" in my experience? (5) May I in no way minimize the place of women in your work. (6) Send preachers to Damascus today. (7) Why has the good news been lost to Syria?

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Open my ears to hear: (1) "Threats and plots can be overcome." (2) "The ones who oppose the most are sometimes kicking against the goad of God." (3) "There are those as prisoners for me today — love them."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Paraguay — Points for prayer: (1) Praise God for a rising expectancy of a great harvest. The impact of Luis Palau's evangelistic crusades in 1976 and 1982 was nationwide. In the latter over 10,000 decisions were recorded. In the 1983 Rex Humbard crusade many more sought the Lord. Pray that the thirst after God manifested then may continue and be satisfied, and result in church growth. (2) A traditional, syncretic Catholicism, with much emphasis on Mary and the saints, has a strong hold on the people. Pray that the spirit of idolatry and fear of man may be broken; the breakthrough will not come without this. Only a minority of believers are of the Spanish-Guarani Mestizo majority. (3) Nearly half of all Protestants are members of immigrant communities isolated from the mainstream of national life, such as the Lutherans and Mennonites. Many of these churches still use German. There are also six Korean denominations. Pray that these communities may integrate into Paraguayan society and contribute towards its evangelization.

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 THREE

—Thursday—

You are abundantly able — you “can do” in every situation. I bring some of those to you just now.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Strong. How infinitely strong you are! Beyond all that we could say or think! What a comfort for mankind to have One who is never tired or unable! Praise your strong name. Praise to the One who is strength itself! Nothing is too large or small, too complex or simple for your strength and interest. How amazing. I am glad to express my joy and privilege before your power.

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

Strength for me: “My strength indeed is small,” as the poet said. I find in me not even the desire to do. My strength is in you. I refer to moral, spiritual and mental strength. I am strong enough physically to do what needs to be done, but even in this without you I would not even live or move or have my being. Praise and adoration ascend to your presence! The essence of strength! How good!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is an encouragement to be able to come to One who is Strength Itself. You can forgive and help. I do not want to be a part of *dissensions*, but at times I am drawn into them — forgive me. Oh, dear God, you see the depths of my heart and know I am indeed a sinner and need and seek forgiveness and cleansing. Purify me and I shall be whiter than snow!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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.

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

HIS WORD

³As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?”

⁵“Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked.

“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied.

⁶“Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

⁷The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. ⁸Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes, he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. —Acts 9:3-8, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Damascus was and is a very real place. There must yet be the very place near the city where you (through your Son) appeared to this very real person called “Saul of Tarsus.” Perhaps he was riding on a horse or walking. We do not know, but we do know a light above the brightness of the Syrian sun at noonday shone on him. A voice spoke to him, even your voice. He saw your dear Son, i.e., before his eyes failed him. The penetrating accusation never left his conscience: “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.” Dear God, I want to read and reread these words as if I had never seen them before!

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

There is indeed a sense in which this experience is a norm or pattern for each of us in our conversion to you. But there is also a sense in which this is but the record of one man's experience with you. As example, I could hardly ask or expect everyone to imitate the details of my own conversion experience, but what are the principles in Saul's experience that speak to my heart? They are in part: (1) Jesus is alive — who sees and hears and knows all about me. (2) He can and does speak to me through his word. (3) My service to his body is a service to him — what hurts his people, hurts him. What helps his body helps him.

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Praise your wonderful name, how easy it is to do this. Thank you: (1) For your knowledge of every town where every man lives. (2) That you are light and in you is no darkness at all. (3) That you are speaking in words I understand — to me *now* from this word. (4) I can and do affect you in my actions and words. (5) You are my Lord, my Lord — keep me down before you in worship. (6) Man must and does tell poor sinners what to do to be saved. (7) There are those who even if they do not hear or know you are kind and helpful to me.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

How to be saved like Saul. (1) Find out you are so very, very wrong — perhaps religious, but lost. (2) Develop or accept God's goad in your conscience. (3) See our Lord in all his exalted majesty and authority. (4) Let the light blind you to all others — remember Saul never saw the light but a person in the light — it wasn't the light that held his attention until he was blind, but Jesus in the light. (5) See him personally, hear him personally, relate to him personally. (6) Wait for a time until the reality takes hold of your inner being. (7) Let others lead you as directed by the Lord.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

You move me to ask: (1) Am I near a major decision for you? (2) Shine your new light on my way now. (3) Am I in any way persecuting your body today? (4) Show me your Lordship in my personal life. (5) I want to know more and more of your rule in my life. (6) Am I listening when you tell me what to do? (7) Shut my eyes to other things that I might see you.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Having ears, let me hear: (1) "I can and do speak to your personal needs." (2) "You either hurt me or

help me." (3) "Those around you will not see me or hear me."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Peru — Points for prayer: (1) *The Catholic Church* is beset with problems; 80% of the clergy are foreign, and there is a growing polarization between the traditionalists and those who espouse liberation theology. Many are leaving the Church and turning to ideologies propagated by Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and Marxists. Pray that churches may more faithfully proclaim the attractiveness of Christ and the fulness of the gospel. (2) *Spanish-speaking evangelical churches* are growing apace, with many congregations being planted every year. Growth has accelerated since 1980 in nearly all denominations — especially Assembly of God, Iglesia Evangelica Peruana, Christian & Missionary Alliance and Baptist groups. About 40% of evangelicals are Pentecostal. Pray that this growth may be maintained despite: a) *Strong denominationalism* and lack of real fellowship between believers of different evangelical groups. b) *More transfer growth than conversion growth.* c) *A high rate of backsliding* and congregations hampered by resentments, moral failures, sin and divisions. d) *Too little earnest prayer* for growth of believers and salvation of sinners. e) *Too few leaders of maturity and spiritual depth.*

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK THREE

—Friday—

*A whole new vista opens to me today!
When I consider that sex has
NOTHING to do with your essential
being!*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Female-like. To consider you in the image of a woman is a reverse, but nevertheless a true concept! All the dear, beautiful qualities of the best mother and wife as seen in Proverbs 31 can be multiplied a millionfold and yet could not approximate *your* true, real self. Soft and kind and full of concern is altogether true of yourself! How I love you for all you are — a Father *and* a Mother to me and to all the peoples of the earth if they *only, only* knew it.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Female-like to me. Oh, dear Person, not only heavenly Father but heavenly Mother and all that means to me. All the care when I did not even know it, all the thoughtfulness not understood and or appreciated, days of concern and prayer, nights of vigil and work, total interest and dedication is what my dear mother and wife have given — are you like that? Yea, and a million times more!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

The first thing to confess would be my unworthiness, my terrible lack of gratitude, of strong desires that are fulfilled outside your will, status, sex, food, things. Dear God, dear God, forgive me. I pronounce the particular sins before you — accept inwardly the cleansing and feel free, free! Praise 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

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,
When the dark 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.

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

HIS WORD

⁸Saul got up from the ground but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. ⁹For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

¹⁰In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered.

¹¹The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. ¹²In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight." —Acts 9:8-12, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How better can I read these words to you my wonderful Savior and Father than to visualize the actual scene? I know it is imaginary, but I want to make it true to each word you have given us. There is Saul, blind, confused, overcome, full of wonder, led and not leading. For three days in darkness, i.e., physically; inwardly he was seeing as he had never seen before. Were not the eyes of his heart enlightened as they had never been before? You spoke to your children in words, words from you and in marvelous specific detail. Help me to read your word with the same interest.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Oh, yes, yes, I want to hear it, read it and see it again and again. In so many ways I am like Saul (all men are like Saul). Stubborn and self-willed, hurting the One who loves you most, kicking against your own conscience — God can and does knock you down, shuts out and stops all your plans — you are rendered impotent! You lose appetite for all that seems so important. All your plans are dead! Then a vision! A strange inexplicable vision! A man comes to you with God's will and deliverance — God's sight! Oh, to see now with God's vision, to look through his eyes! Praise him!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Yes, oh yes, thank you: (1) Someone thinks enough of me to lead me by the hand — man or yourself. (2) The voluntary loss of appetite, in grief or joy or wonder. (3) Three days — three days in the tomb — enough time to truly decide. (4) For unknown disciples who are far more ready to hear and do than some who are well known. (5) That you know all our names and our very selves — better than we know ourselves. (6) For Judas who offered his hospitality to Saul, for the unusual name of the street — straight is the way — and all life. (7) The "touching" interest God and Ananias had in Saul, and in me and in all.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"For he is praying." Indeed he is! (1) Saul is praying in deep personal repentance! This happened because he saw and heard the Lord in full reality. It will and can produce the same effect in me! (2) He prayed in total brokenness of his plans and life style and purpose. It was now: "What will you have me to do?" Unless prayer carries this element it is not true prayer. (3) He prayed *not knowing* what God would have him do — not to figure it out for himself — but to wait and hear — he knew God knew and would tell him, so he waited. "Wait upon the Lord." "Hope in the Lord."

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Petitions arise from Acts 9:8-12: (1) Help me to make fasting a way of life. (2) Give me grace to repent after the example of Saul. (3) How I want to be like Ananias — give me wisdom to know how. (4) May I be as specific in meeting needs as you were with Saul. (5) What were the prayer requests of Saul? "God be merciful to me a sinner." — Amen! (6) Give me a vision of those who can open my eyes. (7) Help me to be your man to touch someone with the *eye-opening* good news.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What are you saying to me here? (1) "It is not weakness to sometimes be led." (2) "My will for you can be more important than food." (3) "I want to lead you from darkness to light."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Peru — Points for prayer: (1) *The National Evangelical Council of Peru* has coordinated disaster relief programs; it is becoming a focal point for communication between evangelicals and the authorities, and for research into the spiritual needs of the land. (2) *The Quechua and Aymara peoples*, the descendants of the Incas, have begun to emerge from centuries of oppression, cultural deprivation, grinding poverty and isolation. Quechua was recognized as an official language in 1975. There is new growth, optimism and blossoming of Christianity in Quechua culture, with revival in some areas. Pray for: a) *The millions of mountain Quechua and Aymara* still bound by superstitions of pagan and "Christian" origin. There are one million landless Quechua. b) *The completion of Bible translation* in two major Quechua dialects and the undertaking of NT translation by SIL (Wycliffe) in 19 others.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

All glory, laud and honor
To Thee, Redeemer, King,
To Whom the lips of children
Made sweet hosannas ring!
The people of the Hebrews
With palms before Thee went;
Our praise and prayer and anthems
Before Thee we present.

WEEK THREE

—Saturday—

I open every door of every room in my heart! I want you to share — change — purify me from the inside!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Intimate. What a wonderful word this is for you. You want to be (and are) dearer and nearer than anyone else. How I love you and praise you for this quality! That you want to share a part and be a part of all I say, think or do is a real marvelous fact. I do so want you to be that involved with all I am and do and think. I *know* you have a deep interest and concern with all of my life all the time. Praise you, welcome to all that I have and am.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

What I say for myself I know can be said for all the children. How totally interested you are with *all men*, every man, every woman, to thus commune with you is a wonder and beauty beyond description. How I *do, do* want you to counsel me on so many things. How I do want your help and strength. Into my subconsciousness and in my every self-conscious moment, welcome dear Father, wonderful Savior.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

I come each day in a deep sense of my own need and freely admit my violation of your will for my life, and truly seek and claim forgiveness, removal, freedom, cleansing. Have I been envious of someone? Am I envious now? Dear Lord, open my mind and memory, deliver me, forgive me — may I be totally satisfied with what you give me now — what I presently have! I rejoice in you!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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!

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

HIS WORD

¹³“Lord,” Ananias answered, “I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. ¹⁴And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call upon your name.”

¹⁵But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.

¹⁶I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”

¹⁷Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here — has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, ¹⁹and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. —Acts 9:13-19, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How good to see and read of your tremendous interest in the life of one unworthy man — even Saul of Tarsus. How carefully have you characterized him: “my chosen instrument — to carry my name — I will show him.” You gave him a vision of Ananias before Ananias ever came. One blind man was led — you turned his darkness to light. Praise to your love and power and mercy — the man was the same (in

personality or basic inward being), but his goals and purposes were totally changed.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

As you changed Saul you have changed me (and all others who are also your "chosen instruments"). It is wonderful to know that every Christian is just this! Saul was changed by the One he saw — when once the eyes of his heart were enlightened he could never forget *who* he saw, but more importantly, the glory and majesty and power present in the One he saw. I have come to see him in the same light — King of kings and Lord of lords. He heard his name, "Saul, Saul" (even in the Hebrew language). Dear Lord, I know you know me by name and call me, even by name. I gladly, humbly, answer "Lord, what will you have me to do?"

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Gladly do I do this: (1) Thank you for a multitude of humble men like Ananias who are ready anytime to obey you — not without reason. (2) That we are to carry your name — which represents all you are — angels or prophets would gladly carry it, but *we* are given the priceless privilege. (3) The kings and those who are in high places can be influenced for our Lord — you want them to be — you sent Saul to them for that very purpose. (4) We *must* suffer for yourself for your "name's sake" — because we are yours, we suffer as you did — or for you. Help me to rejoice that I am counted worthy to do this. (5) That we can be and want to be "filled with the Holy Spirit." (6) Saul was baptized — what a trophy for King Jesus! (7) The same joyous fellowship Saul had with the disciples at Damascus can be ours today.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Let us gather around your word: (1) Saul went to the high priest for letters of condemnation and he himself became God's great letter of salvation to the same people. (2) As he drew near to the city light fell upon him — as we draw near to the great cities of our world is our Lord trying to enlighten our hearts with a message for them? (3) "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" To in any way hurt the body of Christ is to hurt my Lord. Dear God, may I remember this today! (4) Some small man told Saul what to do to be saved. Dear God, help me to do that today! (5) Help me to see the light and hear the voice!

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How I do want to ask according to your will revealed in Acts 9:13-19: (1) May I be as candid with you as

was Ananias. (2) I want to refer to Christians as saints as used here and mean the same thing. (3) Dear Lord, I call upon your name, i.e., your authority — how glad I am to claim it in so many areas of my life. (4) Do you have a few "chosen instruments" or is everyone such a Christian? (5) How much do I need to suffer for your name? (6) I claim the beautiful promise of Isaiah 42:16. (7) May I so decrease that he may increase in me and through me.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What are you saying through these beautiful verses? (1) "I accept no excuses when I command." (2) "I can appear to you every time you read my word." (3) "Your baptism gave you the potential of being filled with the Holy Spirit."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Philippines — Points for prayer: (1) *Praise the Lord for dramatic growth in Protestant Churches since 1974.* There is an exciting harvest being won in this nation and the Protestant Church is becoming a major force in the life of the country. Rapid changes, uncertainty for the future, religious freedom, aggressive evangelism by growing churches and good Filipino leadership, are all factors promoting this expansion. Above all, prayer has been answered! (2) *The Roman Catholic Church is at a crossroads.* The political polarization of the nation is dividing the Church; many priests openly support leftist revolution. The study of the Scriptures has opened the hearts and minds of millions of Catholics to the need for a personal experience of the grace of God — some remaining in charismatic groups within the Church, many others joining Protestant Churches. Pray that this time of crisis may bring many to Christ. A large proportion of all Catholics are practicing animists and spiritists.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK FOUR

—Sunday—

I need this time of preparation for my work in your vineyard. Prepare me dear Lord.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Employer. How very good it is to be your employee. I gladly claim my place in your task force, in your grand enterprise. Oh, dear Lord, it is *good, good*, to be in your presence today. I want to follow your directions, but most of all to get acquainted with the One for whom I work. Please, please help me as I start to work for you. The eternal value of the job we have to do, the beauty and blessedness of our work itself, to say nothing of the incalculable value of the precious eternal persons who are the end product — all are overwhelming in thought.

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 hesitate to relate myself to you as an employee. As you well know I struggle with my own selfish ambition — my own ideas and projects. I want every one of them to be yours. I would like to back right out of the whole effort if the effort would proceed on its own, but then you know my need and I am delighted to work for you. I will repent just as often as I need to, but you can not save the world nor educate your children with good intentions, nor can you with selfish introspection.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

The above has much repentance and confession in it and I want to reinforce all my decisions, and confessions. I want to hide *nothing, nothing* — as a plain matter of fact, I know I cannot and do not. If you can work through me, do so — I am open — ready — and in the process, cleanse me of (hidden to man) sins and the obvious ones. Oh, dear Lord, forgive. How you know I need it and how I do claim your

cleansing and freedom and cleanness.

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

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

HIS WORD

¹⁹and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. ²⁰At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. ²¹All those who heard him were astonished and asked, "Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?"
—Acts 9:19-21, NIV

¹⁵But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased ¹⁶to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, ¹⁷nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus. —Galatians 1:15-17, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How could you do it? Set a man apart from birth? What power! What purpose, what love! I believe I

was set apart from birth — I believe *all* men have been. All men have been called by your grace too, but most men are like those with Saul on the road — hear a noise, but hear no voice or see no One! Only one who is sensitive and responsive and willing could or would hear or see. Only one who was “kicking against the goad” — i.e., resisting your work in his conscience — could be or will be open to hear or see.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Why did Saul go to Arabia? I do not know — no one else knows either — but we can all relate this to ourselves and tell why we would go to Arabia. I would go there (if I were Saul) to pray and preach — to develop the capacity of receiving revelation from yourself — at the same time to tell the glad, exquisite, good news to all who would listen — to all who would pause and hear that God so loved that he gave. I would want to be above — unhurried and uncluttered with the One who loves and lives and is in and through and around and behind and before all things. Before he left he found the usual response of those who have ears and do not hear, eyes and do not see.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

How good it is to thank you: (1) For the overcoming love that sent Jesus. God in human form. Lord, I believe, but I can never know the depth of love, the eternal meaning of all you meant when you sent him. (2) That you can reveal your Son — not only in history — but in man, in even me! (3) He is revealed to be preached — if he is not preached the purpose of his revelation is defeated. Oh, God forbid. (4) We need not consult with man about what you have already said — man’s counsel is not to obtain your revelation, or to affirm it, or to deny it, or to modify it. Those who loved him before we did can give us much, but there is nothing to be added to what you have already said or to what you already are! (5) Men seldom understand — You always understand. (6) Love — true love — Christ’s love, must be present to do anything anywhere with anyone.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“*I did not consult any man.*” This needs to be understood — I want to understand it! It means: (1) Man cannot interpret my personal relationship with you — only yourself as revealed in your Son and your word can do this. (2) Even those who have had a similar experience have not had your experience and can add nothing but confusion to your inquiry. (3) Our Lord, my Lord set me apart — not man — I am answerable first, last and always to you. I am indeed answerable to man — our Lord was to his parents — to Moses and the Law — to the apostles as he served and taught them — but the first and final court of appeal was you — is you — always will be you.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

The requests from Galatians 1:15-17 and Acts 9:19-21 are full of meaning: (1) Keep me “set apart,” always aware of my new birth. (2) Reveal your Son in me. (3) Dear God, make my preaching effective! (4) Help me to first consult your word before I consult *any* man about *anything*. (5) Those who have been preachers for a long time can help me, but not like you can. (6) May I be enabled to so preach Jesus as your Son that men will hear and heed.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As I speak to you in prayer I hear you through your word: (1) “Remember, you are called, saved and serve through grace.” (2) “Do not be so impressed with men — they are not your masters.” (3) “Speak boldly regardless of the response.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Philippines — Points for prayer: (1) *The growing churches need prayer.* a) *Rapid growth* can lead to inadequate discipling and “poorly born” Christians. Pray for spiritual depth. b) *Funding* is difficult due to the poverty of churches and, all too often, there is dependence on US funds. c) *Leadership* is inadequate. Praise God for many fine leaders, but they are too few. Pray for the 100+ seminaries and Bible Schools from postgraduate to primary level. TEE programs are many and vital if run well. Many of the better qualified Christian workers emigrate to the USA. d) *Fellowship across high denominational barriers.* The existence of many churches experiencing growth leads to competition. (2) *Ideological conflict increases in the midst of this growth.* Escalating violence between government and Communist guerilla forces is involving civilians and churches. Pastors have been killed, and rural churches closed. Pray that Christian leaders may both prepare believers for suffering for the gospel, and speak out to address the ills of society that provide the soil for Communist ideology to take root. Compromise of the truth in acquiescing with the status quo, or going along with violence, is easy. Pray for revival in the Church; such could save the Philippines from disaster.

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 kneel to pray,
Confessing all my guilt to Him,
The sin-clouds rolled away.
It’s just like Jesus to roll the clouds away,
It’s just like Jesus to keep me day by day,
It’s just like Jesus all along the way,
It’s just like His great love.

WEEK FOUR

—Monday—

Failure has never happened to you anywhere anytime. You can keep me from falling. I bow before you for your help.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Cannot fail. I can, but *he can't*. Praise your wonderful and holy name. How more than encouraging it is to know you cannot and will not fail in any area of life — all your promises are “yea and amen” — all your plans will and do find fulfillment — all your judgments are right. How comforting when I know of your essential being! How strong and confident you are — how *all-knowing* — when I confide in you no word you have given shall fall to the ground. Bless and praise and wonder!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Cannot fail for me. Let me stand back and shout “glory, and honor, and power.” When I consider even one of your promises to me — that I will be released from this body and share in the excitement and beauty of your presence — and such a promise *cannot* fail. That no temptation has ever taken me — or will ever come my way without the way of escape — that I *can* endure it if I will *only, only* trust you. I am most humbly aware of your total provision for my life, here and hereafter.

How do you personally relate to the faithfulness of God, and God who cannot fail? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, dear Lord! Receive my frank and candid confession that I need to be washed and made clean within. To come to the Lamb who can and does take away the sins of the world is a joy and privilege. Dear Lord, deliver me from any hardening of my heart, keep me always sensitive and responsive. I am glad to die and have my whole life hid with you in my Lord, and hid with my Lord in you.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

²²Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ.

²³After many days had gone by, the Jews conspired to kill him, ²⁴but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. —Acts 9:22-24, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

The reasoning process by which Saul proved the deity of your Son offers such an example to me and to all Christians. Religious people can be confused — ill informed — or misinformed — but these religious people can be and will be convinced. (Praise the Lord for this assurance.) How I appreciate this encouragement, but it is a warning as well — there are those — there have always been those who will not (or cannot) understand — and in the name of religion will conspire — if not to kill at least to oppose. Praise your name, you are always present. If we are not delivered from it we can be delivered while in the midst of it.

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 can and to some extent I do each time I read the text. Dear Lord,

how is it that my zeal is not so intense? The constituents of my day would not look with favor on my challenging the Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, to say nothing of the Catholics or Episcopalians. The issue is not the deity of Jesus, but it is serious — such as liberalism or salvation — such as division or One Body. Dear God, give me desire and boldness. Help me to grow more and more powerful (in your strength, not mine). I do not want only to baffle people, I want to win them to your dear Son.

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: (1) For your word — a sword, a mirror, a fire, a hammer, a light. May I use it for all these purposes in teaching others. (2) Jesus *is* the Messiah — oh, the beauty of the thought! (3) There is an Arabia to which each of us can go to teach and prepare. (4) That you can frustrate the hatred of men. (5) That there is someone who loves us and watches on our behalf — both man and yourself. (6) I can learn of men's plans to defeat your work and take appropriate action. (7) *It is* sometimes right to run from the problem — when bodily harm is a real threat.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Then Saul went to Arabia. We learn from Galatians 1:15-18 that it was three years before he left Damascus for Jerusalem, we would assume he spent over two years in Arabia. What did he do there? There are some things I do not believe he did: (1) He did not get a new or special revelation he did not have in Damascus. He was filled (I believe baptized) with the Holy Spirit at Damascus. (2) He did not attend some school of eastern scholars to obtain new understanding. What *did* he do? (1) He preached and taught all he found there, and the country was populated with several large cities. (2) He did find much time and a good place to meditate and reorient his life.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How good to ask from your word and know we shall receive: (1) Give me wisdom as I study the Old Testament evidence of the Messiah. (2) Teach me patience with men who will not believe. (3) Give me the same grace our Lord had with men who hated him. (4) What did Paul do in Arabia? (I expect you to help me to find out.) (5) Thank you for all blessed accidents — your providence! (6) How can I help those who are persecuted today? (7) Keep me aware that you guard me and all your children — day and night.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What do you say to me in these words? (1) "Baffling people does not necessarily win them." (2) "The devil conspires to kill the zeal of Christians today." (3) "Greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world" (I John 4:4).

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Poland — Points for prayer: (1) *The land is very open for Christian work*, but few pastors have a vision for evangelism. Many areas of the country are without an evangelical witness. Pray that many hearts may open for the message of the gospel. (2) *The Roman Catholic Church is very powerful*, and has successfully blocked all attempts by the atheist government to deprive it of its independence and freedom to work through its churches and institutions. The election of a Polish pope has further strengthened the power of the Church. Many Communist Party members remain RC. The Church is really the center of Polish nationalism and culture in the face of Russian imperialism. [Note: the events of 1989 have further strengthened the influence of the Catholic Church.] The Church is very conservative, and the effects of liberal theology and the charismatic movement are still small, but both Vatican II and the caution of the hierarchy in recent troubles are provoking greater freedom of thought and action among young Catholics. (3) *Many thousands of young people* have turned from a nominal Catholicism to new life in Christ through the OASIS movement with Bible study groups and camps. Pray for this evangelical movement within the Catholic Church. There were 150,000 members in 1983.

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 was opened — 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 FOUR

—Tuesday—

The glazed eyes — the “change of subject” attitude — the apathetic look NEVER happens with you. This being so I gladly worship you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Always interested. Oh, wonder of all wonders! This must surely be the ultimate of your beautiful qualities! That you will always listen to every man, everywhere, in every language, that you will always be attentive and never tired. What a wonder of all your qualities! I do not have the adequate words, but I surely do have the joy and praise and exuberance to tell you again and again how I and all your children appreciate your constant interest.

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

That you take an interest in me is a great source of amazement. An interest and concern about my character is, I am sure, your first concern, although all I am and do are integrated. I love you and want to so live and think that we can share in all I do. I know how very ignorant my efforts and thoughts appear, but then, there is no “put down” in your nature! Bless your holy name!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

I am just as glad to confess my sin. I have no rationale for it (or them). I simply lay them before you and ask that you cast them in your sea of forgetfulness. I could worry and fret over my repeated sins — I am truly sorry — and I do not want such, but I confess with Paul that “the evil I would not that I practice,” but such being so “it is Satan who dwells within.” Free me! Let me loose! Cleanse and forget! Praise and glory — I accept your forgiveness.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

²⁵But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.

²⁶When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was really a disciple. ²⁷But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. —Acts 9:25-27, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I wonder if you have a sense of humor? Surely the incongruity of Saul’s coming and leaving has occurred to you. I feel almost irreverent to thus express it, but he did come in as a lion and left as a lamb! Here begins the lessons on “how many things he must suffer for my name’s sake.” Saul had “followers” even in these early days of his service to you. What a price he had to pay for the pearl of great price, but it was more than worth it all. How I do appreciate each word of your revelation.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I want to travel with Saul. I want to feel as he felt —

to pray with him. What mixed emotions filled Saul's heart! Great discovery! of both the mind of God and of man: of how infinitely merciful God was and how merciless man could be. Thank God for Barnabas. Oh, how I want to be like him! Full of concern and love — when others doubted, he trusted, when others were afraid he was trusting. When and where had Saul and Barnabas first met? In Jerusalem? Barnabas knew the apostles — they probably had the gift of discernment hence they would trust Saul, or did they trust the words of Barnabas?

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, thank you for: (1) Daring friends who will risk their own lives to help. (2) A basket and a rope to be used for such a precious cargo. God supplies the little things as well as what we consider big things. (3) Disciples in Jerusalem who act like disciples everywhere. It gives us all identity with others to see their human qualities. (4) Saul who had seen the Lord. How I believe I can see Him through his words and the words of many others, and through the eyes of my heart. (5) Fearless preaching in the name (authority) of Jesus. (6) Every one of the twelve apostles. Oh, where shall we find twelve "sent ones" for today? (7) A place for Saul to stay and talk and pray and love and thank you.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"But they were all afraid of him." How the fear of man does work a snare: (1) A snare to fellowship — we could have such a wider, sweeter fellowship if we loved and trusted one another. (2) A snare to the work of God in our lives — God could have overcome this problem if someone had only asked him (thank God for Barnabas). (3) A snare to what God is doing through someone else — we will really never know if we do not trust. (4) A snare to the mercy God has in the lives of others — we will never know until perfect love casts out this fear.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

There are requests I would never have considered if I had not found them in this text: (1) Give me the courage and humility I see in Saul. (2) Grant me the willingness to suffer as found in Paul. (3) Help me to be as creative in overcoming Satan. (4) If I should be misunderstood give me persistence. (5) Lead me to some friend like Barnabas. (6) Thank you for the gift of discernment found in the apostles. (7) May my change from serving self to serving my Lord be as complete as Saul's.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

There are several things you want to say to me from this text — give me ears to hear: (1) "I give grace to the humble." (2) "Even good men make mistakes." (3) "There is always someone who will trust you and understand."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Portugal — Points for prayer: (1) *Political and economic upheavals over the last several years* have brought unprecedented changes, including greater freedom for the gospel than ever before. Yet Portugal's economic plight has caused difficulty for many, and the increasing crime wave is causing deep concern. Pray for peace and stability for the land. Pray for government leaders who must make many uncomfortable decisions to safeguard the future; they need wisdom and determination. (2) *The religious freedom since 1974 has given many new opportunities for evangelism* through open-air evangelism, house visitation, literature, etc. Evangelicals have grown numerically, but the effort could have been greater. The growth of cults such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons has been dramatic. Pray for a great mobilization of believers for outreach in this day of opportunity. (3) *Evangelical churches* have, generally, not grown fast, with the exception of the Assemblies of God and a few smaller groups. Praise the Lord for the steady increase in the number of evangelical churches (815 in 1980 to 930 in 1983). Pray for more pastors and full-time workers to be raised up, and for more effective discipling and outreach. Lack of cooperation, quarrels and divisions have hindered more rapid growth.

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 FOUR

—Wednesday—

That you want me is most exciting! I come into your presence to find out why.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Wants you and me. How glad I am to be wanted — most especially by the great God of the whole cosmos. I realize you want every man, woman and child who has been born or will be born on this earth. You want them because they were brought into being for yourself. How I do praise you for your plan for every life. None escape unnoticed or unwanted.

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

Wants me — Since I twice belong to you I am most glad to give myself to you. Use me, cleanse me, direct and fill my life. I do so want you. I love you and worship you in deep humility and wonder. Dear God, move in my life. I am trying to be sensitive to your desires.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Deceit and bitterness — I have sinned, I am a sinner in both areas. Please change me, forgive me! Dear God, I do want to change. I have changed and I am being changed — an openness to your presence and love is doing more for me than anything else. Praise you — I accept my cleanness. I want to be deeply moved to repentance.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

²⁸So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord.

²⁹He talked and debated with the Grecian Jews, but they tried to kill him. ³⁰When the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

³¹Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord. —Acts 9:28-31, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear God, I want to look at these words as if I had never before seen them — as if I was a brand new convert! How generous and thoughtful it was for the apostles to offer Saul a place to stay in Jerusalem. Was it in the house of John Mark? How vastly familiar and yet unfamiliar every place in the city looked to Saul! Boldness is a byproduct of reality. When something or someone is as important as was salvation and our Lord, it *must* be, it *will* be shared. The apostles had to hear of the attempts to kill Saul from someone else other than Saul. Did it mean so little to him that he would not even mention it? Surely the love, devotion, total surrender of Saul is a beautiful example for me.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I have read this word for myself too much — I want

you in it — in all of it. I have pondered a long time as to the meaning of the little phrase, “the church . . . was strengthened; *and encouraged by the Holy Spirit*, it grew in numbers, *living in the fear of the Lord.*” Just what is involved here? How can I — and others — “be encouraged by the Holy Spirit”? Is this a direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the human spirit? Or is this indirect in the sense of using words? We are encouraged in two ways (perhaps more): (1) Through what we sometimes call a “fortuitous set of circumstances.” The Holy Spirit could be the Person behind the arrangement of these circumstances. (2) *Through words* of promise — or information to direct and explain — such is the ministry of the spirit in the word he has given us. Before his words were written they were spoken — and no doubt repeated orally.

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 thoroughly enjoy expressing this time of prayer and worship! Thank you: (1) That Saul and the twelve could get together in Jerusalem and talk and pray into the hours of the days and nights of two weeks. (2) That Saul was willing to be a true witness(martyr) in Jerusalem — that he probably went back to the Grecian synagogues to undo what he did with Stephen. (3) That surprise of a pleasant kind is always possible in your work. (4) That men can praise you because of each other. (5) That brothers can care for our lives more than we do. (6) That Saul could receive counsel and act upon it. (7) That church growth is a byproduct of the encouragement of the Holy Spirit and walking in the fear of yourself!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Let’s gather around your word and think together: Saul had a need that Barnabas met. He became such a good friend to Saul and Saul became more than a friend to Barnabas — so it can be with friends today. Saul stayed in Jerusalem just 15 days — it only took this long to stir up a riot — and a revival! Praise our Lord for the devotion of your bondservant Saul. The Grecian Jews of the synagogue of “the freed men” became a place of bondage to Saul, but then he understood it — a few brief years before he had led such an opposition against Stephen.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Paul always obtained a response — in the reaction here there are several requests: (1) May I be as generous to those I do not know as the apostles were with Saul. (2) Give me the holy boldness I need. (3) Give me fearless courage necessary for debate. (4) May I learn more and more how to effectively “preach the faith.” (5) Help me to praise you instead

of men. (6) May I be ready to heed the advice of my Christian brothers who know you and love me. (7) How I want to see the church today strengthened and encouraged by the Holy Spirit!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What are you saying to me through these verses? (1) “Speak out boldly for me.” (2) “It is not necessary that all men agree with you.” (3) “Please live in the fear of myself.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Puerto Rico — Points for prayer: (1) *A great harvest has been gathered into Protestant churches this century.* Widespread evangelism, a large missionary investment and many institutions have resulted in a large proportion of the population deserting the once dominant Catholic Church. The fastest growth has been among Pentecostal groups, Seventh Day Adventists and Baptists. (2) *The impact of Anglophone North American culture on the Hispanic Puerto Ricans has been far reaching.* This has created fertile soil for change, but also an identity crisis that affects politics, the Catholic Church and mission-church relationships among Protestants. Pray for the maturing churches and their leadership. A missionary vision is lacking. (3) *Less reached groups:* a) *Chinese* (2,000). A small Christian fellowship meets, but the majority are unevangelized. b) *Slum dwellers in the cities* live in a hopeless poverty trap. (4) *Overpopulation and unemployment have forced over 1.5 million Puerto Ricans to emigrate to the USA.* Sixty per cent live in New York where they form the lowest income groups. Many live in Hispanic ghettos where frustration has driven many to violence, drugs and immorality. Pray for all specifically ministering to this community.

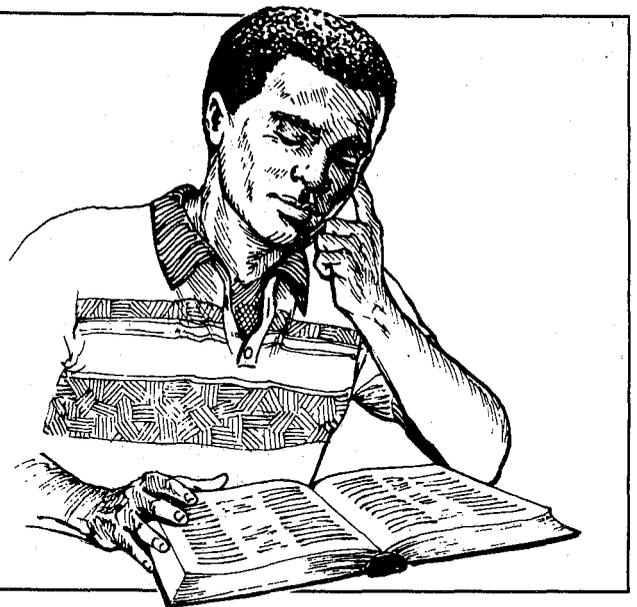
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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 FOUR

—Thursday—

*Ah, to live in the light is what I want!
The light you give is energizing! It is
like heaven. Help me just for today!*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Light-giver. Dear Lord, when you said, “Let there be light” we received the physical light we presently have. When you sent “the light of the world” we were given light all about us — within us and above us, behind us, ahead of us. How beautiful is light! Sparkling, scintillating, diffusing and spreading everywhere — so may your dear Son be in my heart and mind.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Light-giver for me! All the light I have or want on any subject I get from you — either directly from your word, or indirectly from your children who have used the intelligence you gave them. Praise your name! I am *so, so* glad for the light that constantly comes into my life through my study of your word — but more — by him, my Lord, who is the Light of my life.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Why, oh why, do I want to walk in darkness — in any form? Forgive me, I am so strongly drawn to the light — bless the Lord. Cleanse me, forgive me, help me. Move in my conscience to a deeper repentance. Let *all* bitterness be totally rooted out! Give me the sweet, deep peace I need and want.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Sweetly, Lord, have we heard Thee calling,

“Come, follow Me!”

And we see where Thy footprints falling
Leads 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

³²As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the saints in Lydda. ³³There he found a man named Aeneas, a paralytic who had been bedridden for eight years. ³⁴“Aeneas,” Peter said to him, “Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and take care of your mat.” Immediately Aeneas got up. ³⁵All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord. ³⁶In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which, when translated, is Dorcas), who was always doing good and helping the poor. —Acts 9:32-36, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How I would like to have been one of the saints in Lydda when Peter paid a visit! I know you were present at that time — and yet *now* you are present — indeed, you live in the *Eternal Present* — so you were present here and there all at the same time (for there is no time with you). What an amazing thought! To have been in bed for eight years and then all at once to “immediately” obey the command “get up” — is beyond my comprehension! As wonderful as this was to Aeneas it was not for his sake alone that the command was given, but for all those who lived in the city of Lydda and the plain of Sharon. Dear God, I believe.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How shall I relate to this miracle and to the many others in this Acts account? There are several questions I ask myself. Dear God, help me, help me with

the answers. Since I have the same message and people here in Joplin have the same need, why do we not have the same credentials to confirm our message? *Answers:* a) Peter was an apostle, but Philip wasn't and he did the same. b) But the apostles laid their hands upon Philip — so they did, and by the apostles' hands such miraculous signs were given (Acts 8 & 19). But simply because the hands of the apostles were laid on Philip are we totally sure this is how he obtained this power? We are assuming at best. Is it an assumption beyond question? Give me wisdom to answer aright.

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, thank you: (1) For Peter's visit to me on this day so far removed from Lydda and the first century. (2) For Aeneas — whom I will one day see (will it be soon?) and ask him just what he thought and felt and said and did — and because there will be no restriction, it will be easy to do, i.e., of time, space, etc. (3) That men and women turned to the Lord — turned from the vain things of their lives and associations. (4) That you are helping me to project myself back to that time and place and become a participator with them. (5) That total surrender is possible! The Lordship of Jesus can be and must be and will be a reality with me. (6) For dear saints who love you better than life. (7) That helping the poor is "doing good" by your standards.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"All who saw him turned to the Lord." Why? Because they saw obvious evidence of the power of God — at least they believed Peter when he told them the source of this miracle. Because they had an Old Testament background that prepared them for such signs associated with God's men. Because they knew Aeneas and his condition — they knew him before the miracle and they knew him afterwards. Because they wanted to believe, they wanted to worship an all powerful, all caring, all knowing God — and they did.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Aeneas and Dorcas are saying much to me — what should I ask of you? (1) Give me the love necessary to see people as "your holy ones." (2) I need to do much more visiting — help me. (3) Help me to see the potential of wholeness in every man. (4) May I learn the lesson of faith in the healing of Aeneas. (5) Turn me more and more to yourself. (6) Send women like Dorcas into our fellowship. (7) You see the importance of deeds of physical help — open my eyes, change my values.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

There are surely several things you say to me here. What are they? (1) "Healing was a means — the end was teaching." (2) "Help people in every way you can." (3) "The poor are still with you — help them."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Qatar (One of the Gulf States) — Points for prayer: (1) *There are no known Qatari believers.* Pray for the expatriate Christians who have contact with Qataris that they may have the opportunity to share their faith. (2) *The expatriate communities* have been drawn to the country for material gain. Pray that the witness of the small groups of believers among Indians, Pakistanis, Egyptians and Westerners to their own communities may be fruitful. Little has been done to reach out to other unevangelized minorities such as the Iranis, etc.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK FOUR

—Friday—

There is indeed "honey in the rock." I bow before you to receive my portion.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Honey giver. This is such an attractive quality of your character! Honey is sweet — i.e., to the taste — you are sweet and pleasant to all the senses of man. Honey is nourishing — how very nourishing you are to all, and for all our needs! Dear God, you do indeed and in truth know and meet every need. Honey is made from the body of the bee — your goodness and sweetness and strength has been given to us through the body of your dear Son. Honey produces energy. How I praise you for your life-giving qualities!

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Honey-giver to me. How much more sweet — indeed all sweetness comes to me because of you. If my nature has qualities of endearment — you are the source. How full of energy and nourishment I have found you. I surely praise you for this quality. I owe my very life to you. When I think and contemplate the fact that all I have comes through the body of your Son, I am full of sorrow and joy. Praise your dear Self!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

I come to your throne to receive grace and help, to be made clean, to lose all guilt. How foolish is foolish talk! Forgive me! Praise you for the desire to open up and pour out all my guilt and sins. Dear God, I want to be clean! pure! whole! I know you in the Person of your Son as seen in the beautiful record of your word.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Ev'rything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Ev'rything to God in prayer!

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

HIS WORD

³⁷About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room.

³⁸Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, "Please come at once!" — *Acts 9:37,38, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Oh yes, yes. Dorcas did what all of us will do — died! After she had left her body (which is the real definition of death) her body, not Dorcas, was washed and laid out for burial. Thank you that I will never be buried. How clearly does this text say what you want all men to hear and see. Only you can help in the time of death. I wonder what Dorcas saw and heard before Peter arrived, i.e., in the brief time she was apart from her body? It is idle and *wrong* to speculate! It was very far better than being in the body — it was to be in your home — it was in the Paradise of the Unseen World (Hades), but as to personal response we will ask you all about it when we get there. What we need to know is before us in your word.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

One day someone will wash my dead body — one day

I will be out of this clay tabernacle — one day there will be no more days for me! Praise your name. I have a great desire to even now depart this house, since I know how very far better it will be! God's man has the only help available at the time of death. How important the preacher feels when he is called to assist at the funeral — he knows he has the sole source of comfort and strength. Preacher, "come at once."

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 easy it is to thank you at such a time: (1) For dear ones who truly love us and will miss us. (2) For the lasting value of good works in the lives of others who will live longer than we will. (3) For God's value system that says: robes and other clothes are important. (4) That you are at work all the time — arranging the proximity of Lydda and Joppa — it was no accident that Peter was nearby — you knew it before he left Jerusalem. (5) That Peter had nothing more important to do than to help those who grieved. (6) That Peter had left all to follow him — even when our Lord was with you. (7) That you told Peter what to do and when to do it (how else could he have acted "by faith"?).

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Does God raise the dead today? It is not because he lacks the power to do so. It is not because he has changed his mind that "it is appointed unto man once to die." Let's say God does raise the dead today, we then must ask why would he do it? Here are some possible answers: (1) He wants to demonstrate his power and love and personal interest in man — how many people will he need to raise and under what circumstances? Will all men draw the same conclusion from the miracle? How will this prove more than the records of Dorcas, or the widow of Nain's son, or Lazarus? (2) That he wants to prove his word through his messengers is true. Hasn't this already been done? Is there another word from him other than that in his word, the Bible? Aren't the *credentials* given with the word? The word was spoken (and later written) and the signs accompanied the word. What will raising the dead prove about his word that has not already been proven? Please do not side-step the issue, *answer the questions!*

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Death prompts many requests: (1) Remind me all over again that I am not the body. (2) Help me to accept your will in sickness and death. (3) Help me to bring your own comfort to those who have lost loved ones. (4) May I be prepared to be interrupted today as

pleases you. (5) Give me grace to know what is urgent and what is not. (6) I want to see death as overcome by our Lord — help me. (7) May I appreciate much more fully my good health.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me: (1) "Life is brief — live and work today." (2) "The best of people die — for reasons best known to me." (3) "Do not wait for a better time — serve me today."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Reunion — Points for prayer: (1) *The great spiritual need* is underlined by widespread alcoholism (much rum is made), loose morals and witchcraft. There is also much poverty — especially in the highlands. Catholicism is the stated religion of most people. This is still a pioneer field for missions. (2) *Mature leadership* for the young and rapidly growing churches is a priority. The Evangelical Church commenced a Bible school in 1984. Pray that this school may make an impact on all the five French-speaking island territories of the Indian Ocean (Reunion, Mauritius, Comores, Seychelles, Madagascar). (3) *Unreached peoples*: a) *The Chinese*. Many are nominally Catholic; only one known born-again believer. b) There are no churches functioning among the *Comorian* or *Malagasy*, or among the Hindu *Tamil* and Muslim *Gujarati Indians*. (4) *Christian literature and Bibles* have been widely distributed in the past 10 years through the Bible Society, Scripture Union, and Evangelical Church. There is one small Christian bookstore.

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 FOUR

—Saturday—

In ways I do not know — and in ways I do know you protect me. I bow to receive your protection for today.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Protector. Amen! You are in truth my only protection from the evil one — and from myself and from my enemies and my friends. What is true of me is true of all men upon this little sphere. Praise your name, we will never know the terrible things that could have happened to us, and didn't because you guarded and protected us. Bless your name, which is power and love, the essence of 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

Protector of myself. I know you have stretched forth your hand and said to Satan — "This far and no further." You have led me into the ways of pleasantness, i.e., in which I presently walk and protected me from so many unhappy incidents and events. You have kept me from the tongues of those who would lie and cheat and deceive. Bless your wonderful name. How you have hidden me in the shelter of my dear, wonderful Lord — the rock in a weary land!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

As I look over the list in your word I am convinced I am implicitly guilty of most of them and explicitly guilty of several. I confess indeed my specific sins, but "foolish talking," "empty words" — they too need to be examined and repented of. Dear God, how good to be whole and clean and free! A liberty wherein the blood of your Son has set me free!

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

³⁹Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

⁴⁰Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. —Acts 9:39,40, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How often (millions of times) have men traveled with Peter from Lydda to Joppa and walked up the steps and entered the upper room into the presence of the dead body of Dorcas? But on this day I want to share your presence in that room. How every eye focuses on the still form of the body, on the unusual, but how different is your view of this scene! Your devoted servant is already enjoying the wonder of your presence — to return her spirit to her body would be no advantage. But because it would prepare many to enter life rather than eternal death, you grant (and even prompt) the prayer of Peter.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How good were the good works of this good woman, but how temporary — how soon forgotten — or were they? We and two millennia of readers have not

forgotten them! Somehow I want to believe that no good deed done in the spirit of the One who did the menial tasks of the carpenter's shop will ever be forgotten. You have already indicated you have the ability of instantaneous recall in returning to the mind of the apostles all that Jesus taught them — via the Holy Spirit. For those to whom it could mean appreciation or understanding, I want to believe every thoughtful deed and word will be returned in the world to come.

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

Amen! Thank you: (1) For the widows who would never cease talking of the resurrection of Dorcas (oh, that the resurrection from trespasses and sins might mean as much to everyone). (2) That someday we too will be able to talk to Dorcas and the widows and Peter and smile and rejoice. (3) That Peter did not want to obtain the praise of men (women) — the miracle happened while he was alone in the room. (4) That prayer is associated with the miracle since it identifies and focuses the source. (5) That true dependence and humility is seen in the words and posture of Peter. (6) That Dorcas never said anything about what she saw and heard while her body was dead and she was in the spirit world. (7) That I have been raised from a worse death and greater loss.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Shall we raise the dead today? Oh, how I want to project myself back to the time and place of the writing of these words. I notice no "ordinary Christians" did this; it was an apostle. There was no wide scale, wholesale raising from the dead — only the leaders of the body did it: Stephen, Philip, Peter and John the apostles. Why? Why? Because they were speaking the word of the Lord and these signs were their credentials. The miracles proved or confirmed their word. All Christians went everywhere preaching the word, but no miracles are associated with them. Why? Why? Because they were giving a testimony and not a body of teaching that needed confirmation.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Going to a funeral moves all of us to ask questions — and offer petitions: (1) Give me patience and love to answer calls for help. (2) Open my eyes to see that investment in lives is what lasts. (3) May I have as tender a heart as Peter. (4) Break my heart over the heart-break of others. (5) Let me know again just how final death is. (6) Move me to prayer in the presence of need. (7) Thank you for your interest in the sad scene.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What do you say in the presence of death? (1) "Dorcas was with me, not the widows or Peter." (2) "I sent her back to help people believe there is no death." (3) "Prayer is the most powerful force in the universe."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Romania — Points for prayer: (1) *The authorities have used every possible means to control the churches* — infiltration of informers, falsely accusing pastors and church leaders, and blackmailing them to conform to government demands in exchange for reduced persecution. Many leaders in the larger churches are therefore servile to the state. Pray for all Christian leaders in their unenviable situation. (2) *Persecution of all groups who refuse to conform has been particularly severe* — and the level of pressure has gradually increased between 1974 and 1986. Especially persecuted are the evangelical Orthodox "Lord's Army," Baptists, Brethren and Pentecostals, because of their vigorous evangelism and refusal to compromise the Truth. Pray that Western leaders may make the right representations to the government to adhere to international agreements on religious freedom. The ethnic minority churches are also under great pressure — Lutherans (German) and Reformed (Hungarian and German) in Transylvania. (3) *The forms of persecution are many* — blackmail, limitations on church buildings, baptisms, and youth work, violent disruption of meetings, destruction of "illegal" church buildings, heavy fines, imprisonments, enforced exile, dismissal from work and frequent house searches. Pray for our suffering brethren, that they may stand firm in the Lord and continue their courageous witness.

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 FIVE

—Sunday—

We often say "If I only had the chance" — We do not live or die by chance — we live by opportunities given by you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Opportunity-maker. It is a joy for me to relate to this quality of yourself! All the good open doors for a knowledge of yourself — all the opportunities to teach and preach your word for others are arranged by you. Every copy of the scriptures is a marvelous opportunity for someone to know you. Oh, praise your beautiful name. How good to know you are the One who opens every door that leads to 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

Opportunity for me — you are opportunity itself for me. I attribute every project to you. If they failed it was a lack of either faith or wisdom, both I could have had from you. If the projects succeed, I want to offer every ounce of credit to you! There have been so many opportunities for me! I have had some response in teaching and preaching and writing and publishing and in it all I want to let everyone glorify you (I am so sad and sorry that my terrible pride and ignorance have hindered this), but I do wonder and worship in praise before you!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Opportunity-maker, I want to be forgiven for every time I forced a situation and made my own opportunity — although I must confess just as freely that I have not always known the difference. Dear One, cleanse me of *all* my hidden faults.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove 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 a Stranger at the door,
Let Him in;
He has been there oft before,
Let Him in;
Let Him in, ere He is gone,
Let Him in, the Holy One,
Jesus Christ, the Father's Son,
Let Him in.

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

HIS WORD

⁴⁰Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened here eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. ⁴¹He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called the believers and the widows and presented her to them alive. ⁴²This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. ⁴³Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon. —Acts 9:40-43, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What shall I say to you about raising the dead? Wow! I'm nonplused, I am speechless, I really have no words to register my response! I do want to be one of those "believers" who saw Dorcas after her resurrection — the primary purpose was not her resurrection but to cause many to believe in your dear Son. Jesus is the great miracle — his resurrection is far more important — he was raised to die no more. Did Peter teach these eager, open-hearted people? Of course he did. This was the real power and purpose behind the raising of this dear woman. I want to hear every word he said (says). I can read Peter's epistles and receive some of the same teaching he must have given these disciples.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

“Tabitha, get up.” Such a word will one day (oh, that glad last day) be heard — every man and woman’s name will be called and we shall all “get up.” My Lord, are you saying to me right now, “get up,” “arise you who are asleep” and I will shine upon you like the light of the bright morning sun. It does seem to me that if this were a pattern to be repeated it would have happened in at least one more “Joppa” — or Joplin — since that day. Bless the Lord, “a greater work,” a truly greater work has happened. Someone has been raised from an eternal death in trespasses and sins. Raised to walk in the fresh new sunlight of your love!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

I always look forward to this expression. Thanks seems so inadequate. (1) For your definition of death — “the body apart from the Spirit is dead” — her body has been washed and laid out on the bed — and it was to that body Peter turned and spoke. (2) For your definition of seeing — or sight — we see with our spirits — through our eyes — when the Spirit is absent so is sight. (3) For the courtesy of Peter — thoughtful, kind man — like our Lord. (4) For the circumstances of your miracle — open, public, no question of the reality. (5) To be alive twice — once alive in the old life, now alive in a new life — the same old friends and surroundings, but something beautiful has been added. (6) That Peter was “at home” or comfortable with “a tanner” (an unlikely man with whom to stay). (7) For the commonness of all the record, the common name of “Simon” — like Bill or Henry today. Thank you for this lovely, lovely account.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

We can gather around your word with absorbed and absorbing interest: Why did Peter visit Lydda? He was on a journey for *some* reason — perhaps what he did when he got there would indicate why he came. He came to see and confirm the faith of the saints — in the process he healed Aeneas. The facts about Aeneas: a) He was a paralytic in advanced stages of paralysis. b) He had been in bed for eight years. c) He was instantaneously healed. We could add that all who lived in the town and the country saw him, knew him and turned to the Lord. How careful and complete is the confirmation of our faith.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What a glad amazing time is a resurrection. I am moved to ask: (1) How can I better speak to those

dead in sin? (2) Give me the same purpose in preaching and serving that filled the heart of Peter. (3) May I remember that I have been raised from a death worse than physical. (4) Dear Lord, where is the “new life” and wonder of forgiveness? (5) Teach me the real in-depth meaning of “repentance unto life.” (6) How can I better rejoice over those who are raised from the dead? (7) What kind of “personal evangelism” did Peter do in Joppa?

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I truly want to hear what you will say from these verses: (1) “There is something worse than death — it is hell!” (2) “You believe — now do something about it!” (3) “Most men do not care if people are dead in sin — do you?”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Romania — Points for prayer: (1) *The Lord’s Army* is a remarkable, unofficial organization within the Orthodox Church with about 300,000 converted members and possibly another 200,000 sympathizers. Pray for this very significant movement, and its leaders, which was banned in 1949 and has also been severely persecuted. (2) *Trained leadership is in critically short supply.* The government restricts numbers and scrutinizes applicants to the Baptist Theological College and Pentecostal Bible School. In 1981 there were only 15 students in the former. Only three of the 160 Baptist pastors have had formal training, yet there are 1,300 churches. Outstanding pastors have recently been forced into exile, further complicating the situation. Pray for adequate theological literature to be available (there is virtually none extant in the Romanian language) — all having to come from outside the country. Pray for alternative leadership training schemes. (3) *Bible distribution* is severely limited by government restrictions on importation of Christian literature from the West. Some shipments of legally imported Bibles were even recycled to make toilet paper and re-exported to the West. Locally published Bibles are occasionally issued, but are inadequate in numbers and rarely made available to nonconforming groups which most need them.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine,
For Thee all the follies of sin I resign;
My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ’tis now.

WEEK FIVE

—Monday—

“Truth” is that which equals reality. To follow you is to live in the realm of truth. I open the door to reality just now.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

You are truth. What a solid thought. What a strong, satisfying quality of character. On any subject you can give me the facts — the truth on that subject. About any man or woman you can give us the total truth about them, the whole story. You indeed, are the source of all truth and then in the Person of your Son you came into the world as “the way, the truth and the 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

To me you are the truth — how I wander, and hesitate, i.e., in any area, but with you I can be sure. I can be calm. I am on firm ground. I have found *the truth!* No word of yours will fall sort of fulfillment. When you tell me I am justified, reconciled, forgiven, I can and do believe it! When you tell me of a place and purpose in heaven, I believe it, and eagerly look forward to it. How personally assuring to cast myself into the arms of TRUTH.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

To admit falling short, of missing the mark, of transgression of your law is easy in fact, but unless I link it with your love and a total confidence in your forgiveness, I would be discouraged, but I am not at all. I am washed and made clean. Praise for your love and mercy — I have named my sin, but just as freely claimed your cleansing. Amen!

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 love me, and give me thy heart.”
“Give me thy heart, Give me thy heart.”
Hear the soft whisper, wherever thou art;
From this dark world He would draw thee apart,
Speaking so tenderly, “Give me thy heart.”

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

HIS WORD

10 At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. ²He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. ³One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, “Cornelius!” —Acts 10:1-3, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

You had such a good man in Cornelius — an Italian — I’m sure there have been ten million or more just like him in the land of Italy as well as an equal number in so many other countries around the world. He was attracted by his need to the scriptures, and to the lives of some of the Jews in Caesarea. It is only through the word of God we obtain faith (Rom. 10: 17), but it is as much by a felt need that we reach for the scriptures and help from others. How gloriously have you made man and how perfectly you have provided for his every, deepest need. Cornelius set the pace, not only for his Regiment but for his family. Even as this man, dear God, I know you see our prayers and our giving!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Lord, how can I be both “devout and God-fearing”? I take the first thought to refer to acts of

devotion such as the hours of prayer — and giving of alms — the second to refer to a total attitude of humility and respect before yourself. How I *do want this!* Will I ever see an angel? If I do or do not I can indeed believe they are even now in this room where I pray. Whether I hear my name called by one of them I yet know they are here to assist me in ways I do not know. How full of meaning it is for me to look upon the very first Gentile (someone like me) to ever hear the good news. At Jesus' birth the good news was for "all men" but God knows we are hard of hearing.

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 interesting choice of the first Gentile nation to hear the good news — Italians — I find this provocative (not because I am Italian). (2) That you chose a leader and an important one to lead in the spread of your word — only heaven will tell us how widespread it became. (3) That you chose a family to model the type of people you want — after whom you "seek to worship you" (John 4:23). (4) That *regular* prayer is commended. (5) That an Italian army captain could arrange his schedule to include an hour of prayer three times a day. (6) That angels talk our language and know our names. (7) That our alms and prayers affect others as well as God and ourselves.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Angels today: "The angel of the Lord encampeth round them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Psa. 34:7). Here is some general information to make us aware and sensitive to the ministry of angels: (1) God created angels (Psa. 148:2-5; Neh. 9:6; Col. 1:16 ff.; Job 38:7). They were created before this world. (2) Angels are both holy (except those who chose to be evil) and happy (Mark 8:38; I Tim. 5:21; Isa. 6:1-8; Rev. 5:11,12). Happiness is a by-product of holiness. (3) There are innumerable such intelligent beings (Matt. 26:53; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 5:11). (4) You will see in the above references that they are ranked: a) Arch-angels; b) seraphim; c) cherubim. They have: a) thrones; b) dominions; c) might; d) powers; e) principalities. Angels are distinct, neither God, human nor animal (Psa. 8:4,5; Heb. 1:3ff.; 2:9,10,16-18).

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

We are introduced to a good man who prayed. He prompts requests from our own hearts: (1) Send me to men like Cornelius. (2) Teach me that regardless of their job there are men who can be reached. (3) Teach me the concern you have for devout God-fearing people. (4) Rebuke my heart — if those who are not Christians can give generously and pray regularly,

what is my excuse? (5) Should I not pray at least three times per day? (6) If angels served Cornelius I know you serve me — thank you! (7) Keep my heart tender that you might reach me with your word.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I, like Cornelius, wait before you: (1) "Being good is not enough for salvation." (2) "You are not saved if you do not give and pray." (3) "There are other men who would listen like Cornelius if I had someone like Peter."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Rwanda — Points for prayer: (1) *Praise God for the open door for the gospel* and also for the noteworthy "Rwanda Revival" of the '30s in the Anglican Church, which spread to many denominations and lands in East Africa and beyond. Spiritual life is still evident, but much of the love and fire of that generation has gone. Pray that Christians may be an example to the nation that has been torn by the intertribal warfare and massacres of the '60s. (2) *Christian leaders of vision and spiritual caliber are needed.* Pray for those in training in the inter-church seminary in Butare and elsewhere in Africa and the West. All too often those who are highly trained find it hard to be satisfied with the ministry and support in a land of poor rural churches. Pray for the training of local leaders in the churches. (3) *Scripture Union* has a blessed ministry among young people of all churches, this helping to lessen denominational rivalry. Pray for blessing on the daily Bible-reading notes and extension of this ministry to the churches, for this is often the only systematic Bible training most people get.

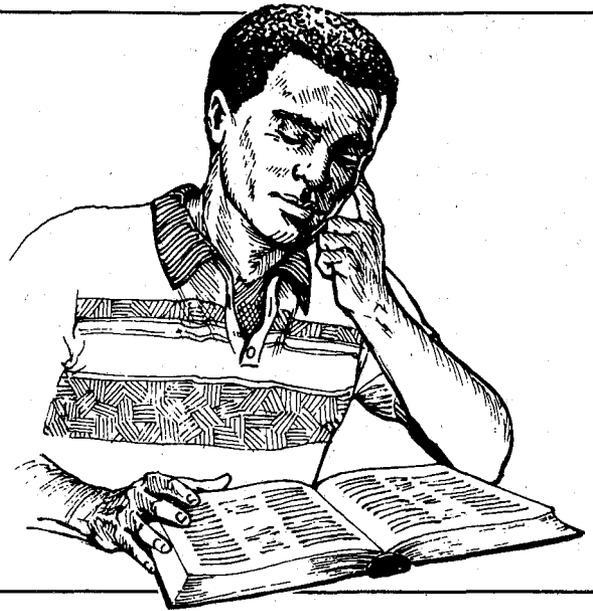
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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 FIVE

—Tuesday—

Jesus said he would leave us his peace. A tranquility of spirit that can not be defined in words. I enter his closet and claim his gift.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Peace. You *are* my peace and the peace of the whole world. Peace is not just the absence of hostility, but a deep sense of oneness and wholeness. A total rest of the being of man. You have made a peace we are to accept. Praise your wonderful name! I am so glad my life and the lives of all men of the earth can be a tranquil day of peace. All nature is at peace with you — all the billions of constellations in the heavens are at peace.

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 greatest area of peace is my own heart! In my thoughts: do I rest all intellectual activity finally in your word? Am I perfectly willing to let your peace that passeth my understanding garrison my thoughts? Dear God, I am willing — make me more willing. Am I at peace in my will? I.e., am I willing to do your will? Sometimes I have great difficulty deciding just what your will is. I think I know, but it does seem so impossible! Dear God, I need trust, not knowledge. Right now, I commit, I submit, I wait, I will!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

“Their god is their stomach.” This is a sad, sinful description of our (my) generation and society. I am influenced by such a permeating, pervasive influence. Dear God, help me! Help me to beat, bruise, control my body — lest it control me. Forgive me, dear God! Move me into total interest in the “things of the Spirit.”

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

⁴Cornelius stared at him in fear. “What is it, Lord?” he asked.

The angel answered, “Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a remembrance before God.

⁵Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. ⁶He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea.”

⁷When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and one of his soldiers who was a devout man. ⁸He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

⁹About noon the following day as they were approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. —Acts 10:4-9, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What a delight to share with you what you have shared with me (and all men). I want to think deeply upon the words of the angel you sent to the Italian army captain: “your prayers and gifts to the poor” — not only what was said but the habit of prayer was noticed; not only the gifts but the condition of the ones receiving them. The pooriness of the poor was seen by you. The occupation, address and name of all men are known to you and your messengers. Cornelius was heard and known, not as one who was saved (cf. 11:15), but as one much loved. He had help in every way possible — men, means and an angel.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just if I had never seen it before — the three men — I wonder what they thought? Strange man, strange orders, but a trip to Joppa probably was not unwelcome. "He told them everything that had happened" and such a strange story he had to tell them! What a shock to learn of a God who cared and set a messenger to men — and to their master in particular. Could I become that "devout military aide"? I have no reason to doubt the reality of what is said. I do want to follow the incident to its conclusion. I am most curious as to *why* all this has happened.

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 read the word in thanksgiving. Thank you for: (1) Cornelius — devout and God-fearing, generous, prayerful, obedient, and careful — what a good man! (2) The angel — direct, real, precise, supernatural. (3) The messengers — informed, obedient, dedicated to their task. (4) Yourself — fully aware, interested in each person, patient, dramatic. (5) A real time and place — Caesarea, Joppa, first century, sand and sea. (6) The tanner Simon — for his hospitality, which made all this a reality. (7) Preserving this record for 2,000 years! Praise you!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"As a remembrance before God." Everyone wants to be remembered. We would all like to think that something we did or said had value beyond the moment. Most of all we want God to remember us. Here is how: There are two things of lasting value to God — of lasting value within themselves — these two things have intrinsic value — they are: (1) *Your prayers* — not just that you prayed, but your devoted habit of prayer — in his case it was 9, 12 and 3 each day. (2) *Your use of money to help the poor* — we remember our Lord "sat over by the treasury" and marked the amounts cast in. Communion or fellowship or joint sharing with God and man is what will be remembered throughout all eternity.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Surely there are several requests that come from Acts 10:4-9. (1) Move my heart that the sense of sacred awe may never leave me! (2) Make me keenly aware that money and prayer declare the genuineness of my worship. (3) Open my heart to know you know everything I do and everywhere I go. (4) Make me as responsive to what you are saying in your word as Cornelius was to the angel. (5) Am I at all race prejudiced? Show me. (6) Teach me how to arrange my schedule to include prayer at noon. (7) Work out your timing for

the salvation of the lost through me — help me to be ready to respond.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Dear Lord, I want to understand you when you speak: (1) "Giving and praying are tangible evidence of faith." (2) "I have sent the witness to request the salvation of the lost: Myself, my Son and the Holy Spirit." (3) "I still speak to people when they pray."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

St. Christopher & Nevis (Leeward Islands, Caribbean); St. Lucia (Windward Islands); St. Vincent and the Grenadines (Windward Islands) — Points for prayer: (1) The economic and political traumas of the last 15 years have shaken the Caribbean. The unconverted have become more receptive and Christians more aware of their responsibilities to both evangelize and influence the standards of society. Praise God for this. Violent changes cannot be ruled out. The widening gap between the rich and poor in the region could be disastrous. (2) Less reached peoples: a) St Lucia is predominantly Catholic, and the Evangelicals are a small minority. b) Many of the smaller Caribbean islands, such as the Grenadines, are poor and isolated, with little clear preaching of the gospel. St. Pierre & Miquelon (Department of France, off the coast of Canada) — Point for prayer: This is the only territory in the Americas without a known Protestant Church. Pray for the evangelization of these French fisher communities. This is a possible field for French Canadian believers.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine;
For Thee all the follies of sin I resign;
My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.
Jesus, Jesus, name that I love,
Blest name of my Savior,
Who came from above.

WEEK FIVE

—Wednesday—

If we do not have a good God we have no God at all. I renew my commitment to your goodness.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Goodness. There could never be enough said about this quality of yourself! Your goodness should lead all mankind to repentance, i.e., the daily, hourly, provision for our life; the balance in the creation about us; the delay in your wrath — all should suggest to us that Someone, even yourself, is standing behind this scene with an infinite interest of deep love. Of course, if man does not read your word, such an understanding will never be his.

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

Good to me! Praise your name, it is not difficult to express this praise to you! It would seem my life has been one long example of your goodness. You gave me good parents — such a dear mother and father; you were good to me in my early childhood — food, shelter and friends; and then led me to salvation and service. Ever since that day in 1936 my feet have been directed in pleasant paths. What a tremendous blessing you gave me in my dear wife! Your daily, continual goodness move me to praise and wonder.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear God, it is not difficult to confess my sins when they are framed by your goodness! Black shows up clearest on white. I am at a loss to know how best to word my prayer — shall I itemize the errors within error? Shall I admit I have not overcome what I have often confessed before? Shall I lose heart and hide my sins? None of these will clear my record! Dear God, all of them together are no answer. I just do *want* to be obedient, humble, forgiving, kind — forgive me, cleanse me!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

What a Friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Ev'rything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Ev'rything to God in prayer!

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

HIS WORD

¹⁰He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹²It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. ¹³Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat." ¹⁴"Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean." ¹⁵The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." ¹⁶This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven. —Acts 10:10-16, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What a wonder and amazement is this! My appreciation and praise is my response to what you are saying here not only to Peter, but to me and to all men. The circumstances you chose for revealing this information is by itself an amazement. You gave Peter a revelation, a vision, a message, at noon, in the broad daylight, by himself, on the second story or roof of a house, while he was hungry and his interest was on food. Animals on the sheet are also a wonder. The detailed identification and variety is of real interest. Your voice, your command — a positive and a negative word — wonderful!

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

What a jarring word! Take unto yourself others who do not understand you or appreciate you — indeed whom you do not understand or appreciate. What a shock to find out I have been calling any thing unclean or impure you have cleansed or consider clean! The artificial, provincial barriers I have built up, break them down, remove them. Oh, that I might think as deeply as Peter did that day!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Thank you, so much: (1) That you reveal yourself in the ordinary pursuits of life, like eating. (2) That Peter was open to a vision from you — help me to be open to hear your voice in the circumstances of today. (3) That I can make comparisons in the physical world with the Spiritual world and learn much. (4) For the thoroughness of your words — all these categories: animals, birds and snakes are represented. (5) For Peter's knowledge of your word — even if it was misunderstood — no answer to you with desire to know is lost. (6) There is a moral as well as physical cleanness. (7) You repeat yourself for all of us who are dull of hearing.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

GOD HAS MADE US CLEAN! What a happy thought, what a beautiful fact, what a glorious acceptance! God has made me clean, pure, whole, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. I refer to imputed pureness. I am clean in our Lord, or I am not clean at all in your sight. I might be clean by men's estimates, but my own conscience is a better judge. When you say clean, pure, whole, bless your name I believe it, I accept it, I claim it, I need it, I want it. Amen! and Amen!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

There is much for which we can ask our Lord from this text: Dear Lord, there are several parallels between eating physically and eating spiritually. I need help here: (1) Give me a consuming appetite for the bread from heaven. (2) Teach me regular habits in spiritual nourishment. (3) May I be as thoughtful with your menu as I am with dinner. (4) Help me to vary my diet of your word. (5) Give me friends with whom I can share this food. (6) I want to eat only your living bread — not any of Satan's substitute. (7) Let me chew adequately lest I suffer indigestion.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As you spoke to Peter from heaven so I listen to your word: (1) "Break out of your apathy — eat and live." (2) "There is indeed a word from heaven — hear it." (3) "Never doubt my word — even when it contradicts your desires."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

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

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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 FIVE

—Thursday—

Jesus said "I will make you fishers of men" — and only he can do it. I ask for more fishermen.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Preacher-maker. Praise your name! It is not my job to make preachers. I am glad to cooperate in any way I can. I am so glad to offer myself. But over the centuries you have produced the preachers. I am glad to acknowledge your infinite ability in this crucial area of life. Dear God, we need nothing more and at the same time nothing less than preachers for this world. There are thirty young men in my two classes who want to learn how to preach. I know you will do it or it will not be done. I am so glad you are not through with making me a preacher.

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

Making preachers — the complicated procedure is only done by you. I want to lift my heart in wonder for all that is done. Some marvelous work of grace and power has found fulfillment here. Praise your name for whatever has been done with me! Dear God, how deeply I need help in this area — preachers have such a large ego problem — they are constantly in the light of the public and under the criticism of those they try to teach and reach. Oh, help every young man who asks you to make him a fisher of men!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, for each and every sin, I confess them — emotion is totally minus — just the fact that I sin and identify it — label it with your label. I feel defeated and overcome — I need *your* strength, but also your joy! I claim your presence and help! I want, need and enter into your forgiveness — and even now contemplate the robe of your righteousness which covers and envelopes me! Praise your name and grace.

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

¹⁷While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. ¹⁸They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.

¹⁹While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit came to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. ²⁰So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."

²¹Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?"

²²The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to have you come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say." ²³Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa went along. — *Acts 10:17-23, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Gladly, gladly do I read to you what you have written to me in deepest appreciation for every word. Peter, like me and millions of others, "was wondering about the meaning . . ." of your communication to him. Oh, how we all wonder, and misunderstand, and ignore and reject your word — but your answer is never

far behind — while we are still thinking about it you are sending the meaning to us. I believe we have missed, overlooked or rejected your messengers full many a time. It has not been your lack of interest that has left me confused, but my insensitivity and preoccupation with other things.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Read this word to myself — in praise, adoration, thanksgiving, petition — I eagerly approach what you are saying to me. Are you sending men to speak to me concerning your will for my life? Indeed you are! In every message from your word I hear you speaking to me, i.e., if I have ears to hear. Dear God, may I today be ready to welcome your messengers. "I am the one you are looking for," so said Peter and so say I! Dear Lord, I believe you will be looking for someone to stand in the gap for you in so many areas. I want to be that man. I know I must first invite you to be my house-guest before I can be used of you. Come in and sup with me, dear Savior!

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 always seems to be the most spontaneous time of prayer. Thanksgiving seems to be the most obvious natural expression of our relationship with you. Thank you: (1) For the quality of persistence in fulfilling your word. If Peter was not found, your work could not be done. (2) The Holy Spirit is an intelligent Being who speaks. He speaks in easily understood words, about very mundane, but important matters. (3) For men today like Cornelius — dear God, help me to be as willing as Peter to help them. (4) For the three unnamed men — I'll find out their names and ask them all about the trip, i.e., when I see them in your presence. (5) For the beautiful sea beside which Peter stayed for a few days. (6) That there are "holy" angels — some have chosen not to be. Thank you for all who chose to be holy — may I do likewise. (7) That only poor, weak, ignorant, sinful man can tell anyone what to do to be saved. Not even holy angels can do that.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Let's gather around your word and see what the Lord is saying to us: (1) I too can be: a) *devout* — an attitude of the heart — I chose to be humble, single-minded, willing; b) *God-fearing* — it is a fool who doesn't fear God. My Lord told me to fear you not abjectly, but in reality and truth; c) *one who gives generously* — oh, how good it is to testify that we are so blessed when we give generously to those who have a need. The percentage of giving surprises me and humbles me! d) *one who prays to you regularly* —

this I want and will *do!* and I so, so enjoy it! Some days it is not easier for me than it was for the Italian army captain. (2) Just who was the heavenly visitor? No name is given — perhaps Gabriel or Michael — but not named so we could relate him to the angels encamped around our lives.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

It is so good to ask directly from your word: (1) Give me goals from yourself in reaching the lost in my community. (2) I want to know the proper combination of human and divine in reaching the lost. (3) Are there men even today who are seeking to hear what to do to be saved? (4) Give me insight in using my home as a place to introduce men and women to you. (5) Who today are like the three men from Cornelius? (6) Open my mind to the tremendous power of words. (7) I am not as concerned as I should be with the righteous, God-fearing, but lost men — help me!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Open my inner ears to hear what the Spirit is saying through his word: (1) "My word will always give meaning to your visions." (2) "When I send, do not hesitate." (3) "Welcome all I send to you."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

San Marino

Area 62 sq. km. (24 sq. mi.) An enclave in North Central Italy. Independent since AD 301.

Religion 94.0% Christian: 92.3% Roman Catholic, 0.7% Jehovah's Witnesses.

There are no known groups of Protestant believers in the republic. Sadly, only Jehovah's Witnesses have succeeded in starting a group.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

All glory, laud and honor
To Thee, Redeemer, King,
To whom the lips of children
Made sweet hosannas ring!
The people of the Hebrews
With palms before Thee went;
Our praise and prayer and anthems
Before Thee we present.

WEEK FIVE

—Friday—

What a wonder it will be when we enter that city whose builder and maker is yourself. I renew my solid hope just now.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

City-builder. You are indeed the builder of the city-foursquare — the One who builds the city for which Abraham looked. What a good thought: all the excitement and interest of a city, minus all the lust of the flesh, eyes and pride of life. How intrinsically beautiful the city would be if you were the architect and builder. The abiding places or apartments would be something to behold! I am not thinking of wealth or physical luxury in the same sense as we have it today. A million times better.

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

City-builder for me. You are just as concerned about all men as you are any one man — but to build a city just to please me, or anyone, I really do not have a large consuming interest in a city. I am quite interested in things of beauty — in form, color and usefulness — the combination of all the beauty and color you have placed in a new world would be a wonder to behold. I praise you for the interest you have in providing for those who deserve nothing.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

It is monotonous to confess the same sin every day, not because I do not want to repent. I do! But because I have so little improvement, I will continue to name, by label, my sins and sincerely repent of them, but I want to open your word and examine my heart in the light of the sins you have named. *Lying:* How easy, so incredibly easy it is to misrepresent. I believe pride is behind most of my lies. The fear of man is also a very real cause. I want to work on the reason, the source and hopefully I can change the result. 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

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

²³Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa went along. ²⁴The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. ²⁶But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."

²⁷Talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. ²⁸He said to them, "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean. ²⁹So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?"

³⁰Cornelius answered, "Four days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me

³¹and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and

remembered your gifts to the poor. ³²Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.' ³³So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us." — *Acts 10:23-33, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What an interesting conversation must have passed between Peter and the three from Caesarea along with the six Jewish Christians from Joppa. The details of the vision of Peter and Cornelius must have been repeated several times. I know you could repeat every word spoken by all ten men. It was a somewhat leisurely walk, judging the distance and the time. Just who were the relatives and friends of Cornelius? I should like to meet them — every one — when there is no time and we have supernatural powers of communication, I shall indeed do it! What a good man is this first Gentile convert! What a humble man is Peter!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Lord, there is so much for me to learn and accept from these verses: (1) Association with others — a joint sharing — I have such a tendency to be by myself. (2) To respect other people, to honor them, to prefer them to myself. (3) When God speaks through a man and it is evident, people *will* come out to hear and see. (4) I should not, in any sense, call any man impure or unclean — i.e., fail to associate with and share the good news with him. (5) The first sermon to Jews was at a prayer time — 9 a.m. — the first sermon to Gentiles was at a prayer time — 3 p.m. Doesn't this say something to me about prayer time?

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Thank you: (1) For the well established word, i.e., that there were not two or three but *six* Jewish Christians to confirm what was done and said — so is all of your word so very clearly, openly established! (2) That Peter refused to be worshipped — for whatever reason — "only a man" says so well what all of us are. (3) That the law of exclusiveness has been abrogated. (4) That God is in the "show and tell" business for us children. (5) That God has a way of removing man's objections. (6) That even a busy army captain can keep the hours of prayer. (7) That we can be in your presence at anytime, anywhere, but most especially for the preaching of the word!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"It was good of you to come." (1) It was good of

God to come in the Person of his Son — to give himself for us who lived in darkness. (2) It was good of the angels to come to certain poor shepherds and brighten up their night with "joy to the world." (3) It was good of the Holy Spirit to come and clothe himself with the minds of the apostles and tell the good news to the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. (4) It was good of God to come in a vision to Peter on Simon's housetop. (5) It was good of Peter to come to the "unclean" serviceman in Caesarea.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

As you spoke to Peter, so speak to me as to my needed requests: (1) All of this record is so believable — help me to remember the truths I learn. (2) Dear Lord, help me in my sometimes inordinate admiration of men. (3) Break down the barriers I have built between myself and other men. (4) Forgive me for calling men stupid or ignorant. May I share your value system. (5) Give me courage and direction that one day I might be given the "shining clothes" of heaven. (6) Am I willing to make unexpected moves? I.e., if you direct them, I want to be. (7) Give me a deep appreciation for other servants of yourself.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You are indeed speaking to me through these verses: (1) "Accept all I say — it is established by many witnesses." (2) "In no way worship any man." (3) "Respect all those who speak for me."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Sao Tome & Principe (Two larger and several smaller islands in the Gulf of Guinea west of Gabon. Former colony of Portugal, independent in 1975). — Point for prayer: The major Protestant witness is that of the Assemblies of God with 12 congregations in the islands. There are several smaller groups, but the majority of the population is nominally Catholic. There are no missionaries.

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

—Saturday—

How carefully — subtly — silently — sometimes violently do you plan our lives — I bow before your work in me.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Life-planner. Dear Lord, you are surely in this business if any at all. I know all things are planned by you. Every life is the object of your interest. Praise your name! You do have a plan for every life. Whether your plan is accepted or not is man's choice, but it is not because of any lack of interest on your part. How wondrously good it is to know our lives are in your heart. Dear Lord, I am glad you have an interest in my 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

Please work on my life for today — just for today — I know if this is my prayer each day that my whole life will have been planned of you. I do want to submit my stubborn will to your lovingness, to your kindness, to your cheerfulness, to your willingness. However grandiose my ideas of your plan for my life might be, if I do not allow you to plan my character, there is no real fulfillment of any plan — i.e., you are more interested in me than what I do or fail to do.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, I freely confess stealing time that should have been given to the saving of the lost, to attempting to edify or educate — or at least so it would seem. I have stolen the devotion that should have been yours and squandered it on myself. Dear Lord, forgive. I have stolen money from the poor and starving and have given it to myself and for my “things.” Dear Lord, forgive.

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

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 foll'wer 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

³⁴Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism ³⁵but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. ³⁶This is the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ³⁷You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached — ³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

³⁹“We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. ⁴¹He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen — by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴²He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.” —Acts 10:34-43, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How I do want to agree with and confirm in my own heart every word you have given me through Peter. I

will list the qualities of yourself I see here in this text and embrace them to my heart: (1) No favoritism. (2) Accepts men from every nation who fear you. (3) Accepts those who do what is right, i.e., accept your dear Son. (4) You sent good news of peace. (What good news *peace* is!) (5) That *Jesus is Lord of all!* (6) You anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and power. (7) Your dear Son went around doing good. He went around healing all who were under the power of the devil. (8) He went around doing all of this because you were with him. Oh, so much more — for all the above I fall at your feet in wonder and praise!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

To continue my praise: (9) You provided eyewitnesses and gave them the Holy Spirit to enable them to speak with total accuracy and tell us of all that was done to your dear Son in his suffering and death. (10) You raised him from the dead (by the Holy Spirit) on a specific day — the third day. (11) You *caused him* to be seen, i.e., his appearances were set in such circumstances as to be undeniable — not just by chance but by plan; to witnesses who could well establish what they had seen, chosen by you for this very task. Wonderful. 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

Indeed I shall! Thank you: (1) For those “who ate and drank with [my blessed Lord] after he rose from the dead.” I want to savor every swallow and every bite, and talk to everyone. (Oh, God, give me the questions to ask them.) (2) That you have “commanded us to preach” — it is not just a good idea — it is an imperial edict! (3) You have also commanded us (through the example of the apostles) to give our personal testimony of all you have done for us! (4) You are the judge of the living — every living person upon the face of this earth, and all who have lived, or will live upon this little speck called “earth.” (5) For Jeremiah, Isaiah, Daniel, Micah and all the prophets who have told us so much about our Lord. (6) Oh, what a word! “EVERYONE”! Whosoever and everyone (means *me!*) receives forgiveness of sins. (7) That I can believe — it is all because of what is included in *his name!*

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

This is such a blessed passage: I am overwhelmed. Upon what shall we meditate! Here it is! “*We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and Jerusalem.*” Please, please turn to the four gospels and absorb every word of those eyewitnesses of his majesty! The description of Israel as “the country of the Jews” is most intriguing. What did he do

there? He lived and worked for 30 years in a little town called Nazareth. When he was tired from much work he did not grouse or complain. When he saw others with much more than he did he remembered the place where all has eternal value. When he saw the inequities of life he knew there will be a day when all shall find equity. He went to a wedding feast and turned the water — the necessary, but tasteless water, the routine of life — into the refreshing red fruit of the vine. This he was to do for all of life for all men, for all time.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

This is such a blessed section of scripture that I rejoice in the privilege of considering petitions from the text: (1) Help me to accept every one God accepts. (2) Give me the peace the great prince has purchased for me. (3) How I do want Jesus to be Lord of all in my life. (4) Just what “good” did Jesus do? Help me to do the same. (5) Deliver me day by day from the power of the evil one. (6) What confidence I can have in the risen Lord. How can I share this confidence? (7) Oh, dear Lord, that your Son will judge the living and the dead is indeed an awesome thought! What can I do to prepare men for this event?

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You spoke so eloquently through your Son — through him speak to me: (1) “I show no favoritism — do you?” (2) “My good news contains peace.” (3) “There will be a judgment for all men.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Saudi Arabia — Points for prayer: (1) *Saudi Arabia is one of the least evangelized nations on earth.* What a challenge to faith: no known believers, no indigenous churches, no Christian workers permitted to enter the country, and no Christian even allowed to set foot in Islam’s holiest city of Mecca. Pray that this land, the heart of Islam, may see a demonstration of the power of the blood of the Lamb. (2) *Great efforts are made to shield the population from foreign influences* that could “corrupt” society. Pray that even this may stimulate a desire for the Truth and an openness to the gospel. Very few Saudis have heard the Good News, seen a Bible or met a true believer. (3) *Eight hundred million Muslims worldwide* bow daily in prayer towards Mecca, and 2.5 million pilgrims annually make the “Hajj” to visit the birthplace of Islam. Pray that many may have their eyes opened to see the emptiness and bondage under which they live, and embrace the freedom that there is in Christ.

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 SIX

—Sunday—

There is a harvest even now being reaped. Open my eyes to what you see. Gladly do I worship you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Harvester. Indeed you are! All the harvest and reports of all us preachers is but a reflection of (and sometimes on) your work. You *are* “the Lord of the harvest.” The physical harvest all about us testifies to your power, to your provision, to your personal interest in man! I love you for all you are but most of all for every precious person you have brought to yourself through what feeble efforts I have given. How wonderful, beyond adjectives, to be a workman together with you! I shall never, never be able to say an adequate “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

Harvester for me. In my life if there is to be a harvest in character, or in any project, it will be because I have cooperated in “the law of the harvest.” Plant — yes, yes, I must plant the seed of the word of God, and he that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully. I want to plant the seed of your word in *millions* of hearts. Water the seed — I want to have whatever part I can in this, but I also want to be an encourager for others to do this. Cultivate — dear God, I am somewhat unwillingly engaged in this, but please forgive. You will give the increase and we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Gossip — a hard word to say because we know to some extent how guilty we are (I am). Why repeat an evil report? Why tell of someone’s failure? Why embellish a report of success? Why must we tell what we hear of someone else? Dear God, help me to turn gossip into praise and thanksgiving and if the report is

not good, help me not to repeat it. You did say, you do *now* say, “speak not evil one of another.” I believe; forgive me for not believing more totally. Pride and Prejudice — what odious sins. Forgive me!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I am resolved no longer to linger,
Charmed by the world’s delight;
Things that are higher, things that are nobler,
These have allured my sight.
I will hasten to Him,
Hasten so glad and free;
Jesus, Greatest, Highest,
I will come to Thee.

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

HIS WORD

⁴⁴While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came upon all who heard the message. ⁴⁵The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, ⁴⁷“Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” ⁴⁸So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea **11** heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. ²So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him ³and said, “You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them.”

⁴Peter began and explained everything to them precisely as it had happened: —Acts 10:44-11:4, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Indeed, indeed I want to read this word to you. I have such concern that I fully, or more fully understand the supernatural manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Such an unusual thing! What a surprise to all, what a surprise to all of us. Just what are you saying to me? I do want to appreciate all you say. The Holy Spirit was "poured out" on the whole household — the "gift of the Holy Spirit" or the "Holy Spirit as a gift." The major emphasis is that they were Gentiles and as such received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Talk about instant initiation, here it is! It will take man years to accept what God did in a moment! Praise your beautiful love and acceptance of all men.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

So many questions I have asked for such a long time (40 plus years): (1) Was this just a one-time event for a one-time purpose? It would seem to be, i.e., the Gentiles were being inducted into the family of God by this means. (2) Were there several languages represented in the household? There could have been since Caesarea was an international seaport and on the caravan route. Or there weren't and the supernaturalness of the event is what you want emphasized. (3) Why command them to be baptized "in water"? Was it not for the same purpose our Lord indicated in Mark 16:16 and Peter repeated in Acts 2:38 and in his letter I Peter 3:21? If so, then the Gentiles were lost when they had this supernatural experience and its primary purpose was for the Jews present, and all subsequent Jews.

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 I do raise my heart and voice for: (1) You interrupt what you yourself commanded to be done to show you have a dual purpose (or is it a single purpose?) that could only be accomplished here in this unusual manner. (2) That the Holy Spirit is a gift — if he comes in this manifestation or another, he is always a gift — oh, blessed beautiful gift! (3) That Peter and the six were ready to receive your conclusion and choice. (4) The "name" or authority of the Lord Jesus is behind all actions and words. (5) That good news can spread so rapidly even without present day communication media. (6) At the dinner table is where we can share our faith. (7) That Peter was willing to patiently explain.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Everything precisely as it happened! How encouraging it is to know that everything our Lord did to and through Peter was recorded, not only by the honesty

and faithfulness of the apostle but under the immediate direction of the Holy Spirit. All these 2,000 years later we yet have the precise account of the salvation of the very first Gentiles. If we are as precise in our commitment to him as was Peter in his record we can become precisely what they were, i.e., Christians. Dear Lord, I do believe you sent your Son to be the anointed Savior of myself and all those who will trust him. A piece of precision machinery would fade into a clumsy anachronism when coupled to the multiplicity of prophecies and plans that mesh in the coming of yourself in the person of Jesus.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

With real zest I relate my requests to the text of Acts 10:44-11:4: (1) May I never, never refuse the gospel to any man. (2) Keep me sensitive enough to be astonished at your work. (3) I want to appreciate more fully than ever the presence of your Holy Spirit in my body. (4) I do want to understand every word about the baptism of these Gentiles with the Holy Spirit. (5) Open my mind as to the purpose of speaking in tongues and praising God. (6) Had Peter changed his mind as to the purpose of water baptism, i.e., since Pentecost? (7) When these Gentiles were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ what did they become? Dear God, I ask these questions in the full assurance you will answer me in the study of your word!

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me through this text: (1) "To have the Holy Spirit is to have my approval." (2) "Do not be as slow as Peter was in hearing my message for the whole lost world." (3) "Don't be surprised if some of your brothers do not understand."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Saudi Arabia — Points for prayer: (1) *The Islamic missionary impetus* is coordinated by the Muslim World League in Mecca. Vast sums of money are used to propagate their faith around the world — aid to countries considered sympathetic, building mosques, sending missionaries, literature, radio, etc. The Saudi government denies to Christians the liberty to share their faith, yet they expect it for Muslims everywhere. Pray for the King and leaders of Saudi Arabia. (2) *Saudi believers*, if there are any, have to hide their faith or risk death. Pray for such. Pray that living fellowships of believers may be planted despite the apparent impossibility.

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

—Monday—

I do so want you to rule — to reign — to direct — to change. This time of worship can make this so. Maranatha!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Lord. How glad I am to claim your Lordship in my life, but you are Lord if I claim you or if I do not claim you. You are Lord of all the world and ten billion worlds (physical planets) like ours. What a total wonder to know you are all you are independently of my response or anyone else's response. Dear, dear God, to know you is peace and joy and hope. To love you is the fulfillment of all that is right and true. To own your Lordship is only to acknowledge what is obvious. But, oh, how much there is in that little word "Lord." Ruler, despot, king, and 10 million more qualities.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Lord in *my* life. I want you to take control in the innermost area of my life. I have *such* a problem yielding my inner-self to you. I want you to dominate, but I find a passivity about yourself, i.e., you cannot and will not violate your decision to leave me totally free to choose, to invite and initiate the action. Only when I truly think your thoughts will your thoughts be mine, and I must think them (those found in your word) in such a manner that I love them. I am eager to *do* them, to will to *do* what you have said. When (and only when) I act upon what you have said will your Lordship become a reality to me.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

"Lewd thoughts" is a sin mentioned in your word. I am not either emphasizing my sin here or rationalizing so as to deny it. I also know the evil one is present even now and is seeking to defeat my love and devotion to you. I live in an environment that promotes

lewd thoughts. Illicit sex has become a way of life with millions of people. I want to treat the cause not the effect. "To the pure all things are pure." Dear God, I am a sinner and I sin in this area. Forgive me, cleanse me, wash me! Praise your holy self!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

The 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.

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

HIS WORD

⁵"I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was. ⁶I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds of the air. ⁷Then I heard a voice telling me, 'Get up, Peter, Kill and eat.'

⁸"I replied, 'Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.'

⁹"The voice spoke from heaven a second time, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.'

¹⁰This happened three times, and then it was pulled up to heaven again.

¹¹"Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying. ¹²The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man's house. ¹³He told us

how he had seen an angel appear in his house to say, 'Send to Joppa for Simon that is called Peter. ¹⁴He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.'

¹⁵"As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. ¹⁶Then I remembered what the Lord had said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁷So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God!"

¹⁸When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, God has even granted the Gentiles repentance unto life."

—Acts 11:5-18, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How I appreciate the care in repeating in clear terms all you did for Peter. You came down to where Peter was and in a form or manner he could — and could not understand — and so you have from that day to this. More than I'll ever say adequately I want to say "thank you" for appearing to me in so very many ways and times. Many I could not understand and many I rejected "out of hand." Later you rebuked me, sometimes bluntly and sometimes gently, but I heard your voice and know your meaning.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I can surely take the place of some of the ones who criticized Peter. Dear Lord, I am critical of too many people and things. I want to hear with open ears. I want you to open my eyes to see all you want me and others to see. Peter was most careful in his recounting. He applied the promise our Lord made to himself and the other apostles (Acts 1:2-5) to the household of Cornelius. Peter said the household was baptized in the Holy Spirit. This fact convinced those Jews the Gentiles were to be granted "repentance unto life." The whole household was "saved" through the message Peter gave them and their response to it (11:15) not through the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Yes, yes, let me hasten to do so. Thank you; (1) For the open, spontaneous acceptance of the Lordship of the One speaking to Peter. (2) For Peter's immediate application of what you said to the circumstance — he gave your answer to this question of morality. (3) That there is progression in revelation. (4) That you repeat what you want several times — you don't have to — out of your mercy you do. (5) That you synchronize your actions so we can get the whole lesson. (6) That Peter identifies Pentecost as "the beginning" — what a beginning! (7) That the apostles received because they believed and so is the equation of reception from that day till now.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Six Jewish Christians went as witnesses. How I want to add my name and presence to theirs. Cornelius was expecting Peter, and in a most expectant, eager manner he had made preparations — all his relatives and close friends were in his house waiting. The deepest respect was expressed to Peter in falling at his feet. It was out of politeness and thoughtfulness that Peter responded as he did. God told Peter three times each time he requested information. The careful time reference of the army captain was additional confirmation to the hesitant Jewish apostle.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Shall I ever lose my eagerness to absorb every word you have said? I pray I shall not. (1) Give me the careful patience in repeating what should have been understood the first time. (2) Remind me all over again that you love everyone! (3) Move me to see that evaluations must be made in the light of your word. (4) If you had to say things three times before they were heard I too must do the same. (5) Keep me aware of your timing. (6) Give me six brothers to help me in my witness for you. (7) Impress upon me deeply that men are saved by the message I bring.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I hear you Lord! (1) "I am counting on you to tell men for me about my Son." (2) "The Holy Spirit is speaking to you today through his word — hear him!" (3) "The baptism of the Holy Spirit has never been for salvation at anytime with anyone."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Senegal — Point for prayer: *Islam has grown rapidly over the last 50 years from possibly 50% to 92% of the population, yet the land is wide open for the gospel! The highly organized and politically powerful Sufi brotherhoods claim 85% of all Muslims as members. Hitherto tolerance for other religions has been a point of pride. Pray for its continuance; extremists could insist on setting up a narrow, bigoted Islamic state. Pray for a breakthrough for the gospel among Muslims, and for an impact to be made on the Muslim brotherhoods.*

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

—Tuesday—

The things that are seen — ALL things that are seen have an end. ALL things unseen have no end. Teach me as I pray.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

End-maker. I'm sure you already know when my end, i.e., on this earth, will be. Indeed, you know the end of all things, the consummation of the whole plan of this little planet. To now talk with the One who has such knowledge and such power is indeed an awesome thought. But I praise you for such grace and mercy extended to me. How unbearably sad it is that the end of those not your children will be just that for this world, and the beginning of torment in the world to come. I look forward to the new heaven and the new earth.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

The end of my life, i.e., as a certainty, is best left to you. I am not hastening the day, nor do I dread it. Indeed, I welcome it and rejoice at the prospect. What a wonder that it is given to man to know that the entrance into the next world has already been prepared — “the abiding places,” the rejoicing angels, the spirits of just men made perfect. I simply rest my whole case with you through the One who said, “I am the resurrection and the life — he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Am I ever profane? Dear God, forgive me for taking what you have given and treating it lightly and as if I did not know you had made it. I refer to other people, to your physical universe, to my own body, and then to put such an attitude into words of profanity! Awful! And yet I have done this. Forgive me! All of life is sacred, holy and should be so considered. I want to increasingly develop the sense of wonder and

awe in all I do and say. Only when my outlook and basic attitude is pure can I escape profanity.

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

¹⁹Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. ²⁰Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. ²¹The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

²²News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. —Acts 11:19-22, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How is it that the first disciples were infected with a desire to share and so many since are not? The answer is in the word “disciple” — many since that glad day did not “so learn Christ.” Dear Father, how shall I accept this fact? The point you are making in this text is that only Jews heard — but they *did* hear. We have Jews and Gentiles and neither one of them hear! How

I would like to be in Antioch for a few days to see and hear and know the very first persons who were called Christians. To hear the men from Cyprus and northern Africa tell of my Lord and his love — the good news about the Lord Jesus. What a privilege that would be!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Read this word to or for myself in praise and thanksgiving, in confession and adoration. What a great city Antioch must have been when these people first came — “the hand of the Lord was with them.” Just what is involved? Probably miracles, the divine credentials. Did the apostles lay their hands upon them? They could have, but it does not say such happened and just how do we know such powers were given to others to pass on to others because of the hands of the apostles? Simon the sorcerer wanted such from the apostles — he didn’t get it — did anyone else? Philip and Stephen did miracles to confirm their words and the hands of the apostles were laid upon them (Acts 6:1ff.), but for what purpose? Was it not to set them aside with others to serve the widows? What happened to the other five? Here are “men” — just “men” — from Cyprus and Cyrene. Dear Lord, I’m listening.

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

I do indeed! Thank you: (1) For the encouragement that there were no doubt many like Philip who went to Samaria. What he did there others did in Phoenicia and others in Cyprus and still others at Antioch. (2) If Philip needed to confirm his words with signs didn’t also these people? Thank you for this insight. (3) Telling “the message,” the “good news about the Lord Jesus” is what saves. Oh, oh, tell it! (4) That we can turn *from* our sin and turn *to* the Lord. (5) News about the good news is also news. (6) For Barnabas that *good man*. (7) “The church at Jerusalem” — the one right, true, loyal, faithful church.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Telling the message — this seems to dominate all this passage. These are transitional verses to introduce us to the record of the spread of this good news in the Gentile center of Antioch. How is it I am so content to tell the message by indirect means of the printed page? Of course the printed page becomes a direct means when used by others. This is no substitute for a one-on-one encounter. I put myself in the place of Barnabas — he was an encourager of others. Through his exhortation many people were brought to the Lord.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the midst of evangelism there are so many requests. (1) How can I today move believers to tell the message? (2) Break down our religious prejudice. (3) When will the “good news” live up to its name in the lives of those who have it to tell? (4) May your hand be with me today in my efforts to evangelize. (5) Turn me more and more to the authority and direction of my Lord. (6) Motivate me, like Barnabas, to encourage people. (7) I want to be a member of the same church as Barnabas and others in Jerusalem.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I am listening: (1) “All who are saved are members of my eternal universal church.” (2) “My goodness is like leaven — put it into the lump.” (3) “I cannot, and will not work without you and others like you.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Senegal — Points for prayer: (1) *Christians are few*, though their influence is disproportionately great through their input into education. Most of these Christians are nominal and their life style gives little credit to the cause of Christ. Almost all are originally from a non-Muslim background and from the Cape Verdians, Serer and Jola peoples. Even among the non-Muslim groups the powers of darkness have yet to be routed. (2) *Evangelical believers are a rarity*. There may be no more than around 1,000 in all of Senegal. Only through the work of the Assemblies of God and Finnish Lutherans have groups of churches been planted, and these only among the Serer and Bassari. Believers are scattered, often poorly taught and under constant pressures from Muslim or heathen relatives to conform. The lack of believing girls tempts many young men to marry unbelievers or to immorality. Pray for a strong church to be planted in each ethnic group. Sadly, liberal teaching is affecting the young Lutheran Church, with increasing nominalism among members.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK SIX

—Wednesday—

Everyone is someone's slave. I am so glad to have a choice just here. I renew such a choice in the closet of prayer.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Slave-maker. Surely this is a voluntary bondage, since all of us will indeed serve someone. All men should gladly choose you as their master. Servitude on a glad choice should be the response of all men. *Every* knee shall bow and *every* tongue confess that your Son is Lord to bring a revelation of your true character. This is a promise yet to be fulfilled, but nonetheless a definite reality. Praise your name for the joy of bondage and yet I need to be reminded that service and yielding and obeying is not a word but in *deed* and *truth*.

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 master — I am your bond servant. Bless your name, I do yield my whole self, i.e., as much as I am able to understand. I do want to deepen my desire. I gladly own your Lordship. I have made such a mess out of my efforts to rule. How can I develop a deeper commitment? Bless your omnipotent name. I ask to receive in this area of character development. Move within through your Spirit, direct from without through your word, prepare ahead through your providence. "Behold the bond servant of the Lord." Can I say this? Not as I want to.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Master, forgive me for my pretense. Forgive me for hatred toward those I see who reject your will when they do not know it, and I am so many times unwilling to tell them. Move in my heart — to truly submit, to give myself away to others that I might serve you. I know in service I find fulfillment — forgive me for resenting the energy loss and tiredness.

I know from much experience I will feel fine again. One day I will feel fine forever. Dear God, give me a gentle and quiet spirit.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

²³When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. ²⁴He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord. ²⁵Then Barnabas sent to Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.
—Acts 11:23-26, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What a wonderful man you have in Joseph called Barnabas! Although he was a Jew he could see evidence of your favor and goodness among non-Jewish people — *all* non-Jewish people — he did not begrudgingly admit it, but was glad, happy, delighted and he looked upon it as a continuing condition. What a meaningful expression — "to remain true to the Lord — with all their hearts" — to adhere, or be glued to you with all my mind, will, emotions and

conscience. This I want to do, this I gladly embrace. What you through Luke say to Barnabas — oh, how I want it to be said of me: (1) “He was a good man.” (2) “He was full of the Holy Spirit.” (3) “He was full of faith.”

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just what was the “*evidence of the grace of God*”? Was it the joy, the exuberance of the believers? It could well have been. Was it the miraculous signs that accompanied the preaching? This is far more likely. After all, the miraculous was the *evidence* of his presence and power. Signs were to credential the word spoken. Do we need evidence today for the same word? Do not the signs already accompany the word, i.e., in the same book where we read the word, do we not read also of the signs? But some will say, “Reading the word is not tantamount to hearing the word” — “signs accompanied the *spoken* word, not the *written* word.” John said he *wrote* signs that we might believe (John 20:30,31). I read this word to probe my own heart and help me to love you more and serve you better.

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

Amen, and amen! Thank you: (1) For every one of the first Gentile Christians or disciples who were first called Christians in Antioch. I shall speak to each of them in total leisure and interest. How interesting a time that will be! (2) For Saul who had been now several years at home in Tarsus — I’ll ask him what he did there when I see him. I wish I could today! (3) For all the conversation that was shared by the old friends — Barnabas and Saul — what did they say? Sometime (when there is no time) I’ll know. (4) That there are ten thousand Antiochs today — just waiting for Barnabas and Saul. (5) The church is simply the collective group of Christians anywhere — in Jerusalem or Antioch. (6) That teaching as well as preaching was the primary job of evangelism and confirmation. (7) Thank you for all the ensuing years and generations in thousands of places who did what they did in Antioch and became what they were.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“*He was a good man.*” This is such a generic description that it means anything anyone wants it to. In the text before us it means that a good man is one who not only has a large generous spirit or attitude toward those who are different than we are, but a man who is “filled with the Holy Spirit and faith.” The Holy Spirit through our response to his presence produces the qualities of our Lord in our character — also called “the fruit of the Spirit.” Faith will move us to

do what our Lord commanded — no wonder “a great number of people were brought to the Lord.” Dear God, I want to be like him.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

As you see my needs move me to make appropriate requests: (1) Help me to see your grace in the lives of saved men and women. (2) How I want to be true to you from my heart. (3) I want to be emptied of self and filled with the Holy Spirit. (4) Dear Lord, how I need to be filled with faith! (5) Are men brought to you only when we are filled with the Holy Spirit and faith? (6) I need to realize you want others to work with me. (7) May I be able to rejoice in the success of others as much as in your blessing upon my efforts.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What do you want me to hear from this text? (1) “Your faithfulness is your responsibility.” (2) “If you will, I will.” (3) “You need help — from me and from men.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Seychelles — Points for prayer: (1) *Nearly all Seychellois claim to be Christian*, but are steeped in superstition and depend on the outward rites of baptism and confirmation. Immorality is a serious problem, and very few have a saving knowledge of Christ. Pray that full freedom for the preaching of the gospel may be granted, and pray that many within the recognized churches may be converted. (2) *Since 1970 over 15 informal Bible study groups* have sprung up on the largest island Mahe, with a number of Seychellois coming to the Lord. An indigenous Pentecostal group, which began in 1982, has rapidly grown to over 500 believers. Pray for lively, locally led fellowships to be planted all over the islands. (3) *The Seychelles Creole NT* is now being translated through the Bible Society of Mauritius. Pray for the rapid completion of this project and for the Word to make an impact on Seychellois society.

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 SIX

—Thursday—

How very much emphasis is given to freedom — to liberty — only in yourself and your Son is liberty. We ring liberty's bell in personal worship.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Liberty-maker. Bless your name you are just that to me! But to all men everywhere you are the true source of freedom! Openness is the attitude you produce in life — this gives freedom. Oh, to love to do what you choose to do! And this is exactly what you produce in life. When we establish a deep love for you and your Son, then we are so excited and happy about you, and establish goals of eternal value and you move us to reach for them. The very nature of yourself and your works sets us free — we are glad to do what we choose to do. There could be no One or no enterprise that offers such excitement, adventure and value. Praise your very 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

Liberty-maker for me! How set free I feel! I have been led into a task I love to do, and I'm paid for it! I have found that thinking of you and your work all the time is the best way to establish goals that last, beauty with meaning, hope for eternity. The only limitations I have are self-imposed, or demon-imposed or demon directed. The truth of life and its meaning has set me free. The truth about life's true goals has broken me loose from the bondage of boredom! Praise your dear beautiful Self in the person of your Son. His life was one of total liberty — I want to follow him in the deepest areas of my mind.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear, dear Lord, deliver me from the terrible sin of substituting tradition for truth. Just because we have always done it a certain way does not make it true or right. In evangelizing how tragically I have capitulated

to tradition! Dear Lord, deliver me! It is not right, it is not true that asking people to "come to the meeting" is evangelism. Evangelism is going and sharing. Truth in the realm of personal purity is not compromise but commitment! We have much to learn!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

More love to Thee, O Christ,
More Love to Thee!
Hear Thou the prayer I make
On bended knee;
This is my earnest plea:
More love, O Christ, to Thee,
More love to Thee,
More love to Thee!

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

HIS WORD

²⁶and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch.

²⁷During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) ²⁹The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. ³⁰This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul. —Acts 11:26-30, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

"For a whole year (what year was it? 39? 40?) Barnabas and Saul met with "the called out ones" and taught great numbers of people. I know you were also

present then and there as you are present here and now. How many disciples were there? What was taught to them? If the same disciples were there all year, what were they taught all year? There must have been much direct revelation given to Barnabas and Saul. Did you call them Christians? Was this your choice of a name? "The ones who belong to the Anointed One" — is this a good meaning? Dear Lord, I want it to describe me.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

The church, "the called out ones" of my Lord, was built upon the teaching of the apostles and prophets. Here is one of them — Agabus is his name — you have anticipated the need and are here making provision for it. The Holy Spirit really did the speaking through the prophet. What an act of unselfish generosity — to help those they had never seen, who actually did not like them! The Jews hated the Gentiles. Those living in the province occupied by the Holy City would be especially prejudiced, but were not these learners called by the name of the One (even yourself) who gave himself to those who hated him? May I also so learn of 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

Yes, yes, thank you: (1) For the church in Antioch that could listen and learn. (2) For the honorable, blessed name of those who belong to the "Anointed One." (3) For Agabus who would make the long journey and would plainly, boldly predict a famine. (4) That all your promises find fulfillment. (5) That each disciple gave not as his neighbor did, but as he was moved by the need and yourself according to his ability. (6) That Barnabas and Saul were willing to be "errand boys." (7) That money is a very spiritual commodity given by Apostles to elders.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Is ability here equated with income? It would seem to be so — at least in the amount given — but all ability comes from God, therefore all income is from God. The surprising fact of this generosity is not its amount but rather that everyone had a part in it. "Each (one)" was involved. Ability relates to several areas of life such as: (1) Intelligence quotient. (2) Art — in music or painting or drama. (3) The gifts of the Spirit — God needs each of these to help those who are starving for the bread of life.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In life saving, spiritual and physical, there are petitions: (1) How can I learn to teach from the example

of Barnabas and Saul? (2) What was the great attraction for the people of Antioch? In these two requests I am asking for help in the deep needs of my own life. (3) Please help me to appreciate more fully the gift of prophecy. (4) I want the unselfish love these Gentiles had for the Jews. (5) Am I giving according to my ability? (6) Open my eyes that I might see that money is a spiritual commodity. (7) How do elders relate to the use of money?

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

There is much I should hear from these verses: (1) "All disciples (learners) are Christians." (2) "All Christians are disciples." (3) "All Christians are brothers."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Sierra Leone — Points for prayer: (1) *Sierra Leone was the first West African country to be evangelized*, but after nearly 200 years of effort, only 10% of the nation even claims to be Christian. There is no significant church growth, nor is there a single denomination that has ever made a lasting spiritual impact on the country. Pray that the Christians may be electrified by the ministry of the Holy Spirit! (2) *The decay of public and private morality* has been so severe that the land faces a grim future despite its economic potential. Pray for wise and godly political leaders with foresight to be raised up, and for freedom to preach the pure gospel and make amends for past failures. (3) *Witchcraft and the all-pervading secret societies* have hardly ever been challenged and defeated by the power of the Cross. Both Islam and churches in general have avoided the confrontation that must come before breakthroughs can be seen.

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 SIX

—Friday—

You Lord see me at all times — not to catch me but to comfort and love me. I carry this thought to your throne.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

The Seeing One. Oh, oh bless your name you see me! Blessed wonder of wonders! You see all men at one time, *all* events, all the sequence of all things. There is no past-present-future with you, neither is there anything happening that is a surprise to you. Dear God, my heavenly Father, to try to contemplate your omniscience and omnipresence is beyond my wildest imagination, but I want to try. It stretches my mind and gives me more cause for adoration and holy amazement. How limited is the likeness of man to yourself — at least in this realm.

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 Seeing One — “Thou Lord seest me,” but not as man seeth but you look into my mind — you know the true and real *purposes* of my life. You contemplate the emotions or affections that sweep my life. You can see the total meaning of the approval or disapproval I give to any one circumstance of life. You see me now but you see me in the total perspective of the ever-present now! How beyond all human understanding and yet a thrill of excitement pulsates through such contemplation.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Anger is a sin of mine. I am angry at the wrong thing, at the wrong persons — my anger is most easily released when I am tired and have concentrated on something for a long time. I really can not and do not rationalize and excuse such bursts of rage or resentment. Dear God, please forgive — right now I wonder how I could have done it, but I did and I apologized to those involved — and to you. Our Lord was angry

— “he looked about on them with anger because of the hardness of their hearts” at the healing of the man with the withered hand. His anger was deep compassion expressed in the hot surge of desire to help. Dear God, may I be like him!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

⁹James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews. ¹⁰All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do. —Gal. 2:9,10, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How good it is to read of the meeting of two of your most devoted servants, Peter and Paul. Peter, James and John had the reputation of being “pillars.” How did you see them? How far from fact is reputation? But they were given divine perception — perhaps the gift of discernment — you know and I do not — but I am trying to think your thoughts. What is “the right hand of fellowship”? It probably was the shaking of hands — and using the right hand it signified the

strength of the agreement. Can you give me such a hand? I know you want to. Dear God, I want to so agree with all you want done that we can hold on to one another as we get it done. Wouldn't angels do a better job? *No*, they are not an extension of yourself like I am.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

It is so comforting to know that even in the earliest of days, in the pristine purity of the apostolic church, there were those who wondered about the reaction of others. It is easy enough to say that what others think makes no difference — it doesn't to our personal relationship with you — but in the extension of your rule in the hearts of men it can make a very large difference — it can also be the difference between eating or not eating, of working here or there, or not working at all. It was with these areas Paul was concerned. In all these relationships, dear God, wonderful Lord, help me to remember to "see" the *grace*, the unearned favor you give to me, and to others. Help me to operate and let others do likewise out of the sense of *need* as well as *grace*. "Remember the poor" — remember the wide field.

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: (1) For the unselfish generosity of the Gentiles meeting the needs of the Jews. (2) That grain and fruit and meat are just as "spiritual" as prayer and Bible reading and singing. (3) That God does expect someone to lead in this work, i.e., he wants to lead *through* someone. (4) Regardless of what we preach, human need, physical human need has a priority. (5) We can and should work with those who approach service from a very different background. (6) An emotional, warm friendship can exist in his work, indeed *should* exist. (7) That Peter, James and John could serve together for several years and still be the closest of friends.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

There are so many who left Jerusalem at the stoning of Stephen. They went "everywhere" and all of them as they went spoke or told or proclaimed the good news. Some went to Phoenicia, others to Antioch and yet others to Cyprus. Some even went to Northern Africa. It is most difficult for us to understand just how prejudiced some people can be (or we are). For 2,000 years God had been working with and through the Jews. There was nothing in common in the Jewish mind or life with Gentiles. God changed their minds through the marvelous miracle at the house of Cornelius. It is most interesting that *the church sent Barnabas*. Why didn't the apostles send him? Why wasn't

one of the apostles sent? Most especially is this true if only by the hands of the apostles could the supernatural gifts of the Spirit be given — perhaps that is why Barnabas went to find Paul. But the report of his work and many turning to the Lord occurs *before* Paul arrived. How long was he there before Paul arrived? These are moot questions, but they need to be asked.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the meeting of leaders of your Son's body there are several petitions: (1) I want to be like James who said, "Faith without works is dead." (2) I want to be like Peter who said, "We become partakers of the divine nature." (3) I want to be just like John who said, "God is love." (4) I want to be like Barnabas who sold his own possessions to give to others. (5) I want to be like Paul, who said, "For me to live is Christ." (6) I want to recognize God's grace in the lives of others. (7) I want to give to the poor, not because they will thank me, but because I love them.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me dear Lord: (1) "Give and it shall be given unto you." (2) "People have physical as well as spiritual needs." (3) "Let others serve without being suspicious of their efforts."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Singapore — Points for prayer: (1) *The dynamism and growth of the Church in Singapore* over the past 15 years is cause for much praise to God. The rapid social change, economic development and increasing use of English are human factors in this growth. The receptivity of the Chinese and Indian Singaporeans, active evangelism of church and para-church organizations, and the concentration of committed, giving Christians in the little state are spiritual factors. (2) *The challenges facing the Church in Singapore*: a) *How to maintain a spiritual cutting edge* in a time of increasing affluence. b) *How to lessen the dropout rate* — maybe over 30% of those converted do not maintain their faith. c) *Limited and expensive church building sites* — innovative methods to cope with further church growth are needed. d) *Maintenance of adequate family life and witness* in high-rise flats and with high employment. e) *The spirit of denominationalism* cripples the spiritual growth of a number of congregations.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I love Thy kingdom, Lord,
The house of Thy abode,
The Church our blest Redeemer saved
With His own precious blood.

WEEK SIX

—Saturday—

I believe you hear even the inaudible expressions of my heart — but I gladly speak them out before you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Hearing. You hear the prayers of all men, but much more. You hear the conversations of all tongues of all men at the same time — it is, to me, a total impossibility and redundancy. Why would you *want* to do this? But it is an essential part of your very nature. You are not frustrated since there is nothing you do not know. You are never impatient for the same reason. To hear all words as well as to know all thoughts is one awesome concept! To imagine less than this for yourself is to attribute less than omniscience to your nature. Praise and wonder are my 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

Hearing me. To hear everyone and everything is one thing, to hear me and my prayers (as well as all other words) is something else! How wonderfully good it is — comforting and solidly reassuring to *know* you hear every word and give thoughtful consideration to each one. Even now you know I am trying to express my deep appreciation for your true nature. You read these words and know their meaning (or lack of it). Dear Father, give me traveling direction — a mercy today as I travel over treacherous highways. One day (perhaps soon — or not soon) I will be delivered from this clay house to enter into a full realization of the One who heard me — even when I wasn't listening to him. Bless your merciful Person.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Wrath — that I should express intense anger at anything but sin itself is sad. It is a reflection upon your creation and providence. Forgive me! I can

blame my fits of wrath on my nerves but who is responsible for the health of these nerves? Who aggravates them? Am I not the sinner here too? Forgive me! How I want your peace to guard my emotions and my mind. How I seek your powerful penetrating cleansing for my sin. How eagerly I draw to myself your promise of wholeness! Bless the Lord oh my total self!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

12 It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. ²He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. ³When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. ⁴After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover.

⁵So Peter was kept in prison. —Acts 12:1-5a, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It really meant something to “belong to the church” in the year 44! Did James have a wife and children? What were their feelings of terror and loss as they saw their loved one led away? I'm sure you can answer these questions with full detail and accuracy. I would

like to know someday (when there are no more days) just what kind of a man was Herod? How cheap was the price of human life! How precious to you — how meaningless to Herod. What were the thoughts of James as he laid his head down for the last time? How delighted I am to know someone who knows perfectly every answer — and several more questions I have not even considered. Praise your name!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I want to take Peter's place, or the place of one of those at the Feast of Unleavened Bread. What questions could have been asked of you and of one another? (1) How could God permit an arrest during the sacred feast? (2) What will we do if Peter is beheaded like James? (3) How can God let our enemies, and his enemies, overcome us? (4) Why doesn't God strike Herod dead? (5) What have we done to deserve this? All these questions, and others I would have asked or thought. I'm so, so glad to have all the answers in this historical record. May I remember when it happens again!

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, thank you: (1) For King Jesus, who was truly and is truly and will be truly GREAT. (2) That the called out ones (the church) became a clearly defined community in 44 A.D. (3) For the others who were arrested and persecuted that we do not know — but you do — and one day we shall meet and know and appreciate. (4) For death that is but a door into your presence and the wonderful world and life to come. (5) That we can truly and finally please you — man is never pleased with anyone or anything. (6) For our Passover who is ever alive to intercede for us. (7) That 16 soldiers cannot keep God's servant in prison when you want him out!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Some who belonged to the church." Let's ask and answer several questions about these unnamed persons: (1) To what church did they belong? (2) Can I belong to it today? (3) In what sense did they belong? (4) Why were they persecuted? (5) What happened to that church to which they belonged? *Answers:* (1) There was only one "called out" body of Christ — if we do and believe what they did we can become what they were — Christians who together formed the church of our Lord. (2) Indeed we can! The church is composed of all Christians — the same thing (or One) who saved me made me a member of his church. (3) They had been bought with a price and belonged to him, but in another sense they belonged to each other. (4) They represented a threat to the vested interests of

the religious leaders. (5) The church is alive — not as well as it might be — but whenever persons became Christians his church lived through them.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Out of persecution we can find much for which we must have your answers: (1) "Why do the Gentiles rage, and the people imagine vain things?" You have an answer — my need is trust! (2) Give me the same courage in the face of prosperity that your children had in persecution. (3) Keep me aware that with some people nothing is sacred — with me all of life is sacred. (4) Keep me aware of the temporariness of this life. (5) I want to affirm my confidence in your power to deliver out of any trouble — (help thou my unbelief. (6) Keep me tender-hearted toward those who are slaves to their jobs. (7) May I live today as if it were the last day!

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What do you say to me out of these verses? (1) "Do not fear what man can do to you." (2) "In this life right does not always win." (3) "Eternal life is right on the other side of your last heartbeat."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Solomon Islands — Points for prayer: (1) *Praise the Lord for the work of the Spirit in reviving power in the South Sea Evangelical Churches in 1935, 1970, and in nearly all Protestant denominations in the '80s.* People in all walks of life are coming to the Lord in churches, house groups and prayer meetings. There are strong, growing churches; dynamic leaders; and a remarkable missionary outreach, especially to Papua New Guinea. (2) *Island and tribal loyalties could create difficulties for the government.* Pray for wise leadership and continued freedom for the gospel. Its impact on the land has been great. The Prime Minister elected in 1985 is a born-again believer. (3) *The poor training of pastors is the biggest bottleneck for growth in maturity and expansion of the Church.* Pray for the six SSEC Bible Schools and the Anglican Theological College.

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 SEVEN

—Sunday—

This is a "good earth" — a beautiful awesome place. It carries the imprint of its Creator. Create in me a new heart — as I worship you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

King of all the earth. Bless your beautiful name! You are much more than king of all the earth, the creator and sustainer of ten trillion galaxies — but for this little speck called "earth" you are indeed ruler and Lord, but a loving, non-interfering ruler, i.e., if we do not want your rule in our lives then your rule will only include the physical universe and the creatures (great and small). One of our days (when days shall cease to be) all mankind will know of your kingship — every knee shall acknowledge and every tongue will pronounce the words of wonder either in horror or honor. Right now I am most happy to own you as my king.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

King of all the earth for me. To stand back and contemplate the globe and relate yourself with the land surface — nay — all the peoples who live and move upon the land mass — and if there be other worlds with other peoples, you are the king, creator and owner of each of them. But in a particular personal manner you are king of my life and my world. Dear King, how strange it seems to describe your rule in such large dimensions and then circumscribe and hinder your rule in my own daily living — forgive me! How I do *want* you to reign. Long live the King! In my own heart, home, job — total life!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

To confess my sins becomes totally monotonous and useless unless I truly repent. Dear God, move me to repentance. I know this is a dangerous prayer, but I do pray it because I sincerely want to repent and

change. Sins named in your book form the basis of my confession in the general area of my sin, then my particular sins will be confessed along with them. "Railing" — I am blood guilty of this sin. I have railed at my students and have asked their forgiveness, and yours; at my wife and no one deserves less such treatment. Forgive, forgive. I have railed at circumstances when they are under your control. Open my eyes, humble my heart, forgive my sin.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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.

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

HIS WORD

⁵So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

⁶The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance.

⁷Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists. —Acts 12:5-7, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What a thought! You know by name and experience every member of that church in Jerusalem. You could repeat *every* prayer. How I would like to have been

there! What commitment! Peter was sound asleep the night before his execution! What was in his mind? How did he so view yourself that he was able to accept the restful peace of sleep? Sentries at the entrance and soldiers, between which slept Peter the Apostle. These men, all of them, needed you. All of them were soon to be abruptly ushered into your eternal presence. Who were they? Were any of them saved from hell? Who was the angel? I know you know and one day I believe I will!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Is there a connection between the prayers of the church and the appearance of the angel? This strikes at a very basic issue. I think it altogether wonderful how you are able to answer prayer and then leave it up to man to interpret it as a coincidence or happenstance or "good luck." What you want and I want to give is real trust and confidence in your interest and answer to prayer — would he have been there if there had been no prayer? Why ask such a question? It is of little or no profit.

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

Amen — so be it. Thank you for: (1) *Earnest* prayer — it effects and affects much in its working. (2) The inclusive word "church" — no doubt there were present there, as today, some who were immature in their prayer life. (3) The wonder of sleep — how much a boon it is to man — the power of the peaceful heart to bring peaceful rest! (4) The very real physical efforts of man to thwart (defeat) your plans. How puny they are when you are ready to deliver! (5) The suddenness of some of your acts — all are sudden when not expected — a delightful surprise is the name of your game with me! (6) The light that shone into the cell — you didn't have to use a light, but you did. It surely brightened up the whole picture. (7) The materialization of the angel — or is this the explanation? At least Peter could see him. Perhaps it was giving Peter capacities of sight into a dimension that exists all the time — the Spirit world.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared." Since the meaning of the word "angel" is messenger, it would be easy to say that any humble servant of the Lord who carries a message from the Lord is God's angel. Of course this is an accommodated use of the word, but the lowest servant of our Lord, like Ananias of Damascus, can do what an archangel like Gabriel could not do: tell the good news to Saul of Tarsus and baptize him that his sins might be washed away and he could be filled with the Holy Spirit. "Sudden-

ly" somewhere, sometime a messenger of the Lord appeared and told us the good news or we would not be here to record it. It would be *oh, so good* to have an angel materialize in the midst of the busy activities of life, but it would be better to go where you know no one has ever come with the glad tidings of great joy — after all it was given "for all the people."

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How many requests can I find in the example of Peter: (1) I want to be an example of "earnest prayer" — help me. (2) Give me the settled peace that guarded the heart of Peter. (3) I am aware of angels, but not as much as I should be — help me! (4) I want to affirm that there are no doors you cannot open! (5) Shine the light of your word upon my own bondage and set me free! (6) Keep me alert. Sometimes you act suddenly. I do not want to miss your direction. (7) I praise you that as I go about life today you are aware of it all. Sensitize my heart.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Through your word, visit me! What do you say? (1) "I am listening to those who pray — even if they have but little faith." (2) "The word of God is not bound." (3) "I am interested in all the details of life."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Somalia — Points for prayer: (1) *This closed land* needs to be prayed open for the gospel. Only a few areas were ever exposed to the gospel, and this was just a limited period of 20 years. (2) *The work of missions* ended in 1973-74 after some very difficult years of seeking to win Somalis under almost impossible restrictions. Yet the courageous witness of *SIM* and the Mennonites led to the conversion of a number of Somalis and also the translation of the Somali Bible. (3) *National believers* continue to live for the Lord under very difficult conditions. Many are isolated and it is hard to meet for fellowship. They face much opposition from both the authorities and their own families. Some believers took refuge in Kenya. Pray that God may preserve his own and bless their witness.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Crown Him with many crowns,
The Lamb upon His throne;
Hark how the heavenly 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 SEVEN

—Monday—

You reign — many do not know it — many more do not accept it. I do — I bow before you in willing submission.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Reigning. The fact is you *are* reigning *now* and always have been, and always will be, over the entire physical inanimate world, over all the animal kingdom you are king, and in the hearts of all men who want your Lordship you reign. Dear Lord, count me as one who wants your rule because I need it so desperately. To attribute all power, all authority in heaven and on earth is to but repeat the words of your dear Son. One day, when there are no more days, you will claim your reign and all that has not yielded, gladly, to your reign will be removed. Right now I am most happy to acknowledge your supreme Lordship and try, help my trying, to yield my whole being to you.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

“Let not therefore sin (Satan) reign in your mortal body that you should fulfill the lusts thereof” (Rom. 6:12). It is possible for me to “let” either you my great, loving Father-Creator to reign or sin through Satan, or Satan through sin. I can *let* either one — the choice is mine — but is there really a choice considering the results? As much as we choose Satan and sin one would imagine there was some benefit, at least beyond the momentary pleasure of the moment, or season. What I need to do is to be creative about the means of entering into the joys, delights and satisfactions of the Lord!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Selfish ambition — how can I eliminate this? By being sure the purpose or goal of my ambition is unselfish. But there are other sins for which I should be and am heartily sorry and want to repent. At the bottom line

is selfishness — perhaps the largest is “self-deception,” i.e., pretending I am something I am not. It must appear positively humorous to you, or infinitely sad. All that I deceive is myself. Dear God, cleanse me in the blood of your Son, clothe me in the best robe in your house — the red robe of righteousness. Comfort me and deepen my dependence on you.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I have 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.

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

HIS WORD

⁷Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. “Quick, get up!” he said, and the chains fell off Peter’s wrists.

⁸Then the angel said to him, “Put on your clothes and sandals.” And Peter did so. “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me,” the angel told him.

⁹Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

—Acts 12:7-10, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What amazement filled the face and heart of Peter when he opened his eyes and saw the angel! Even after he saw the angel and heard him he yet could not believe it. How good it is that we can live this incident all over again. What must it be to live in the "eternal present" — it is just as clear and real today with you as it was two thousand years ago! How precise and thoughtful is the angel. Angels seem to have a habit of waking people up — the shepherds, Cornelius and now Peter. How I do want to awake with the apostle — chains and iron gates mean nothing when you are ready to deliver! You can and do direct the thinking and actions of people, i.e., when it suits your purpose — the first and second guards did not know Peter left!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Your angels are here in this room, I just cannot see them. Are they saying much the same thing to me? "Quick, get up," it is late and the world is going to hell! All chains of hesitancy and bondage can and do fall off! "Put on the whole armor of God" — righteousness, truth, good news of peace, faith, etc. Fasten this armor on tightly, i.e., be personally knowledgeable that you have it on. "Follow me," God's angel — the angel of God says this to me. I can follow him out of prison. Oh, the amazement of it all! Oh, the total freedom!

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 I love to do this. (1) Thank you for your servants who needed to be awakened. I do, too! (2) That personal contact can and is made to wake us up — of one type or another. (3) When my hands are set free I can serve. (4) He wants me dressed to serve him. (5) The angel compensates for Peter's dullness or lack of belief. (6) There were visions in which you communicated. (7) The poor soldiers were left behind.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"He had no idea it was really happening"! This could well characterize most of life. In a dozen ways I have been delivered and I really do not know it. (1) I had no idea what was happening when our three children were born. (2) I had no idea what was involved when our children were married — I thought I did, but I didn't. (3) Grandchildren are full of surprises! (4) I had no idea what was really happening when I baptized the very first convert — a little boy about 10 or 11. (5) I knew not that the humble meeting I held of 10 or 15 saints was "the house of God and the gate of heaven." (6) I had no idea what really happened when

a totally sincere girl gave her heart to me and pledged her life with mine. How could I ever know the ten thousand blessings she would bring?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Wake me up to the requests I should make as related to these verses. (1) Show me just what is urgent and what is not in your work. (2) Release me from the bondage of useless routine. (3) Strike from my hands all desire to do my own will. (4) Show me the reality of what appears as but a dream of spiritual conquest. (5) Clothe me for the battle of following your leading. (6) Lead me past all the barricades of Satan. (7) Open doors for me I really never knew could be opened.

**READ HIS WORD AND
WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS**

What living word do you speak to me from this text? (1) "Get up and tell of your deliverance." (2) "Leave all and follow me." (3) "I can deliver from every prison."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

South Africa — Point for prayer: The racial issue overshadows all others. Pray for: a) The tensions and hatreds in society to drive Christians into earnest prayer for the spiritual health of their nation. b) Courage for those in authority to rectify injustices and implement policies that will bring about meaningful and nonviolent political changes. c) Christian leaders to be uncompromising for both biblical truth and social justice. Few have the balance. Liberation theology has become a major emphasis in a climate where all legitimate means for change have been thwarted. d) The Church to be a true agent for reconciliation. Christians need to put loyalty to their Lord before the security or advancement of their own ethnic group. There are Christians on both sides of the racial divide who advocate violence in either repression or protest. Pray for repentance from wrong attitudes and that credibility for a biblically prophetic role may be regained. e) True fellowship links irrespective of language and race. Pray for those working to this end. f) The primary task of the Church for evangelism and missions not to be lost, but reemphasized.

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 SEVEN

—Tuesday—

What a solid encouragement it is to know you are planning our good — not evil. I bow before you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

For us. Wonderful Lord, great God, I know you love me and every man, every woman. You have planned and provided the very best for each of us. It is a wonderful source of strength to know of your infinite interest. How carefully you have given us “all things to enjoy.” In the smallest of detail you have indicated your interest and concern that we have all we need. In you we are full and have all things. If you are for us — and we know you are — then who could be against us — i.e., successfully oppose us?

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

For me. In so many little areas of life I have found evidence of your interest! How I praise you this is true. For today and all its needs and opportunities I know you will be there to help me, to indicate your involvement in all human affairs. Man may not see it or appreciate it, or acknowledge it, to say nothing of thanking you for it, nonetheless, you are there behind what man can see, or interpret, to provide. How is it we have an atmosphere on this small piece of matter that is especially suited to our needs?

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Hardening of the heart. This is a sin and I want to be rid of it. I want to hold an open, tender heart toward yourself. How shall I learn of your heart and your interest if I am not sensitive toward your will in my life? Dear God, I do want you to penetrate my inmost being and have control of my thoughts. Most of all, just now, cleanse and forgive me of all and each of my sins. I confess them all to you!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

“Are ye able,” said the Master,
 “To be crucified with Me?”
 “Yea,” the conquering Christians answered,
 “To the death we follow Thee.”
 Lord, we are able, our spirits are Thine,
 Remold them, make us like Thee, divine:
 Thy guiding radiance above us shall be
 A beacon to God, to love and loyalty.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁰They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him. —Acts 12:10, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

On Peter’s strange journey — I want to think of it as you do, and as Peter did, for you do know how he felt! Here again we walk with Simon — you are as involved in all human affairs — they are your affairs, too. How does it feel to follow an angel in the middle of the night — or better, in the wee hours of the early morning? How do the stones feel on your feet? Did the iron gate make a noise when it opened? How many houses did they pass before they had walked the length of the street? Did Peter get a really good look at the angel just before he left? What expression was on the angel’s face? I’m sure you can answer all these foolish questions, but I wish I could.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Lord, I would much rather follow an angel than to have an angel follow me. Could you arrange that for today? I do not say this or pray this in an

altogether facetious manner. Can you through the angels open closed doors to cities today? Oh, indeed, indeed. More than sixty years of my life have gone by, but even now I know you can deliver me from all that binds me, limits me, confines me. You can lead me into the "wide place." You can find for me my own "Rehoboth" (Gen. 26:22). Dear God, open the gate to the city!

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

With enthusiasm I do! Thank you: (1) For all barricades put up by men — for how else could we know your power except through overcoming? (2) For some gates — hindrances that seem to solve themselves — now I know who is really doing it. (3) That we "never walk alone" — your servants of heaven are with us, you are with us, the Holy Spirit is *in* us. (4) We can go "through" all hindrances to your way. (5) Your personal, powerful, sensate presence need be with us but for "the length of one street." (6) Night is no hindrance or problem with you. (7) The angel did — and did not — leave him.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"The iron gate leading to the city opened for them by itself." Why did Luke include this little insight? Why mention the *iron* gate? Because to men such seems unmovable, impregnable, but with God in the fulfillment of God's purpose it becomes animated, no longer cold, unmoved metal, but a living thing responsive to the will of God. Nothing is indifferent when God speaks. Dear Lord, great God, moving Holy Spirit, ministering angels — this is the *real* world. When God moves into the sphere of man there are no barriers.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Into the excitement of that memorable night I want to go for petitions: (1) Keep me aware that even when I do not know it you are leading me. (2) Teach me over again that so many things that "work out" are of your own doing. (3) Impress upon me that if I do not move you cannot. (4) I need a lesson in patience retaught to me each day. (5) Let me know how far it is from where I am to where you want me to go. (6) Teach me how to separate what I should do from what you are doing. (7) Thank you for the simple, trusting faith of Peter.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What are you saying in this verse? (1) "Iron gates are

no problem for me." (2) "Some problems will solve themselves." (3) "It takes time to lead even in a miraculous manner."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

South Africa — Points for prayer: (1) *Praise for the positives:* a) *The strength of Protestant Christianity* despite the widely publicized negatives. The Spirit of God is moving in all the major racial groups, and with touches of revival in some areas. There are large numbers of evangelical believers in the country. b) *The increasing prayer concern* among Christians, and growth of interracial and interdenominational prayer movements. (2) *The missionary commitment of South African Christians* suffered severely because of the country's increasing political isolation since 1961. South African missionary outreach has been large, and some world renowned missionary thrusts have been of South African origin.

[Additional Note: The fourth edition of Operation World, from which our Intercession notes have been obtained, came out in 1986. As readers are aware, 1989-1990 saw great changes in Eastern Europe and in South Africa. The release of Nelson Mandela in early 1990 has reduced many of the racial tensions in South Africa, but has not totally eliminated them. Prayer is still vitally needed that people will focus their attention on the Prince of Peace, and not be side-tracked by social issues, important as they are. We can also praise God that the Dutch Reformed Church has re-evaluated its theological stance on blacks that has long underpinned South African racism.]

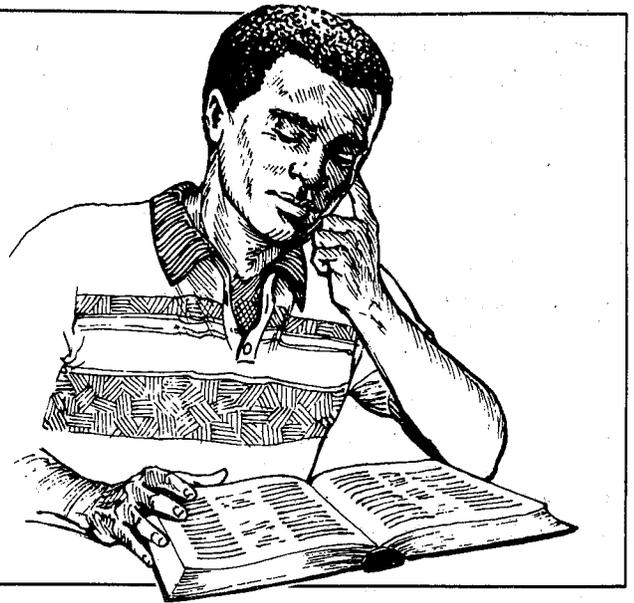
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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!

WEEK SEVEN

—Wednesday—

What comfort there is in the truth that you are the same, yesterday — today — forever. I want to renew this thought just now.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Faithful. How beautifully this word does describe your very self. This quality means so *very* much — consistency is a habit we all need to cultivate — you need not; you are consistent in *every* relationship. Faithfulness means you keep every promise. How glad we are to acknowledge this. No one promise has fallen short in any regard, for anyone. Faithfulness presupposes an interest. I am so glad you have an interest in all men all the time.

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

Faithful to me. It is for my need and my weakness you express your faithfulness. You have given me every good and perfect thing, or event, or relationship that I have — for this I praise you. I love you for being just the same yesterday, today and tomorrow — as spelled out in man's perspective — but remaining only what you have always been. Glory and honor, adoration and amazement are all words to say how deeply grateful I am to you.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Deceit. Dear God, when it would be better to tell the truth, i.e., for our own advantage, we tell a lie. When it would be better to love we hate. When it would be so much better to admit we evade. Dear God, forgive me (not them). Cleanse me, free me, love me. I love you.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I've found a Friend, oh such a Friend!
He loved me ere I knew Him;
He drew me with the cords of love,
And thus He bound me to Him.
And round my heart still closely twine
Those ties which naught can sever,
For I am His, and He is mine,
Forever and forever.

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

HIS WORD

¹¹Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were anticipating."

¹²When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. ¹³Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer the door. ¹⁴When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!"

¹⁵"You're out of your mind," they told her. When she kept insisting it was so, they said, "It must be his angel." —Acts 12:11-15, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How good it must have been to hear Peter express the very thoughts you intended by your action in his life! "To know without a doubt!" Ah, fond desire! But this we can and do have in our confidence in your character as revealed in your word and the life of your Son. Peter knew of the plans of Herod and the Jews. He knew also where the prayer meeting was held. How do you view the actions of Rhoda? It must be your delight to surprise with joy all such young women and all such faithless disciples. Thank you, thank you that you desire to so speak to man.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Just whose place shall I take? Could I be as confident as Peter in the face of soon coming death? I am sure I would be as surprised as he in the deliverance. Can I approximate the overjoyed wonder of Rhoda? Dear Lord, I *want* to. Peter was not only knocking but speaking. I wonder what he said. One day I shall ask Rhoda — and know. Until then I would be like to hear in my imagination a few of his shouts of joy. Has anyone accused me lately of losing my mind because of my testimony concerning the living Savior? Or my telling of a supernatural deliverance of one of his servants? I wonder what someone meant by saying "It must be his angel"? Did Peter have a single angel assigned to him? Do all of us have 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

Of many texts this should be a source of gratitude: (1) For the fact that you are in the "resource business." (2) That you do not ignore or minimize the opposition of man. (3) That your revelation, even to Peter, was progressive. (4) That the largest part of praying is adoration and thanksgiving. (5) That even a lowly servant girl was known of you and knew Peter in a personal way, i.e., she knew his voice. (6) Excitement is a part of your work with men. (7) Sharing God's blessings is natural and compatible with your plan.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"It must be his angel." The term angel means "messenger" so it seems strange to relate this expression to the death of Peter — as if this person is saying he died and his spirit has returned. We have not known the spirit of man and the term angel being used interchangeably. Are we to learn here that each person has an angel assigned to them? If so, why would the angel knock at the gate? Perhaps it was but the outpouring of amazed confusion. There is one static lesson: angels are very real, intelligent beings who have a great interest in men. They are deathless beings alive in the world today.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How like the disciples in Mary's house are all of us! (1) Shock me into the reality of the spirit world. (2) Deliver me today from Satan's clutches and all he has anticipated. (3) I do knock on the doors of opportunity today, confident that you will open. (4) Help me to be patient with those who act out of impulse and not thought. (5) If the door does not open right away keep me persistent in knocking. (6) Give me the joy of Rhoda as related to my Lord knocking on the door of my heart. (7) In spite of all who doubt or deny move

me to affirm that he is indeed knocking for admission into all of my life.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What do you say just here? (1) "My answers to prayer are not always what people expect." (2) "Joy need not always make sense." (3) "Believe me first, last and always."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

South Africa — Points for prayer: (1) *The White community*. The *Afrikaners* are mostly members of the three major Reformed Churches, primarily the theologically conservative Dutch Reformed Church. The *English speaking people* tend to be less religious than the *Afrikaners*. (2) *The Colored (racially mixed) community*. Their unfortunate past has left a legacy of social instability which can only effectively be changed by the power of the gospel. Unstable family life, immorality and alcoholism are real problems. (3) *The Asian community*. The *Indian* community has gone through traumatic social and economic changes since their arrival in Natal a century ago. Many are very Westernized. The *Chinese* live mainly in Transvaal; many are still non-Christian. (4) *Black African communities*. Black nationalism has become a potent force. Politically this has led to violent protest in some areas and widespread rejection of the ideals of the dominant white community. This could lead to a rejection of biblical Christianity and persecution of true Christians.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

To God be the glory, great things He hath done,
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,
And opened the Lifegate that all may go in.
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father through Jesus the Son,
And give Him the glory, great things He hath done.

WEEK SEVEN

—Thursday—

What a delight to know you have made an agreement with your Son on my behalf. I bow before you to rejoice!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Covenant-maker. How remarkable that you want to make an agreement with man. You want man to enter your mind and heart and agree with you concerning this matter or that. We have such a full record of your faithfulness in covenant agreements — of land, of a great nation, of your dear Son. But of all the agreements you have made and kept, none are more important, indeed all seem to be but the preparation for your final agreement in the blood and righteousness of your dear Son. That you would want to transact business with me is a total amazement. Praise your faithful name! How glad I am for your goodness.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Covenant-maker with me. To claim my part of this testament is so important and yet so very humbling. How glad I am to claim the remission (the stopping of sin) in my life and record. I want to enter the fullness of fulfillment as related to your covenant with me. Trusting reliance upon your faithfulness is my part — which I gladly give — but to stop sinning is accomplished in fact in only a relative manner; to stop all sinning I would have to know all things, i.e., where I am imperfect and would need a power I do not now have. “To will is present, but to perform is not.” I can see and claim the guilt of sin stopped — the record of sin removed — but the practice?? Dear God, I surely, sorely want to!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Which indeed leads me to openly admit my need, deep, deep need. I am a sinner — one who violates

your law, misses your mark, falls far, far short of your glory (character). I could (and do) specify several categories, and specific sins. I cast myself daily and momentarily upon your mercy and love. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow! I claim by faith, not by work, my freedom and joy of acceptance. I am such a poor example of obedience if obedience is performance. I have failed if obedience is an attitude and desire. Dear God, I agree! I want to obey. I see no reason at all for myself not to obey, but there is another law in my members bringing me into bondage. Thanks be to yourself! There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are hidden in him.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

¹⁶But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. ¹⁷Peter motioned for them to be quiet and described how the Lord had brought him out of prison. “Tell James and the brothers about this,” he said, and then he left for another place.

¹⁸In the morning, there was a great commotion among the soldiers. “What could have happened to Peter?” they asked. —Acts 12:16-18, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It must please you to see men pleased, especially when

the surprise is associated with your answer to prayer! How totally beyond belief was the deliverance of Peter, was the presence of Peter and the recounting of your action in his life. Who asked what? What were the comments in the house of Mary that day? I want to hear it all over again — you know James so much better than we do — what was his response? Leadership was a very real and needed activity in the church at Jerusalem. You know the names (and serial numbers) of every one of the soldiers in the empty cell of the prison. Was it your choice that they die? No, No, You have no pleasure in the death of wicked (or lost) — it was Herod's choice!

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 quiet" and hear, as for the first time, what Peter — what are you saying to me! The Lord brought him out of prison — even when angels are the means the cause is "the Lord" — yourself, or your Son. You are cognizant of physical wood and stone buildings. "Tell James and the brothers" — James the brother of my Lord, James the one who did not know his own brother, i.e., the One who lived with him in the same house — but now he did — now he leads others to know. My, how he could speak with help to me! It is so good to have spiritual brothers just like those in Jerusalem!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Indeed I can: (1) Thank you for the persistence and boldness of Peter. (2) Thank you for the thrill of divine astonishment. (3) Thank you that in quietness we learn. (4) Thank you that it can still be told to the leaders and brothers and sisters how the Lord can and does deliver his servants! Amen! (5) Thank you that Peter never stayed around for congratulations — he cared more for the safety of the disciples. (6) Thank you that he never told them where he was going — what wisdom he had from you! (7) Thank you that this incident could have caused some of these soldiers to become Christians before they saw you.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"What could have happened to Peter?" This was the question of the soldiers, but it can be a question for each of us. (1) What could have happened to Peter if Jesus had not made a personal resurrection appearance to him? He could have become discouraged and quit. (2) What could have happened to Peter if our Lord had not prayed for him that his faith fail not? (3) What could have happened to Peter if Jesus had given up on him the third time he went to sleep when he asked him to watch and pray? (4) What could have happened to Peter if he decided God was against him

and therefore he was in prison? (5) What if the Christians had not prayed for him?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the midst of the excitement of these verses there arise requests: (1) I want to keep the capacity to be astonished at your goodness. (2) Help me to tell someone today what the Lord has done for me. (3) I want to respect and admire your work in others. (4) May I seek to protect others by what I do not say. (5) May I, like John Mark, drink in eagerly every word of the wonder of your grace. (6) It is good at times to leave — help me to know when. (7) Keep me alert to the beautiful accuracy of this text.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

My ears are open — speak to me from these verses: (1) "Time is a very important factor in some of my work." (2) "People need to hear over and over again all I have done." (3) "There is no avoiding loss as well as gain in some of my work."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

South Africa — Points for prayer: *The 10 National States/Independent States* are a patchwork of larger and smaller ethnic enclaves within the area of S. African provinces according to the majority ethnic group: (1) *Bophuthatswana*: pop. 1,490,000; 40% of Tswana. Fairly viable economy. Christian 90.4%, of which African Independent Churches (AICs) form 24%. (2) *Ciskei*: pop. 738,000; 12% of Xhosa. Independent 1981; government has poor record on human rights. Christian 75%. (3) *Gazankulu*: pop. 618,000; 40% of Shangaan/Tsonga. Economically backward. Christian 51%; only AICs and RCs growing significantly. (4) *Kangwane*: pop. 185,000; 16% of Swazi. Christian 68%; massive growth of AICs. (5) *KwaNdebele*: pop. 173,000; 35% of S. Ndebele. Christian 85%, much nominalism; AICs 50% of population. (6) *KwaZulu*: pop. 3,940,000; 60% of Zulu. Has refused independence. Very fragmented geographically. Christian 75%. (7) *Lebowa*: pop. 2,020,000; 60% of Pedi. Poor and economically unviable. Christian 57%; rapid growth of AICs and RCs. The Zion Christian Church, largest AIC, is predominantly Pedi.

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 SEVEN

—Friday—

You are at the head of an innumerable throng of angels — of the spirits of just men made perfect. I gladly worship you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Lord of hosts. The hosts of heaven are under your command. Indeed, all the hosts of men and angels will be (and now in the light of eternity are) under your control. Praise your powerful name! In all the battles of the Old Testament record you led forth in triumph — in whatever opposition to the hearts or lives of men there are ten million angels — all the strength of omnipotence ready for use. I doubt not your total ability — it is only that you do not choose to use such power.

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

Lord of hosts for me. There are truly legions of angels at work on behalf of man's needs. I praise you for such interest and involvement in the passing show of man's little flutter of existence. Oh, dear God, keep me open and reaching out to you in praise and wonder — you merit all such praise, yea, much, much more. Lead on. O King Eternal — the day of march has come!

How do you personally relate to the power 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

To simply and fully confess all my sin to you is no burden — it is a grand release! I have at times been bitter at you (at least indirectly) for the inequities of life — and even now I do not understand them any better than before, but bitterness is totally self-defeating, for which I ask forgiveness. It is a sin against myself, as well as yourself! Against my dear wife who surely does not deserve such treatment. Cleanse and relieve me of this! Calmness and peace are the fruit of forgiveness. Praise your name forever!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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.

HIS WORD

¹⁹After Herod had a thorough search made for him and did not find him, he cross-examined the guards and ordered that they be executed. Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there a while. ²⁰He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon; they now joined together and sought an audience with him. Having secured the support of Blastus, a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the king's country for their food supply. —Acts 12:19-20, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How typical of all men are the soldiers of Herod. I'm sure that thought occurred to you. When you do not want someone or something to be found it will not be found. You have your own purposes for hiding all that is hidden. Such purposes are also past tracing out. Perhaps one day (when there is no day) you will open the treasure of your hidden secrets to our wondering view. At the same time, these soldiers represent all men who are in a search for you — at least implicitly this is true — some are truly reaching out, although you are not far from any one of us. These poor soldiers represent all of us — cross-examined by your truth we have no defense — we, unlike them, are blood guilty and deserve to die. You, unlike the cruel, selfish, prideful king, are the king of mercy and love. Praise your name!

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

As I have already said, it is not difficult to take my place in the frantic search of the soldiers, I am so glad that I have found you! I have deserved to die and you have forgiven me! I am more than glad I do not have to accept the judgments of men, but of yourself. I do accept all my mistakes among men and their consequences — some deserved and some undeserved — both good and bad — but only because I know my eternal judge and sentence is in your hands. Blessed, wonderful judge of all the earth! It is good to have the close record of a little despot long ago and far away to let us know that no one and not a thing is either long ago or far away with 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

Oh, indeed! Thank you, thank you: (1) For every Christian home in Jerusalem. (2) That none of the Christians knew where Peter was. (3) For your way of making the authorities aware of the number of Christians and the miraculous aspect of their faith. (4) That a measure of justice, i.e., responsibility and guilt, prevails in human society, even some pagan societies. (5) For death that will usher us into the larger life — awesome, awful thought for those unprepared. I have a hard time believing the soldiers did not accept our Lord and his hope of eternal life before they were executed. How many days were involved, etc., we do not know. (6) For the total accuracy of the Acts account, historical and geographical. (7) That we do not have such a ruler over us today.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

A thorough search was made for him and did not find him. I am so glad that this in *no way* describes you, my blessed Lord — indeed, you have been in a thorough search for all men since before the beginning of time, and you have “found” those who have eyes to see and ears to hear and hearts to believe. Dear God, you have found me! The Son of Man came to “seek” — you “seek” those to worship you. You are the shepherd in search of the sheep — the Samaritan who found poor, robbed and beaten mankind on the roadside of life. You are the shepherd who calls and leads and carries his sheep. Bless your tender heart! In another figure you are “the hound of heaven” — the love that will not let me go! What a lovely captivity to be caught and held by you!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I love to think through every word of these two verses: (1) I want to be aware that any time you wish I can show up very inadequate in the presence of

men. (2) May I not take out my punctured pride in the hurt of others. (3) May I remember if you do not want us to find something it is useless to look. (4) Forgive me dear Lord if I cause any innocent people to suffer because of my selfishness. (5) May I find setbacks a lesson in humility. (6) Dear Lord, help me to freely admit the miraculous in the record of your book. (7) Give me a clear memory of all you have done to prove your love and your power.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What do you say to me from these two verses? (1) “Learn from Herod that your conscience can become dull.” (2) “Sometimes innocent people suffer.” (3) “You will find no peace in browbeating other people.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Spain — Points for prayer: (1) *The new era of liberty* gives a thrilling opportunity for the gospel. The stirrings of the Holy Spirit in Spain at the time of the Reformation were crushed by the Inquisition. For five centuries Spain had no liberty, and a repressive superstitious Catholicism dominated the life of the country. Pray that religious liberty may lead to spiritual liberty for many. (2) *The changes in Spain have not resulted in an openness to the gospel.* Satan’s means of blinding people must be torn away: a) The rapid secularization of Spain has led to indifference to Christianity, a rejection of absolutes, a big drug problem and an alarming rise in crime. b) Deeply ingrained superstitious Catholic practices and teachings have given a suspicion of any other view — especially foreign ones. c) Evangelicals are often mistaken for Jehovah’s Witnesses, whose activities are widespread and growing.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Standing on the promises of Christ my King,
Through eternal ages let His praises ring;
Glory in the highest, I will shout and sing,
Standing on the promises of God,
Standing, standing,
Standing on the promises of God my Savior;
Standing, standing,
I’m standing on the promises of God.

WEEK SEVEN

—Saturday—

Your essential being — your whole person is to be honored — adored — revered! I so worship you just now.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Reverend. “Reverend and holy is his name.” How interesting that a title so often applied to men is really your name — a quality of your character. Dear God, I accept this quality as perhaps the *one* quality I most relate to yourself. To me you are to be worshiped, hallowed, respected, and so indeed reverence is one of the first qualities that comes to mind. I want to bow before you, prostrate myself before you — holy, pure, separate, sanctified and reverend is your total person.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Reverend for me — all men should and ultimately will reverence your name and I count myself as among them. “Sacred wonder” would be a good way to describe my attitude. How beautiful to lift up my inner being to you. To know you are altogether, yea and more, the source and full origin of all that is clean, right, good and holy. I love you, but it is a love full of amazement and shock! Dear God, I want to be speechless with true reverence before your face!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

In this frame of heart it is not at all difficult to bow in contrition before you. How shall my heart (entire inward being) be moved to change? I struggle each day with this problem — I do so need to change — I ask for a full view of your goodness that I might repent. “Love suffers long with kindness” — I do neither! How longsuffering you have been and now are with me! Dear God, Holy Father, forgive, but *change* me! May my fear of your judgment and condemnation in an endless suffering or punishment move me, shock me, startle me into a deep change of

mind! Dear God, forgive — but change me.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

²⁰He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon; they now joined together and sought an audience with him. Having secured the support of Blastus, a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the king's country for their food supply.

²¹On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. ²²They shouted, “This is the voice of a god, not a man.” ²³Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten with worms and died.

²⁴But the word of God continued to increase and spread. —Acts 12:20-24, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

To read this account in the light of eternity surely gives a vastly different estimate of the actions of those involved. As Herod looked down upon the people so you looked down on the whole scene. What had Blastus told the people of Tyre and Sidon that helped them as they appeared before this poor puppet?

Perhaps he said to flatter him as much as possible — did he tell them that Herod had an inexhaustible desire to be accepted by men — to be recognized as a man of power — and he would do *anything* to get it? Poor, poor man! You alone can satisfy the human ego — for the human ego is the human spirit created in *your* image and restless and unfulfilled until at rest and completed in you! But the options are no options at all — we either give you the praise or we are “eaten of worms.”

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

What powerful words are in these verses! From what we are told by contemporary writers Herod *was* a good speaker — he did have real ability in oratory — but at the best his voice was not in any sense “the voice of a god,” and what he said was blaspheming to the true One God. Dear Lord, help me to remember the source of all speaking ability — to know how fickle and fallible are the praises of men. To remember that you *are* listening to every word I speak (or write). It is a fearful, wonderful, awesome thing to speak in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the holy angels.

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Thank you: (1) For letting me know honesty and duplicity do exist in all human exchange. (2) That our country is not dependent upon a despot for food supply. (3) That we have peace and prosperity in our free land. (4) For clothes and shelter — dear God, help us to be content. (5) For the plain lesson on the results of pride and pomp. (6) For the strong message that we should give you the praise for all we are and have. (7) That in spite of all, your word can and does spread.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Let's remember and learn from these questions: (1) From what was Peter delivered? From “Herod's clutches and everything the Jewish people were anticipating.” It is interesting that the motives of Herod and the Jews are spelled out and in no uncertain terms. (2) Explain the strange actions of a servant girl. For all time her exuberant joy and surprise will be ours. Her overlooking the obvious is so characteristic of such surprise — the account becomes all the more authentic. (3) The appearance of Peter was either the imagination of a distraught mind or the supernatural appearance of an angel — of course, it was neither one — but such is the disbelief of men. Lord, have mercy.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How powerfully do these verses move me to ask of you! (1) Dear Lord, I want to seek my importance in you — not men. (2) Keep me aware that there is always a way to deceive — guard me from it. (3) Teach me what a blessing is my daily bread from your hand. (4) May I remember that native talents can be given to you or prostituted. (5) Make me more aware how deadly is the praise of men. (6) Help me to brand as a lie that man has said anything of truth without you. (7) I want to remember that sooner or later the worms will eat us all.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Directly from heaven via your word — speak to me: (1) “I will not share my glory with another.” (2) “Most men are liars.” (3) “The word of God will continue long after all the world is gone.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Spain — Points for prayer: (1) *The growth of the Protestant Church has been steady but disappointing.* The 6,000 Protestants in 1932 had increased to 20,000 in 1963 and 50,000 in 1986, but they are very unevenly distributed. Active Evangelicals are still only one in 1,000 in the whole country. The only major advance has been the exciting outpouring of the Spirit among the gypsies among whom there are many thousands of radiant, witnessing believers; their numbers may now be as high as 20,000. (2) *Unreached peoples.* a) *The Basques* are an ancient and proud people, but there is not a single Protestant church among them. The few churches in the four provinces where Basques live are Spanish speaking. There is only a handful of known believers among possibly 750,000 Basques in Spain. b) *The 43 million tourists* each year from all over Europe. c) *The Muslims* have a considerable influence in the cities of Granada, Cordoba and on the Costa del Sol where there are also communities of Spanish converts to Islam. Youth With a Mission and other groups are beginning to work among them.

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 EIGHT

—Sunday—

*I so like the thought of your being my **ROCK** — a hiding place — an assurance of strength — permanence. I renew these qualities in worship of you.*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Rock. Praise your wonderful name! One of your names is “Rock.” This gives all men the assurance of stability, of strength, of protection, of a shade from the heat of the sun. The immense bulk of a great rock is most impressive, as is the weight involved. All these qualities — and more — tell me and all men of your character. I can and all can hide in you from the storms of life. What a tremendous need is met in shelter, protection, shade, refreshment and peace. Praise your name I am delighted to be in you.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

My Rock, my fortress and high tower! The psalmist uses this figure to describe you, or his response to you. So do I. I want to get away, to leave, to hide from this life and all and everyone in it. I’m so glad you are “my escape” — not from reality but into reality — into the One who cares about every hurt of everyone. I stand before you as I would stand before a gigantic rock — larger than any rock I have ever seen, like the overwhelming bulk of the rock at Alice Springs in the outback of Australia. Oh, wonder upon wonder. Praise you.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

To confess my sins is not difficult — I am daily reminded, and always aware of my short comings, my missing the mark. I do not ever, ever want to become comfortable with this. I want always to be sincerely, deeply sorry and full of desire to do better, to lean upon you, to hide in you. To love — love you so deeply that my response (which is my lifestyle) will not include selfishness, pride, flesh. Dear God,

forgive my insensitivity. Clean me up.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

¹¹When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was in the wrong. ¹²Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. ¹³The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. —Gal. 2:11-13, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Gladly, gladly! How fallible are your servants! Even Peter (the rock) becomes shifting sand. How strong beyond belief is peer pressure! How marvelous is your check and balance in the problems and weaknesses of men. What a snare is the fear of men! Oh, dear God, how I do see myself in this group. I have vacillated in both roles. Some days I have been Peter and other times among those from James. Dear God, forgive! How more than patient you have been — yea, you *are* today! How we struggle for identity and acceptance with one another, when our identity is always in you!

In you we are important and accepted!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How easily and personally can I allow you to speak to me! Have I been listening when some dear, courageous brother (or sister) has opposed me to the face? And “even in the presence of them all”? No, no not all the time, but I *have* had second thoughts — and when the clamor of my emotions was stilled I could hear, sometimes — oh, how I need to hear. Have I had the courage and boldness and real love of the apostle Paul to oppose some brother to the face when he stood condemned? Is this my place? If it isn’t, who will do it?

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Yes, yes, thank you: (1) That Peter was willing to go to Antioch — it was a long journey. (2) For the fellowship or partnership that was shared around a dinner table. (3) For the lesson those from James could have learned from the words of Paul to Peter. (4) That such segregation was labeled for what it was, “hypocrisy.” (5) That God has only one “group.” (6) For the healing and liberating power of truth received. (7) For the overwhelming tender love that must have accompanied every sharp word from Paul to Peter — for Peter’s tender heart and sensitive conscience that let him receive and respond to the rebuke.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“*Even Barnabas was led astray.*” How could it be? We know how, by the hypocrisy of the “other Jews” at Antioch this dear good man was led. This speaks both well and ill of him: (1) *Well*: He was submissive, i.e., he could be led. He admired and respected other men and their opinions. He truly wanted to be careful in his relationship with God and men. (2) *Ill*: He did not look beyond the moment. He did not look at the whole picture. He allowed pride of position and party majority (which is usually wrong) to rule over what God had plainly said. Praise your wonderful love and Barnabas’ grace, he repented! We can change our minds several times and be acceptable to God!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the mistakes of others I can find requests for my needs: (1) In the midst of unfamiliar surroundings keep me humble-minded. (2) Give me the wisdom to know the difference between culture and sin. (3) Give me a man as bold as Paul to speak to my inconsistencies. (4) May I be as humble-minded as Peter. (5)

Teach me how pervasive is my influence, for good or evil! (6) Show me your face, O my Father, that I need not fear the face of man! (7) How subtle is hypocrisy — show me my sin!

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

If ever I need to listen and hear it is now! (1) “I expect obedience under all conditions of life.” (2) “You are always in need of instruction — listen!” (3) “Repentance means restitution — win Barnabas back.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Sri Lanka — Points for prayer: (1) *Claimed by some to be the site of the Garden of Eden, but now an island of tears.* The ugly conflict between the Buddhist Sinhala and Hindu Tamil has brought disaster and death to many. The security situation in the north and east is limiting outreach and causing the closure of some churches. Many villages in the north have been turned into terrorist camps. Pray that the strife might humble the pride of the Buddhist in his religion of non-violence, and convince the Hindu of the futility of life without Christ. Praise God for the evidence of this already occurring. (2) *Sri Lanka is the only non-Muslim Asian country where the Christian Church has steadily declined in numbers and influence this century.* The causes: a) Colonial suppression of national culture, language and imposition of Western national forms of Christianity. b) The renaissance of national culture after independence and revival of traditional religion. Some nominal Christians have become Buddhists. Pray for a decisive reversal of these trends. c) Hardly any evangelization by the mainline churches. Biological increase among Christians less than among non-Christians.

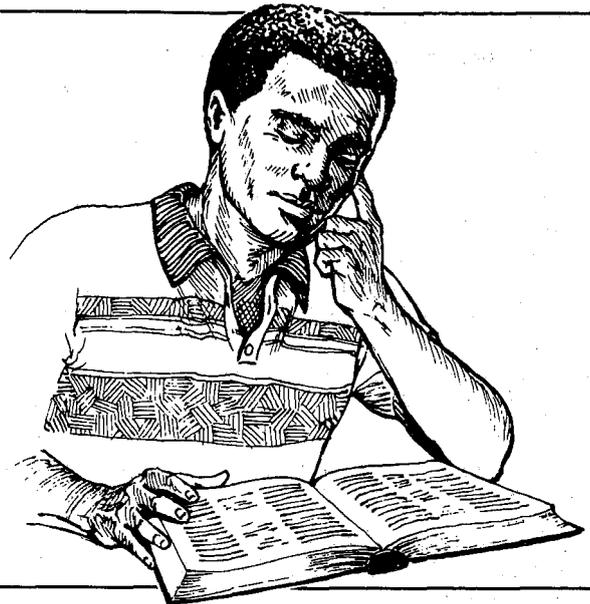
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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 EIGHT

—Monday—

I have no problem at all in thinking of you as triune and yet one. One in nature but three in person. I bow in wonder before you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

One. There is one true God and his name is Jehovah — Lord — his name is many, but this is One — three persons — but one in nature. There are three separate, distinct, divine beings, but all are the same in Being. I praise you for the beauty and meaning of this important quality. To know the one true God is no small matter — indeed the most important fact of my life or the life of any man upon this earth. I try to contemplate the meaning of such a thought. Why would there be three beings? I do not know, but I see multiples of the triune all about me in the world in which I live — man is body, soul and spirit. Praise you for one more amazing characteristic.

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

One to me. I believe the oneness of your purpose, accomplished by yourself, your Son and the Holy Spirit, is one source of amazement to me. Just to consider two or three areas: (1) *Salvation.* You thought it — “God so loved that you gave” — Jesus effected it, and the Holy Spirit sealed it. (2) *Creation.* You conceived it, Jesus did it, the Holy Spirit coordinated it. (3) *Resurrection.* The thought originated in your mind, Jesus was the first fruit, the prototype, and the Holy Spirit was the power to accomplish it. Praise and wonder before the three in One!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

“Their god is their stomach — their glory is their shame.” When I allow my body to run me it becomes my god. When I joke and laugh and ignore the problem, my glory is a shame, my characterization of the problem is a true shame — I mind earthly things.

Dear God, forgive! The lust of the flesh is no joke. The desires of the body are only two — as near as I know: sex and food. They are closely associated, if not integrated. To sin in one area opens the door for sin in the other. Dear Lord, I want to beat my body — I do not at any time want it to beat me! Forgive, cleanse, renew and transform!

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

13 In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. ²While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” ³So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. —Acts 13:1-3, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How good is this word! We are back “in the church” at Antioch. How do you see us today? Are we *in* the same called out assembly today? Dear, dear God, we *do*, we do want to do just what they did to become what they were. We do want you to see in the earth

today the same faith and faithful men that you saw in the church at Antioch. Oh, dear God, if you want to make me or anyone else “a prophet,” i.e., with direct heavenly input of information, I am more than ready, but what shall I say in my forth telling that has not already been said? The content of the teaching — what shall it be? Dear Lord, how I struggle — help me! If I said more than your word it would be too much.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How easily I can identify with these burning, living words! Whom did you call to lead the first Gentile church? “Simeon called Niger” — if he were here today there are those among us who would call him something else and reject him. Cyrene is in northern Africa. Are we looking at “another one of them”? A man who had been educated and lived in the court of Herod? They were worshiping you. What were they doing? Surely in prayer, praise, adoration, and at the same time “they were fasting.” Are you saying to me that you speak to men, most unlikely, unworthy men in a period of devotion and fasting? I can only answer in the affirmative! Dear God, I want so much to imitate their faith and love 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

Amen! Thank you: (1) For Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius, Manaen and Saul — I want to be much more specific, but I can't. I am deeply grateful for them. They say so much to me. (2) That you have teachers in the church today. We have no direct input of curriculum but we do teach *your word*. (3) You call men of experience to new experiences. (4) I can worship, I can fast today. (5) You want men “to work” not just or only to worship. (6) That others can and should send us forth to your work. (7) The laying on of hands for approval and separation and blessing is such a beautiful part of your church.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“*After they had fasted and prayed.*” How very much more can be done *after* we fast and pray and *during* a fast and prayer! We clean our ears so we can hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. He is speaking today just as clearly and personally through his word as he was in the church at Antioch. Indeed, he is speaking right here and right now as we read this Acts account. He is saying: All the areas of the world have not heard. As I sent Barnabas and Saul to Cyprus, I'm sending you to _____. (You fill in the blank.) But we are too full of Christmas and New Years, etc., feasting to hear the gentle dove-like voice of the Holy Spirit. How clear would be our desire to share if we should fast and pray! We would find some sorcerers in our experiences but we would have the same

resources as the first two missionaries. Dear God, when will we fast and pray?

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

These three verses (Acts 13:1-3) have been precious to me for more than 40 years. I want to pray out of them for my needs: (1) Keep me aware that I am a member of the same church that met in Antioch! (2) I am no prophet, but oh, how I want to be a teacher! Teach me! (3) Help me to be a true “son of encouragement.” (4) I am glad there was a man called “black” in the first Gentile church. (5) There was even a man from the “third world” of northern Africa. This says something — open my ears! (6) A man reared in the immoral court of Herod the tetrarch would be so polluted there could be no hope — wrong, wrong! He was a leader in the body of Christ! I know several like him. Help me to be open to your power to change people. (7) And last of all was Saul. There was a time when all of us were last of all — that time is *now*!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As you spoke and separated and called so speak now through these verses: (1) “I can call better where men fast and pray.” (2) “Men can hear better when they fast and pray.” (3) “I will not separate men and send them out without fasting and prayer.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Sri Lanka — Points for prayer: (1) *The Church* is one of the most nominal in Asia. Pray for a demonstration of the love and power of God in the lives of those who bear the name of Christ, and for a convincing unity among all true believers. Specific areas of weakness: a) *Cultural isolation*, with Western worship forms, widespread use of English, and with obvious links to the colonial past. Most traditional churches are middle class and unable to relate to the poor. b) *Liberal theology* has had a deadening effect. Dialogue rather than evangelism, church union rather than union with the Lord, and social concern rather than meeting heart needs have been the norm. c) *Limited outreach to non-Christian religions*. This has been hampered by an introspective attitude, a theology that suggests that the church's mandate is not to gain converts from other religions, and inconsistency in the lives of many Christians. (2) *Theological education* has been a fundamental weakness and the need for full-time evangelists and pastors is acute.

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 EIGHT

—Tuesday—

Jesus is in the water of the Jordan — you are in the third heaven — the Holy Spirit is in a bodily form like a dove — and yet all are one in nature. I renew this truth just now.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Triune. Praise your threefold self! The Total cooperation of your three persons is a constant source of amazement! You are all in each area, i.e., absolute fullness — as God, as the Word, as the Holy Spirit. Help me and all other men to understand this quality better. Let me try to relate your triune nature to some other areas of your work. *Revelation.* (1) The thoughts originate in your mind. (2) The expression of them is from the One who became our Lord. (3) The power to carry this out was from the Spirit. *Judgment.* (1) The definition or balance between what is right or wrong from yourself. (2) The decisions stated by your Son. (3) The power to carry them out from your Spirit.

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

Triune to me. All the above expression of praise does is enable me to praise you and enter into a time of wonder at your greatness. All three Divine Beings have the same nature, i.e., all of you are *eternal*, having no beginning and no end. Alpha and Omega can be as easily applied to all as One. All of you are *omnipotent*, i.e., total in power. This is more than I can grasp, but I thank you and try to worship adequately before you. All of you are *omniscient*, i.e., absolute wisdom and knowledge — that each one could have all that the others had in knowledge and wisdom would assure Oneness in action and thought. How feeble do my words appear when related to your essential Being. Praise is too weak a word.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Truly, truly, *nothing* is hidden from you — my sin

cannot be unknown — the hollow efforts of man to explain anything apart from your word is a total absurdity. There is no meaning without you and no explanation without your revelation. Forgive me of the sin of reading or expressing one thought apart from you. Dear God, speak into my being every word of your book. I love your word, for in it alone can I find answers to the deep questions of who? why? where? how? For other sins which essentially reflect upon my unwillingness to accept your total rule, I seek forgiveness.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

⁴The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down from Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. ⁵When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper.

⁶They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, ⁷who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. — *Acts 13:4-7, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear, dear Lord, how is it that the Holy Spirit sent these two servants of yours? Was it only by the instructions you gave them in Antioch? I wish fervently that I *knew* the answer to this question. I do want to be sent by you — help me dear Lord, I am so, so glad to see you at work in the very ordinary activities of places on a map. You selected Seleucia and Cyprus — or did you? Perhaps Barnabas did since it was his early home (4:36) and you honored his choice, or worked through it. Dear Lord, I do wish I knew for certain what is meant here, in the expression “they proclaimed *the word of God.*” They had no Bible. They did know your word from the Old Testament scriptures but this must then be intuitive information and they speak as your prophets. Is this correct? How many synagogues heard their word? Were there no converts? How did John help? I know you will answer all these questions when I see you face to face. Amen!

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I do so want to be with these two men. The actions and words of Barnabas and Saul are all so natural, i.e., unforced and spontaneous. Did they talk to the men who worked on the ship as it carried them to Cyprus? Did they call on any of the thousands or hundreds of homes in Salamis? Why didn't they stop at the many cities or villages on the way from Salamis to Paphos? Perhaps they did. Some commentators say the word “traveled” refers to a leisurely journey, but it is quite possible that I am reading into the text the cultural milieu of today's world. Help me, dear Lord, to walk in their sandals. How did they see Bar-Jesus? I.e., what was their attitude toward him? Are there today such evil men as Bar-Jesus? To ask the question is to answer it. Can we expect God to blind the eyes (understanding) so as to defeat their counsel? Will God use men like Barnabas and Saul to provide this blindness? All such questions are much more easily asked than answered.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Yes, yes, I thank you: (1) For the sending power of the Holy Spirit. (2) That you did not tell us who decided to go to Cyprus. (3) That the pattern of working with the religiously oriented people is yet applicable for today. (4) That proclamation (or preaching) was a very real, large part of your work in the early church. (5) That there are helpers as well as leaders. (6) So much could be done with no mechanical transportation. (7) That your word recognizes intelligence and ability wherever it is found.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“*A Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus.*” There are so many interesting things to consider here: (1) That a man who was a Jew could also be a sorcerer is more than too bad. How was he ensnared in the occult? What was the mixture of Jewish religion and the pagan influences? (2) Evident-

ly he used his so-called power to represent himself to Sergius Paulus as a prophet of the gods. (3) It strikes us as more than strange that his name should be “son of Jesus” or Joshua. He appears to have a very aggressive temperament. This is sometimes an indication of insecurity. When his position and influence were threatened by Paul and Barnabas he became very adamant in his attempts to dissuade the governor. What shall we say of this one? Is he beyond redemption? He must be shocked out of his bondage. Were the eyes of his understanding opened while his physical sight was gone? We like to think so — we do not know.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

As Paul and Barnabas begin their journey there are naturally several requests: (1) May the journey of each day be under the direction of the Holy Spirit. (2) Help me to see finding passage on the ship at Seleucia was of the Holy Spirit. (3) Did Barnabas suggest work on the island of Cyprus because he once lived there? Is this also the leading of the Holy Spirit? (4) Luke reports no converts at Salamis. This does not mean there were none — give me a balance of values. (5) Luke reports nothing of the wonderful messages preached in several synagogues at Salamis — puncture my pride! (6) Luke does not tell us how John helped — am I ready for that kind of obscurity. (7) Although they walked 100 miles and could have spoken in several towns, Luke had a higher purpose than reporting preaching success — do I?

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You have already spoken to me — speak again: (1) “No man is impossible of influence for me.” (2) “Intelligence is not the property of the saved.” (3) “There are false prophets in the land today.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Sudan — Points for prayer: (1) *The devastation due to war and famine appears unending.* Political and religious extremism, mistrust between Muslims and non-Muslims, as well as between the southern peoples themselves, are bringing despair. Pray that in all these disasters the Holy Spirit may soften hard hearts and give new openings for the gospel message of reconciliation. (2) *The Church has gone through 30 years of suffering, and periods of persecution.* Persecution has increased in intensity since the implementing of Islamic law.

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 EIGHT

—Wednesday—

How abundant — lavish — generous you are! In so many ways. I live because of your grace and mercy. I gladly worship you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Generous. What a happy choice of qualities for yourself. You are so much more generous than any man has ever been to any other man — some men who have emulated your grace have expressed this quality in lovely ways. You are so generous in so many realms, such as: (1) In the animal world you have created such a generous amount in every species — how many kinds of dogs are there? (2) With birds you have been so infinitely generous. I looked over a handbook for birdwatchers and was once again amazed at your handiwork — hundreds of different birds, every one beautiful. (3) In the creation of trees — oh, how intricate, every leaf perfect.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Generous to me. This is but another way of saying you are full of grace — indeed you are to me — you have placed me in the most prosperous country in the world, both financially, in productivity, in access to the Word of God — if we lose it all, I have enjoyed more than sixty years of abundance! Dear God, accept my gratitude for every second of every day you have placed me in the midst of a people who love you and each other and want to help me and I want to help them. Bless your heart of grace! You have supplied all our physical needs, and we have more than we need. How fully, yet poorly does this word describe you — amazing generosity!

How do you personally relate to the generosity of God, and God who is generous?

CONFESSION OF SIN

I suppose the sin of ingratitude is the worst of all sins. It springs from some sins and produces others, but it is a terrible sin. I want to be forgiven, and open my eyes to see how uncaring I am in so many ways and times. I am afraid to care — is that true? I do not see, therefore I do not care? For whatever reason — surely best known to you — forgive! And yet for one more sin forgive, and that is false humility. Help

me, move me, cleanse me — I claim your cleanness.

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

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

⁷who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. ⁸But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. ⁹Then Saul, who was called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, ¹⁰“You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you ever stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? ¹¹Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind, and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun.”

Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. ¹²When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord. —Acts 13:7-12, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I truly, truly love to read this word — your words —

to yourself! For someone to request an audience with yourself! What a beautiful desire and request. How was it produced? It all seems so natural, but you have your part and you have given man his part — did the news of the efforts of Barnabas and Saul to spread your word reach the ears of the governor? All of the thinking processes of Elymas and Paul and Barnabas and the proconsul — you can and do enter fully and understand perfectly. Praise your omniscience! You also know me in the same way.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Yes, yes. Paul was “full of the Holy Spirit” when he read the mind and heart (i.e., motives) of the sorcerer. Does this mean that the Holy Spirit gave him such power? The text seems to say this. Why was such power given? To prevent the defeat of “the word of the Lord” — your own defeat in the eyes of the governor, and all men of the island. Your word had not been recorded — the governor could not read it; he would know nothing more than what was said on this occasion. If your cause was to be sustained it must be here and now! Notice the qualities of this man: (1) “child of the devil” — what an awesome thought! (2) enemy of *everything* that is right — *everything*? This seems so inclusive! but it is true. (3) Full of all kinds of deceit and trickery — all for selfish ends. (4) Perverter of the right ways of the Lord — probably a reference to his false prophecies and Jewish background.

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 some men in leadership want to hear your word. (2) Thank you that some servants are so energetic and full of zeal and love that they develop such an interest in men of leadership. (3) Thank you that there is “the faith” from which to turn or toward which we can turn. (4) Thank you that we can be filled with the Holy Spirit today and through him overcome opposition. (5) Thank you that I can become a promoter and friend of all that is right. (6) Thank you that I am your child. (7) Thank you that I can be open, honest, true and known and read of all men.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Shall we think and pray as we answer these questions? (1) Why did Paul oppose Peter — and that publicly? Because he stood self-condemned as a hypocrite — praise God for both Paul’s courage and Peter’s repentance. (2) Even the good man Barnabas was not at all immune from peer pressure and became confused and was led astray. He was no doubt led back by the same rebuke Paul gave to Peter. All of the disciples were in

debt to Paul. (3) How is a man justified? By faith not by law. God *must* give us a standing before him or we could never stand at all. We are neither good enough nor smart enough to be saved by anything but grace. (4) The death of our Lord for our sins would be useless if we could be justified by obeying the law. (5) In the church at Antioch were three most unlikely prophets and teachers: Black Simeon, Lucius of Africa, and the half-brother of Herod — plus the illustrious Barnabas, and last of all Saul.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the midst of opposition so many questions arise which can be turned to petitions: (1) Lead me to men in high places who want to hear the word of God. (2) Give me the courage to speak in spite of all opposition. (3) There are many “wise ones” who need to be converted — give me grace and boldness. (4) May the Holy Spirit fill me to meet every crisis with his wisdom and power. (5) I ask by faith for the wisdom from above that I might answer Elymas. (6) Help my unbelief that you can defeat liars and tricksters today. (7) Send a mist and darkness over the eyes of those who oppose your work in my experience.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

How dramatically did you speak to Paul, Barnabas, the proconsul and Elymas — speak to me through their experience: (1) “Expect opposition when someone wants to hear the word.” (2) “You must face and answer opposition to overcome.” (3) “Greater is he that is in you than he that is in Elymas.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Sudan — Points for prayer: (1) *The growth of the Church since independence has been significant in some areas. For many, Christianity has become a means of demonstrating opposition to the Muslims, but for others there has been a genuine work of the Spirit. Parts of the Anglican and Presbyterian Churches have experienced revival, and there have been significant people movements among the Nuer, Mabaan, Uduk, parts of the Dinka, Toposa, Acholi, and some of the Nuba tribes. Yet in many Christianized areas there is a considerable degree of nominalism (both Catholic and Evangelical). Revival is needed.* (2) *The Church in the Arab-speaking north is minute. There are a number of Coptic Orthodox churches in the towns, but probably no more than 200 ethnic Arab evangelical believers.*

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 EIGHT

—Thursday—

Beyond anything man is or can do you stand invincible — the overcomer! How encouraging to worship such a ONE!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Courageous. In so, so many ways you are courageous in the affairs of men. From man's perspective it took great courage to create the worlds, the ten million galaxies, as you have — but since nothing you do in the physical world can fail — it is only from our perspective that courage is present. But I want to say, and all your children will stand back aghast at the courage present in creating man and angels! That you would place your confidence in my willingness to do your will and leave me open to Satan's efforts is an act of courage beyond human words! At the same time I thank you that such is true!

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 courage in the promise of "the woman's seed" — what boldness and adventure it took for your Son to become flesh and live among men — courage to believe in me for me to believe in you — how is it that I lack this quality? Dear God, I repent — if you believe in me, then I *know* it shall be done. How I want your perfect will to find fulfillment! For your strength and character I thank you and glorify your very Self!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

"To be carnally minded is death," is separation from your presence, to be cut off by my own thoughts. To think on the things above, to meditate upon them *immediately* removes this sin. But it is the "set" of the mind that directs the life. "To be spiritually minded is life and peace," but only when it is the habit of thinking! Dear God, I do, I do want to repent — "*change my mind*" down deep in the depths of my

being. I want to change my mind; to set my mind upon those things which are: (1) true, (2) noble, (3) right, (4) pure, (5) lovely, (6) admirable, (7) excellent, (8) praiseworthy. All these qualities could be seen in my Lord, and in his servant Paul. Dear Lord, if I meditate upon them they will be seen in me!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

O Jesus, I have promised
To serve Thee to the end;
Be Thou forever near me,
My Master and my Friend:
I shall not fear the battle
If Thou art by my side,
Nor wander from the pathway
If Thou wilt be my guide.

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

HIS WORD

¹³From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem. ¹⁴From Perga they went to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down. —Acts 13:13,14, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Were you on board the ship that sailed from Cyprus to Perga? I'm sure — confident — you were. How very interesting that we are now following "Paul and his companions" instead of Barnabas and Paul. You have moved him to the front of the narrative, as you do in all of life in the experience of all men — *some one must* lead and others *must* follow. In a certain sense all of us are leaders and all of us are followers, but in the record of historians, like Luke, it is "Paul and company." Praise your name for your leadership

which we all want to follow. I have not been to this part of Turkey, but I have been in the country. What time of year was it? What type of weather faced them? What was the attitude of the people in Perga? All of these questions I know you can answer, but perhaps none of them influenced John Mark's decision to go back to Jerusalem. Thou knowest!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I know it displeased Paul that John Mark "left them and *would not* go with them to the work" in Antioch of Pisidia. Paul felt he had been deserted by this young man — was Paul right? What were the feelings of John Mark? Some people feel it was when he returned to Jerusalem that he wrote what we now have as the gospel of Mark. If this is true he was not depressed or discouraged. I can indeed relate to all three men. I would be sorely concerned if a relative of mine made some inexplicable move that would reflect upon him and the work of our Lord, to say nothing of our family. So was the place of Barnabas — I would think. "Leave then if you do not want the work. You cannot be the servant we need and God wants." So, perhaps, were the thoughts of Paul. But most of all I relate to Mark — "What can I do with men so capable as these? I am little or no help at all. I could do much more in Jerusalem."

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Yea and amen! (1) Thank you for transportation — then and now. (2) Thank you for the clear record preserved by your power to this very day. (3) Thank you for thoughtful Luke, and the Holy Spirit who never told us who was at fault in John's leaving. (4) Thank you for the shocking fact that no travel scenes are described by this historian. It was more than a hundred miles of rough territory from Perga to Antioch. Luke's value system was almost totally spiritual. (5) Thank you that Paul *used* the religious practice to his own advantage — such as the synagogue and the Sabbath day. (6) It seems right to "sit" before you to learn and converse. (7) Thank you for all the unnamed people who sat there that day and heard for the first time the wonderful words of life. I shall be there too one day!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

John Mark left them to return to Jerusalem. Evidently there is much more in this text than we read in the Acts account — the choice of Mark was not acceptable to Paul, neither the choice Mark made to leave them at Perga, nor the choice Barnabas made later to take Mark on the journey. What possible reasons did John Mark have? (1) He had an urgent message from

his mother that he was sorely needed at home — perhaps his mother was sick and needed him, or had a financial crisis only Mark could meet. (2) He did not find the work he was doing with Paul and Barnabas what he expected. He was really not needed — as is shown subsequently, these two men were quite sufficient unto themselves and John Mark could do a better work elsewhere, like writing the third gospel in Jerusalem.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In an incident so briefly mentioned here, so largely considered later, we have several requests: (1) "Paul and his companions" is vastly different than "Barnabas and Saul." Help me to learn *you* identify and select leaders. (2) Keep me from homesickness — except it be heaven. (3) Keep me from self-pity which encourages nothing but weakness. (4) Keep me from personality conflicts which hinder your work. (5) Keep me from judging the motives of others. (6) Keep me from unforgiven ill-will. (7) Keep me from bragging about difficulties as if others have not so suffered.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Surely there is much you can say to me from these two verses: (1) "Every servant is important — John Mark included." (2) "Luke never gave a travelogue — he told of God's work in preaching." (3) "These men spoke to the religiously confused and uninformed."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Sudan — Points for prayer: (1) *Christian work was severely limited in 1964* with the expulsion of expatriates working in the southern provinces. The return of a measure of peace in 1972 allowed a limited return of personnel for rehabilitation and development programs in the south. Renewed fighting caused the withdrawal in 1983-85 of most personnel in the south, but in 1985 famine and refugee crises opened up aid and development programs in the north (Darfur, Kordofan, Khartoum and among Eritrean refugees). Pray for: a) *The opening up of this vast land for the preaching of the gospel.* Many areas in the north and south have never been evangelized. b) *Favor in the eyes of the authorities* for Christian agencies, and the issue of visas for new workers. (2) *Bible translation* is still a major unmet need. At least 16 and possibly 97 languages will need to be tackled. Various translators are working in 18 languages, but some work has had to be continued elsewhere due to the chaos in the south.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK EIGHT

—Friday—

You are healing me every day in ways I do not know — and some I do! I lay my body — mind — time in your hands. I do this again in the closet.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Healer. How strange to discuss this quality of yourself when I spent all of yesterday in class discussing the healing of Aeneas. You are the source of all healing, of all restoration of the imperfect function of all the human body. Why, why are we so interested in the function or malfunction of this machine? It is already doomed — the death sentence is upon it — to dust it shall return. The answer is as obvious as the question because while we live in this house we become very closely associated with it — indeed we struggle for independent identity. Praise your wonderful name — I am not, have never been and will not be this body.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

You can and do heal me! I have been very sick, i.e., my body has malfunctioned. I sought your help first — last and always — through doctors my back was healed. Through the same means (but you are the source) other parts of my body were made well. The only difference in these healings and others was *time*. You did it! Praise you. It took longer, but you did it! Why shouldn't we praise you for all that doctors and nurses know about restoring my body? Because you have to work through men and women and it takes longer yet this does not deny your power. I'm right here to record my deepest praise for your healing.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

I have been greatly helped by understanding you as power. Only because of and through your power can I overcome sin. I do not hesitate in admitting my sin, indeed I want to — to you, not to men unless they are involved in it. What I need and claim is the power to

overcome. I want not only to *know* the scriptures but the power of God. I do not — do not — want to be like the Pharisees who were ignorant of both — many of them knew the scriptures but not the power of yourself. I want you to work in me, through me. Forgive me, cleanse me, wash me, purify me, but most of all, *enable* me!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

All to Jesus I surrender,
All to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him,
In His presence daily live.
I surrender all, I surrender all.
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,
I surrender all.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁵After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the synagogue rulers sent word to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have a message of encouragement for the people, please speak."

¹⁶Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: "Men of Israel and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me! ¹⁷The God of the people of Israel chose our fathers and made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt. With mighty power he led them out of that country ¹⁸and endured their conduct forty years in the desert. ¹⁹He overthrew seven nations in Canaan and gave their land to his people as their inheritance.

²⁰All this took about 450 years.

"After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet." —Acts 13:15-20, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Oh, dear Lord, you have always "a message of encouragement" for me — most of all it is you have

come to heal me of all my diseases, inward plagues I have brought upon myself. The God of the people of Israel is my God. You are my God. I acknowledge, gladly, all your mighty works. Your choice of "the fathers" indicates there is hope and purpose for all men. Your endurance in the wilderness of the complainers and faithless indicates your kindness. Your war against the seven nations demonstrates your hatred against disobedience. Most of all what you have promised you surely will fulfill. 450 years is one long time by our measure, but a brief time with you. Blessed be your name for your careful record of deliverance and love.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How I would like to have been one of the Gentiles who worshiped in the Antioch synagogue on that Sabbath so long ago! What a verbal commentary Paul or Barnabas could have given me. But wonder of wonders, it would have been no different from the record I now have in your word. I can read, and I want to read, the books of Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges and Ruth. How personally helpful are all the records which tell me over and over again of your power in the lives of men and women.

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

Yea and amen: (1) Thank you for the purpose of teaching and preaching to one another, i.e., encouragement! (2) Thank you we all as Christians can be "brothers" in an even more precious relationship than the Jewish brothers. (3) Thank you that verbal communication is just as effective, with its facial expression and hand gestures, as it was when Paul spoke. (4) Thank you that I can learn from Paul how to speak to religious people and reach them for your Son. (5) That you are the author or source of prosperity and adversity when it suits your purpose. (6) Than you can (and do) lead me out of my own Egypt. (7) That you are more than patient with me. Dear God, I repent, please forgive me!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Overthrew the seven nations. It would sound upon hearing it or reading it that the whole initiative was with yourself, but it was Moses and his army, it was Joshua and his men, who did it. Without you they could never have done it, but without them you would not have done it. You have bound yourself by your own laws — and one of them is that you will accomplish your purposes through man. Blessed be your name, I believe you are even now at work overthrowing and raising up as you will. I want to be in the front lines being used of you for your will.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

As we attend one of the Jewish worship services there are several petitions that occur to us: (1) Teach me to preach from the example of Paul. (2) Give me wisdom as I study your word. (3) Help me to speak to everyone who attends my class. (4) Give me the same conviction of historical facts that Paul had as I preach your word. (5) If you endured the conduct of Israel 40 years surely I can endure some people with the same love you had. (6) Thank you that you are fighting for me today. (7) Give me a time perspective like yours. Events, not time, are important.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Please speak to me through this text: (1) "History is His story." (2) "Please learn from the example of others." (3) "I have always worked through men."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Suriname — Points for prayer: (1) *The period 1975-1985 has been traumatic.* Religious freedom has been maintained, but the land needs a stable government that will ensure economic and communal well-being. Pray for the nation's leaders. There has been a growing spiritual hunger over this period. (2) *Christian leaders need to speak out for truth and mobilize believers for outreach.* Materialism, sectarian growth, spiritism and Marxism have made great advances. There are four Bible schools. (3) *Both the Moravian and the Roman Catholic Churches have a large following* in many ethnic groups. Few from these denominations know of the new birth and Christian belief is often mixed with spiritism. However, there are several key evangelical leaders in the Moravian Church, revival prayer groups and a spiritual awakening among the youth. Pray for them and for revival to sweep through the traditionalism of the majority of Christians.

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," O how sweet the name!
"Jesus," every day the same;
"Jesus," let all saints proclaim
Its worthy praise forever.

WEEK EIGHT

—Saturday—

I am so glad to know the One who began my life and who will live with me eternally. I wait in his presence.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Life-giver. You are the one who gives life and the one who decides when our sojourn here will end. A profound thought: that all of life has its origin in yourself or of yourself. Man's life is a part of yourself, i.e., we are created in your image and share your nature — animals and all other life are created and are temporary. It is so good to know the life you have given to all men will never end. In the other world there will be a life beyond our very fondest dreams. How I do praise your name for life here and especially that my life is in America.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Life-giver for me — my life came from you. I am more than grateful — I am overwhelmed with the thought — all I am, all I hope to be or do, the source of life energy and thought process comes from you. I shall not have life one more day than you choose. If this is my last day of life for this world it will be your giving. Blessed be your name! I came from you and to you I shall return. In giving life you must also sustain it — what an amazement to maintain a life you have started! I shall never in ten lifetimes be able to thank you enough for all that is involved in life!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

I want forgiveness for the misuse and dissipation of life — such a precious commodity — and how easily, lightly we abuse it! Only one little minute, but eternity is in it. For harshness in word and attitude, dear Lord, dear gentle Jesus, forgive me. I can blame it on nerves, but whose nerves are they? I can rest, I can relax, I can pray and I need not be harsh or unkind. For this sin, this selfish sin, forgive me. Each day, every day, I want to arise from the fountain of cleansing “just as if I had never sinned.” Praise your name!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Out of my bondage, sorrow and night,
Jesus, I come, Jesus, I come;
Into Thy freedom, gladness and light,
Jesus, I come to Thee.
Out of my sickness into Thy health,
Out of my want and into Thy wealth,
Out of my sin and into Thyself,
Jesus, I come to Thee.

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

HIS WORD

²¹“Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years. ²²After removing Saul, he made David their king. He testified concerning him: ‘I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.’ ²³From this man’s descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised. ²⁴Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel. ²⁵As John was completing his work, he said: ‘Who do you think I am? I am not that one. No, but he is coming after me, whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.’

²⁶“Brothers, children of Abraham, and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent. ²⁷The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath. ²⁸Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed.” —Acts 13:21-28, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear, dear God! When you give people what they ask, it is seldom good! We are so full of pride and selfishness, but even in the midst of our ignorance you can work it out for our good if only we have eyes to see! Such was the case with Saul the son of Kish.

You would but the people wouldn't — how often this has been repeated!

How I wish I could fully appreciate David the son of Jesse. Dear God, I want to have the very same disposition — “after your own heart” — or full of desire to do and be all you would do and be if you were man — even the great son of David.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

May I stand with John and freely confess that “I am not worthy of the least of his favor” — nay — I fall prostrate at his feet in contrition and confession. How more than glad I am to be a child of Abraham by faith and to claim all the promises God made to Abraham: the forgiveness of all my sins and salvation in him! Shall I repeat the monstrous sin of finding no proper ground for a death sentence and yet refuse to allow him to be king of my life? Dear Lord, no, no! “Crown him, honor him, worship him,” is the cry of 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 farm boy king — Saul the son of Kish — he could have been so much — he is so like me. (2) Thank you for the sweet singer of Israel — David the shepherd boy — he was a farm boy too, but what a difference! (3) Doing as well as being, or being and therefore doing is the secret — thank you for David. (4) Thank you for the long, patient record of history — it is “His story.” (5) Thank you that there had to be Mary and Joseph and angels and shepherds to bring your Son — for we see our part in your great plan. (6) Thank you, thank you that I *can* and *do* recognize Jesus for who he is! (7) Thank you that I was not Pilate — and yet help me today to release Jesus and let him be king.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel.” There is surely no message more sorely needed today. Where has real genuine repentance gone? Who is being used of God to bring deep sorrow for sin that leads to a complete change of conduct? Repentance needs to be preached — we can't mention it as a viable option to present problems. It must be infused into the heads and hearts of the listeners as God's command. Preaching includes all the rhetorical devices possible to elicit an involvement with the message. Can you see John on the banks of the Jordan? His words were alive with the presence of the Spirit of God. He named their sins and told them they were guilty before God. If there is no godly sorrow there is no repentance. We *do* sin against God. We *will* have to give an account for the deeds done in

the body. There *is* a judgment and there is a hell. Somebody needs to tell it like it is! John did.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

There are questions from history that can easily be requests: (1) Dear God, I am too much like Saul the son of Kish — forgive me. (2) David was the man “after your heart” — teach me what this means. (3) All you want done I do not always want to do — help me! (4) Thank you for the long promised Savior — I want him to save me from my own selfishness. (5) I have no greater need than a daily repentance — I claim your answer! (6) Help me to accept my sonship as a son of Abraham by faith. (7) I, like Pilate, find no fault in him, but do I, like Pilate, evade him? No, no, he is Lord!

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You have surely spoken to me in this text — I am still listening: (1) “I will remove those who will not obey me.” (2) “I can use anyone who loves me from the heart.” (3) “Salvation's message is the same today.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Swaziland — Points for prayer: (1) *Pray for a prepared, united, revived Church.* Christianity is challenged by Communist ideology filtering over the border from Mozambique and entrenched traditionalism within the leadership of the country. Pray also for outreach teams and tent campaigns in towns and rural areas. (2) *The national believers* face many pressures if they want to live close to the Lord, for compromise is easy and materialism in the developing economy has a great attraction. As a result there are few believers who are willing to pay the price of going into full-time service for the Lord. (3) *Trans World Radio* has a powerful radio station in Swaziland, with an outreach to all of central, east and southern Africa, as well as to India and China: 280 hours of broadcasting a month goes out in 20 languages. Pray for broadcasts to the needy lands of Angola and Mozambique, and for the raising up of believers able to prepare programs in the languages of tribes that have scarcely been touched with the gospel.

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 NINE

—Sunday—

Life without hope would be no life at all. I have eternal hope — and hope right now. I renew such hope in your presence.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Hope. How shall we live without hope? We cannot! We *do* not. Hope is the beautiful quality that gives anticipation and relish to our efforts. You are the one who creates hope! Blessed and holy and wonderful is your name! You have been the source of hope for every man from the beginning of time — what a great thought! Hope in the face of the grave! “All men” — i.e., “*all men* will hear his name and come forth” (John 5:24-29). As in Adam all die and surely they do, just so certainly in Christ shall *all* be made alive (I Cor. 15:22).

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 hope. Dear wonderful Lord, how delightfully good it is to write, to pray, to praise before you! Without my hold on your word full of your promises life would be worse than useless — for there would be no purpose or point. But because I have your very nature, your Holy Spirit, (or the Holy Spirit), I have all things that have meaning and purpose. You are my all and you are in all I want and do. You are my hope — the wonderful fact is: all that we hope in you happens. No hope is short of reality. No idle dreams, all living fact! Praise your name which is hope!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

To return wrong for wrong might seem to be “natural” but it is sin, and an indication I am living by self and selfishness and not by the Spirit of my Lord who when he was reviled, reviled *not* again. Dear Lord, deliver me from the need to have my own way. Forgive me for resentment and frustration at being interrupted. Our Lord was interrupted in the

midst of a far more important work than I will ever do and he did not resent 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 happy day that fixed my choice
On Thee my Savior and my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad.
Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away!
He taught me how to watch and pray,
And live rejoicing every day;
Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away!

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

HIS WORD

²⁹“When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. ³⁰But God raised him from the dead ³¹and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people.

³²“We tell you the good news: What God has promised our fathers ³³he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm:

“ ‘You are my Son; today I have become your Father.’

³⁴The fact that God raised him from the dead, never to decay, is stated in these words:

“ ‘I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.’

³⁵So it is stated elsewhere:

“ ‘You will not let your Holy One see decay.’

³⁶“For when David had served God’s purpose in his

own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed. ³⁷But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay.

³⁸Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. ³⁹Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses. ⁴⁰Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you:

⁴¹“Look, you scoffers, wonder and perish, for I am going to do something in your days that you would never believe, even if someone told you.”

⁴²As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath. ⁴³When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God. —Acts 13:29-43, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How easy this is to relate this text to yourself! How interesting that *all* you had written was fulfilled before your dear Son was taken from the cross! That one verse: “But God raised him from the dead!” Praise, adoration, wonder, joy, all such words are not enough to say all that is in my heart as I consider what happened when you raised him from the dead! You knew how slow and dull we are in relation to divine reality, so you appeared for many days. Dear, dear Lord, how kind and good you are, how patient with our willfulness.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Indeed, indeed I have been doing that very thing! Those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem were both men and women who had followed him. They were all eyewitnesses of his majesty. He was and is king over all! Death, life, hell, the grave, king over all! They saw him, talked with him, handled him, ate with him, feasted their eyes upon him. Oh what “good news” it is! He is alive today, 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

How could we do less? Thank you, thank you: (1) For every single promise fulfilled in him. (2) That our Lord was truly dead and buried to show the power of his resurrection. (3) That the evidence for his resurrection is so overpowering. (4) The promises made to the fathers can be fulfilled in the lives of the children. (5) For the holy and sure blessings of David in the resurrection of Jesus. (6) Each man can serve his own generation — there is no other time to do it. (7) That right today we can proclaim from the housetops the forgiveness of sins!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Urged them to continue in the grace of God.” This is a word from Paul to the devout Gentiles of Antioch of Pisidia. They had not yet become Christians — at the same time they were urged to “continue in the grace of God,” i.e., to continue in God’s favor. Their interest in God’s Son put them in the favor of God. Indeed, in one sense there are degrees of grace or favor: (1) God looks with grace upon the whole human race or we would all be destroyed long ago. Are Christians “the salt of the earth” that gives God’s flavor and preserves the population from destruction? (2) God looks with favor on those who have an interest — like the first Gentile Christian, Cornelius. Those who seek him will be found by him.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Paul’s sermons produce all manner of requests in prayer: (1) Impress upon my memory all the prophecies of his death that I might teach and preach them. (2) Thank you for the overwhelming evidence of his resurrection — move me to preach it! (3) Dear Lord, may I serve your purpose in my generation. (4) There is no greater need today than for men to know they can be forgiven — move me to tell it! (5) I believe, I am always seeking help for my unbelief. (6) In every way, help me to continue in your grace. (7) Open my heart and mouth to preach even to those who do not want to hear.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You were speaking through Paul to those in Antioch of Pisidia — speak to me through him today: (1) “Men who hear for the first time do not always understand.” (2) “Detailed teaching can produce wonderful results if you keep it up.” (3) “I am looking in favor upon all who are interested in my word.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Sweden — Points for prayer: (1) *In the last century Sweden was noted for its revivals*, but in this century for its permissive society and materialism. Pray for the government and leaders of the nation, as years of permissive legislation and erosion of respect for the things of God needs to be reversed. (2) *The spiritual need of the country* is shown by the decline of professing Christians from 99% of the population to 69% today. Only 3-4% of the population regularly goes to church.

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 NINE

—Monday—

I want to relax in your hands and let you fashion me into what you want. This time of worship truly helps in that purpose.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Potter. This is a beautiful figure (metaphor) to describe yourself and your relationship to man. As the potter finds the clay — you have done even more — you have created the clay, and you remember that we are dust. You moisten the dust to make it pliable. In one way or another you must and do moisten us that we might be clay in your hands. How long will it take to beat all the air bubbles out of us? Air pockets in the furnace of the kiln will burst the purpose of the potter. Just what form do you have for me (and ten million like me)? I'm sure it is no problem since I raked ten billion leaves just last week and there wasn't one exactly like another — is not man of more value (or thought) than leaves? Indeed he is!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

I praise you about my pot — I am clay — of a most perishable substance and to the dust shall I return, but this is a discussion not only of the outward but the inward man. On the inside I feel my weakness, but it is with the inside you work. We have the bodies of flesh from our parents — it is with spirit that you work. I'm so, so glad that none of the comparisons here made are static (i.e., cannot be changed). You are *constantly* in the process of the work of the potter. You are always kneading me, you are always shaping me, you are always firing me, etc. I am also glad that in a sense you have shaped me for a work and it has been done, and now you are at work shaping me for another task, but I want to remember the whole process is present all the time.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

As I think of you as the potter, I want to fully confess I have been, nay, I am: (1) full of rocks to be

removed; (2) mixed with soil that needs screening; (3) stupid in that I try to tell you how I should be made. In this connection I want to confess to often grieving the Holy Spirit. I do so in thought and word and deed. I think thoughts unworthy of his presence. I speak words he must reject. I have spent my energies on tasks of no benefit or pleasure to him. Dear Lord, forgive! In the specifics I openly admit and repent of sin, yea sins. I claim 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

Come, Thou Almighty King,
Help us Thy name to sing,
Help us to praise:
Father, all glorious,
O'er all victorious,
Come and reign over us,
Ancient of Days.

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

HIS WORD

⁴⁴On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. ⁴⁵When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and talked abusively against what Paul was saying.

⁴⁶Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷For this is what the Lord has commanded us:

" 'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.' "

—Acts 13:44-47, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, do you see all men as we see a crowd? Or

do you see each one all at the same time? Or is there another way of seeing that I could not even imagine? "Almost the whole city of Pisidian Antioch" came out to hear the word of yourself — how large a crowd was that? How could such interest in your word be aroused? What did you do? What did your servants do? What should I *do* today to arouse such interest in the city where I speak?

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 want to mingle in that crowd. I am a *most* interested Gentile. I want *right now* to respond as did these men and women to the abusive language of religious leaders who argue among themselves. Help me, help me, to hear from the original source and find the same light, eternal light, salvation, that these Gentiles did in Antioch. That your salvation was to be "to the ends of the earth" is a fascinating thought! Only if those taught were to teach others could this happen. "To teach others also" would seem to be *the one most important task* we have to perform. How beautiful are the words: *eternal life, light, salvation*. This is what we enjoy and share, but until we have caused others to share with others we reject eternal life — shut off the light and condemn the world.

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

Yea and amen: (1) Thank you for the Sabbath day of the Jewish calendar — typical of the eternal Sabbath called heaven. (2) That there *are* cities today who would give the same attention to your word — help me to find them. (3) Thank you for men who will get sad, mad or glad — if they do not, nothing can be done. (4) Thank you for the bold words of Paul and Barnabas — they help me. (5) Thank you that whereas we must obey, we need not repeat a profitless effort. (6) Thank you that we decide if we are worthy of eternal life. (7) Thank you for the command to go to the ends of the earth.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"We had to speak the word of God to you first." The urgency of Paul and so many of the first century speaks so eloquently to me today. Do I feel the compelling "must" in my preaching? Is necessity laid upon me? Our Lord said the good news must first be spoken to the Jews — and then to the Gentiles. Is there a priority in audience today? It seems obvious to me that our Lord is sending us first to the religious people — what about the Mormons? The Jehovah's Witnesses? Are these persons any more steeped in their religious beliefs than the Jews were in theirs? There are religions in the world such as those in India

or other parts of Asia, but what of Europe? Do we owe a debt *first* to the religious people of the world? Dear Lord, most of all we owe a debt to you — it is preaching the word that matters most.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

As men and women gather to hear your word I want you to hear my prayers: (1) Lead me to religious people who will have an interest in your word. (2) May I respect the beliefs of those who do not know you, even as did Paul and Barnabas. (3) Give me courage and wisdom to stir people as did your servants here. (4) Give me grace to receive the abuse of men even as your Son. (5) Lead me to the very ones who should hear. (6) Keep me aware that it is in men's response the decision is made as to the worthiness of the person. (7) Do I believe salvation is for "the ends of the earth"? I do — help my unbelief!

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What do you say to me here? (1) "Crowds do not mean there will be no opposition." (2) "There are some who are disbelievers." (3) "There are always multitudes who will hear."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Sweden — Points for prayer: (1) *All is not dark!* Praise the Lord for evidences of spiritual renewal in some areas. Real life in the more informal home gatherings is encouraging. Many churches are majoring on evangelism. Cooperation between churches in fellowship and outreach has increased. The population, as a whole, has become more receptive; post-war idealisms have been cruelly disappointed. (2) *Theological training* is a key prayer target. This education is affected by the humanistic influence of the universities in general; pray for more lecturers who are truly evangelical. (3) *Missionary outreach from Sweden* has been outstanding. The contribution of the Lutheran Church and all the free churches in more than 60 countries has been used of God. Sweden's unusual stand in world politics opens up many areas of the world for missionaries which are closed to other countries.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Great God of wonders! all Thy ways
Are matchless, God-like, and divine;
But the fair glories of Thy grace
More God-like and unrivaled shine,
More God-like and unrivaled shine.
Who is a pard'ning God like Thee?
Or who has grace so rich and free?
Or who has grace so rich and free?

WEEK NINE

—Tuesday—

It is so good to have the intimacy of marriage when you are the partner. I want to talk to you about this right now.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Husband. The whole world is not at all married to you, but all Christians are! Together we do indeed make up the bride. How comforting and full of strength is this fact. How thoughtful and careful are you as a husband. I know you created all men to be married to you. As a husband loves and provides for his wife so do you for us. Indeed, you are the pattern — the model for all husbands — a very good description of your love and care for your bride is found in the Old Testament as Israel was your beloved. Oh, may I not repeat their unfaithfulness.

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

A husband to me. You have provided in so many, many ways for me! What clothes! The robe of unearned righteousness! The sandals of peace — not to mention the armor of warfare — I feel like the prodigal (and indeed I am) who received “the best robe in the Father’s house” — I wear the ring of recognition, the blessed Holy Spirit. Blessed be your marvelous name — which is my name since I am married to you. All that I have said about you reflects in my life for I share your intimacy — what an ideal marriage — never, never, will you in any way at any time disappoint me!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

I feel like an unfaithful wife — (which is exactly what I am) returning to blurt out my sin, my adultery, my stupidity, my unworthiness. I do not sin in anticipation of forgiveness, or do I? Dear God, oh, wonderful Savior, sweet Holy Spirit, may my love so increase, my intimacy be so constant that I will have no place

for anyone else. Could I be predisposed with self-interest to such an extent that the needs of the sad world about me do not even reach me? Dear God, forgive. The more I think of my sin the more helpless and hopeless I become. It is in the cleansing I find release and freedom. Praise your wonderful name! Clean! Free! Forgiven!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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.

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

HIS WORD

⁴⁸When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

⁴⁹The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. ⁵⁰But the Jews incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from the region. ⁵¹So they shook the dust from their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium. —Acts 13:48-51, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

In the midst of the crowd of Gentiles in Antioch were those who were disposed to believe and those who were not. How remarkable it is that I could ever contemplate your position on this circumstance, but such

is not at all different than what happened to me yesterday. You were the silent observer of all that happened. You read the hearts of the listeners, as well as the heart of the speaker. How many were truly listening? How many listeners thought the same thoughts as the speaker? How many truly understood even the basic point of the lesson? You know, you know.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

It is such an encouragement to read of the spread of the word "through the whole region" — how did it happen? It seems so obvious that those who heard and accepted were too glad and delightfully motivated to keep quiet. Was there more freedom and openness then? Were there less restrictions in "the whole region"? Were people ready to listen? We could say "yes" to all these questions and contrast them with what we imagine are the opposite conditions of our day, but since we are using our imagination in both instances we must confess we do not know. What we *do know* is that the joy of the salvation these persons experienced was a contagion in their heart that spread itself through their lips and lives.

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 easy this will be — thank you, thank you: (1) For every man and woman in Antioch who "honored" the word of the Lord — respected, accepted, believed — and were given the confident hope of eternal life. (2) For all who were "disposed or inclined or moved in the direction" of eternal life. I take this to mean that holding out eternal life as an offer appealed to some, and did not appeal to others. (3) That your word moves men to act; it is never neutral. (4) That even when the preachers were expelled, your word continued to grow. (5) That protest is not offensive to you. (6) That one day I will know the whole story of the spread of your word in the region of Antioch of Pisidia. (7) That in spite of persecution the learners of Jesus "were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit."

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... they shook the dust from their feet in protest against them." There are several lessons in this for me: (1) The protest was against those who hindered others — not against the persecutors per se. It was the hindrance of the truth in the hearts of potential converts that caused the decision of protest. (2) Dust of the feet was washed away by our Lord — what a contrast! And yet his act was also a form of protest. (3) What does this act say? "Sorry we came — you can have your dust back." Or, "You dirty people — good

riddance!" Or, "You are not worthy of our efforts!" Or, "Your rejection of us is God's rejection of you."

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

As your word spreads I have several requests: (1) I want to honor your word and be appointed for eternal life. (2) Who does the appointing? I want to know! (3) If faith comes by hearing your word and eternal life is promised through believing, I have my answer. (4) Keep me aware of the influence of women in all of life. (5) In the midst of persecution give me peace. (6) In the center of opposition keep me steadfast. (7) It is right to protest — show me how.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Surely there is much you can say to me from these verses: (1) "In spite of your poorest efforts some will believe." (2) "In spite of your best efforts some will not believe." (3) "In spite of all your efforts it is still my work."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Switzerland — Points for prayer: (1) *Few today know of their national heritage through the great reformers Calvin and Zwingli, or much of what real Christianity is. Materialism and a comfortable satisfied indifference prevails. However, there is a new spirit of inquiry among young people who seek a living faith.* (2) *In the Catholic cantons, predominantly in the south and center of the country, the small evangelical witness is growing, and the centuries-old prejudices and religious polarization are breaking down. More Bibles are being purchased by Catholics than Protestants.* (3) *The immigrant "guest workers" are predominantly Catholic (Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Yugoslav), Orthodox (Greek, Yugoslav) and Muslim (Turks, Arabs). Pray for each of the 19 ethnic minorities represented to be evangelized.*

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 NINE

—Wednesday—

I am just now ascending the stairs of worship to the top of this high tower — what a view I anticipate!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

High tower. What an interesting expression! I am sure it was used of you by those who had such towers for protection and observation. I can surely relate to this. You are the eternal protection, or security for every man alive as well as every man who has ever lived! How secure and safe I feel in you! How strong is the position of your children! The height of this tower is beyond human comprehension — into infinity! From this perspective there is nothing hidden from you. How full of meaning and value is the thought — all men of all time and place can run into this high tower and escape the corruption that is in the world through lust.

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 thought that you are *my* high tower is beautiful! How I want so much to enter in and feel the cool, refreshing shade of your presence! To look around and know I can ascend the stairs — or perhaps no such effort is needed to ascend to see what you can see! How do you see the world today? It surely must sadden your heart to see your children with your light hidden under the basket of their own interests. Dear God, I believe we could take your light to all men any time we decided we would.

How do you personally relate to the perspective of God, and God who is high tower? 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 the first to stand before you in guilt! I have not even spoken to those to whom I could speak. Dear God, I am here to confess my blood guiltiness and at the same time I am ashamed to even ask your forgiveness. I purpose in my heart, here and now, to visit the homes in Joplin, to enlist others to

help. For other sins, too numerous to mention, I ask your cleansing, release me! free me! I believe you are working in me both *to will* and *to do* your good pleasure. By your willingness and your energy I shall overcome!

What personal sins do you want to confess?

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I have a song I love to sing,
Since I have been redeemed,
Of my Redeemer, Savior, King,
Since I have been redeemed.
Since I have been redeemed,
Since I have been redeemed,
I will glory in His name;
Since I have been redeemed,
I will glory in my Savior's name.

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

HIS WORD

⁵²And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

14 At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish Synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed. ²But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. ³So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders. —Acts 13:52-14:3, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

To read that the learners were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit is a moving, challenging word to me. What does it mean? Oh, that you would explain it all to me. I know you know every nuance of meaning in these expressions — the text seems to separate the two thoughts and say that they are not necessarily the

same, i.e., being filled with joy is one thing and being filled with the Holy Spirit, though associated, is not altogether the same thing. What gave them their joy? Remember; they were Gentiles with but little background in the Jewish religion. This was: (1) the joy of total forgiveness, (2) the joy of the true meaning of life, and the world in which we live, (3) the joy of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in their work.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Careful now, read this text just if you have never read it before. It seems striking to me that whereas the Holy Spirit is very prominent in the first century church, or the church described in Luke's second treatise, we find no reference to "miraculous signs and wonders" being performed by the disciples. Paul and Barnabas, or Silas, or Peter and John, or the apostles — yes — but *not* the Christians. Why? Why? At the same time I will not ignore the plain statement of their "being filled with the Holy Spirit." Neither will I ignore the obvious purpose of the supernatural acts of the Holy Spirit, i.e., to "confirm the message of his grace" (of *your* grace). Hasn't the message been confirmed by the preservation of this blessed account called *Acts*?

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: (1) For the dear disciples who no doubt faced problems much greater than mine and yet were filled with joy. (2) That I as a disciple can be and should be and want to be "filled with the Holy Spirit." (3) For the power of good habits, such as is suggested in the little expression "as usual." (4) For the fact that effective speaking is mentioned — it would suggest that some speaking was not effective. (5) For the willingness of some to believe — which in a sense made the speaking effective. (6) That it was the majority who believed, both of the religious and irreligious — so it is today if we would only get there with the message. (7) For the use of the term "refused to believe" — it is not a matter of evidence, it is a moral choice.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, . . ." Really now, this is what it is all about. To worship and not reach the lost or educate the religious is a very unbalanced, unsatisfactory relationship. To even perform signs and wonders and yet remain silent about our Lord is to miss the whole point of miracles. It is such a privilege to speak on his behalf. Does the Lord need our help? Couldn't he speak for himself? Of course he could and at times he has spoken directly to men, but never, never has he told men what to do to be saved. He has

never sent an angel on this mission. The greatest of all tasks he has given to us!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

At Iconium you were at work. From this experience I have petitions: (1) Give me the joy of the learners in Antioch. (2) Fill me with the Holy Spirit. (3) Enable me to so speak that men may believe. (4) Keep me aware that there are always wolves in sheep's clothing. (5) Remind me that all of us who work for you are brothers. (6) Give me the same boldness in the face of opposition that filled Paul and Barnabas. (7) Thank you for your confirmed word — help me to preach it with your wisdom.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me through these few verses: (1) "Nothing can overcome my joy." (2) "Your greatest need is to be filled with the Holy Spirit." (3) "You can spend considerable time in the midst of opposition if I am with you."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Syria — Points for prayer: (1) *Syria is a land of religious coexistence.* Tolerance for minority religions is tempered with surveillance of any activity that could provoke communal tensions. Christians find it hard to witness freely in these conditions, even when given the opportunity. Syria is one of the less evangelized nations on earth despite the large minority of traditional Christians. (2) *The Muslim majority has a false conception of what a true Christian is.* Pray that they may be enlightened by contacts with believers who have a holy life style and radiant witness. Muslims are in daily contact with traditional Christians, as are Syrian soldiers based in Lebanon. (3) *The Christians have stood up to Islam for centuries and survived.* Most Christians are Arab and 25% are Armenian, descendants of a multiplicity of Orthodox and Catholic traditions. Christians are an influential minority in the cities, professions, politics and the armed forces, but are a shrinking percentage due to a high rate of emigration to the Americas and Africa. Syria was once one of the great centers for the spread of the gospel. Pray that believers may recapture the zeal of the church of Antioch, and reach out to their compatriots with the gospel.

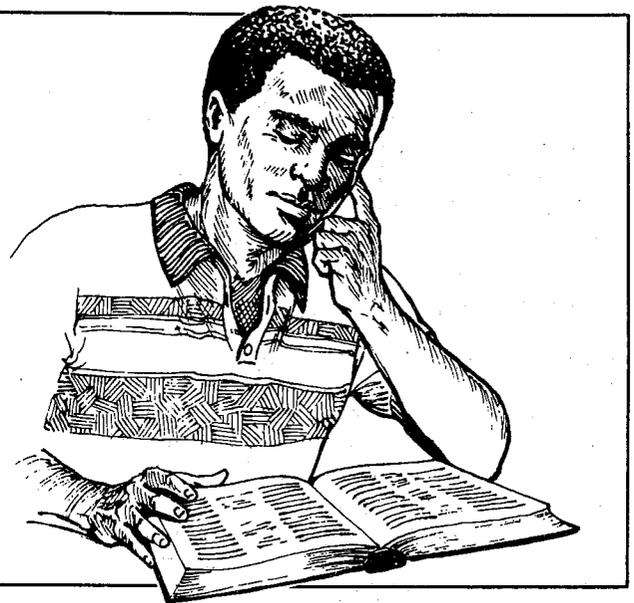
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK NINE

—Thursday—

How very much we need protection only you can know. I enter this time of worship to see you as my shield.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Shield. You said to Abraham, “I am your shield and great reward” and so you have been to all those who trust in you! Oh, bless your wonderful self. I need protection — all men need *personal*, close protection. All of us want to feel secure and safe. We are in constant battle and therefore we need you in such a real way. I am glad to believe Satan is held in check, i.e., according to the experience of Job. Many, many more fiery darts would be thrown our way were it not for your interest in and protection of your children. How I thank you. How many do not even know of your care?

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 is most difficult to pray about your essential being without relating to myself! I am the one who knows the result of not calling for your protection. I am most delightfully happy to get behind you, to put you out front in the thick of the battle. I want only to hide, but I know this is not essentially my place. As you can see I am struggling with the two aspects of your nature and mine; you can be and are my shield only when I claim your presence and protection in the midst of the fight. You are indeed my shield, but not for hiding, for winning on the front lines of the struggle.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

I need not detail my losses in the fight, or perhaps I should. I must, I need the reinforcement of forgiveness to arm me for today’s effort. There really is no way to write down the intimacy I feel and know in a confession of my personal failures. I thank you

that you are indeed, indeed at work in me to will. You create the willingness. You live in and for me, i.e., in my place and you are at work in me to do. You provide the divine energy to get it done. I am so full of self and self desire, but if that self is changed by the renewing of my mind, bless your name I can be transformed! I claim your promise and your forgiveness.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I 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

⁴The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. ⁵There was a plot afoot among the Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them. ⁶But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country, ⁷where they continued to preach the good news.

⁸In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked. —Acts 14:4-8, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It is refreshing to see people to whom a message about their Messiah meant so much. Today most men

would not care. Perhaps if money and prestige became an issue as it did in Iconium we would suffer the same opposition. At the same time we would need to be as bold and confident as the apostles. Dear Lord, you know of the whole circumstance and have left it for me to ponder and that I do.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Yes, yes. How is it I am content to live in my little comfortable world where no one takes sides? How is it that we are not in the thick of the battle for truth and right? If our missionaries turned a report in of constant opposition amid many successes, but not a few failures, what would be the response? It appears to me we are represented by the Jews whose little world was torn up by the "sword" our Lord came to thrust into society. Dear God, have I misjudged the situation, or have you opened my sleepy eyes?

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Indeed I shall: (1) Thank you for the term "apostle" as applied to Barnabas. He was a "sent one" along with Paul. He felt the sense of call and commission. He went because he was sent. (2) Thank you that however planned and well supported, no plan or plot will work if you oppose it — good or bad. (3) Thank you that had they stoned them at Iconium you would have raised them up as you did at Lystra. (4) Thank you for that precious unnamed man or woman who told the apostles of the plot for their lives. (5) Thank you that we can go today to this same country and walk where those men walked. The millions of Turks there now are as lost as the Lycaonians of long ago. (6) Thank you, thank you that Paul and Barnabas just kept on preaching the good news. (7) Thank you for the unusual outreach of men not only in cities but in "the surrounding country."

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Let's answer the following two questions with some real thought: (1) A very important decision was made as related to preaching in Antioch. What was it? The Jews had judged themselves unworthy of eternal life, therefore the apostles turn to the Gentiles. It was even a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. To me it seems an incongruity as to how a human decision could be made from those totally free of influence and yet be a fulfillment of what was said centuries before and yet this is part of the wisdom of God. (2) There were two responses to the preaching of Paul in Iconium. What were they? A great number believed — those who refused to believe opposed them. Can we expect a different response today?

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

When men plot to kill there is hope in prayer: (1) Help me to make the message so clear that men cannot be neutral. (2) Give me friends like those of Paul. (3) Help me to leave a place of labor for the same reasons that prompted Paul. (4) Thank you for your divine leading through circumstances. (5) Keep my focus clear — preaching the good news is my work. (6) Is it easier or more difficult to preach today? Open my eyes! (7) May the "surrounding" country where I live hear the good news.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

There is much you can say to me: (1) "Division is not necessarily a reason for leaving." (2) "I have those who will help you." (3) "Sometimes the only safe route is out of town."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Syria — Points for prayer: (1) *The Protestant witness is small*, but churches are slowly growing. Almost all converts are from the traditional Christian minority. There are churches in most cities, but the lack of full-time workers and availability of training for leadership are serious limitations. (2) *Conversions out of Islam are few and far between*. Spiritual bondages, social barriers and religious prejudices must be broken down before some can take the decisive step. (3) *The entry of Christian literature was restricted for years*, but since 1981 there has been much more freedom to import and distribute Bibles, etc. Pray for the entry and dissemination of Arabic literature, and blessing to come to Christian and non-Christian readers. There are two Bible Society shops in the country. (4) *Missionaries are not allowed to reside in the country*. Pray for those who pay occasional pastoral visits, and for a more open door to this needy land.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

All glory, laud and honor
To Thee, Redeemer, King,
To Whom the lips of children
Made sweet hosannas ring!
The people of the Hebrews
With palms before Thee went:
Our praise and prayer and anthems
Before Thee we present.

WEEK NINE

—Friday—

In the most unexpected ways you reward us. I pause just now to thank you for them all — but also just for yourself!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Reward. You yourself are the reward! For all men you are the sole object of desire. In the person of your Son, you are “the Desire of the Ages” or “the Nations.” In you is the full accomplishment of mankind. Reward is such a strong incentive — to gain yourself — and be found in you — what a goal! So many rewards are far less than the anticipation — the unknown becomes more attractive than the reality — not so with you. I am sure that when I enter your eternal presence I will say of you as the queen of the south said of Solomon, “the half has never yet been told.”

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

Reward for me. Just what do I really want? Deep down in the strongest desires of my heart, what do I want? (1) To create or bring into existence something of long lasting value — through you and your dear Son and the powerful Holy Spirit, I can — but if I do not have you, if I am not in you, nothing shall be done. You are the creator. I am only a faint reflection of your likeness. (2) To grasp and help others to know the value of life, i.e., as lived by mankind past, present and to come. To coordinate the various areas of living — you are the only and real answer to the reason for living. Truly in you is an exceeding great reward. Your book gives me the key to open the mysteries of who I am. Why I am. Where I am going. Praise your wonderful name!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Grumbling and fault-finding. I am so very prone to be this way when I am excessively tired. The weakness

of my body becomes the weakness of my temperament. Why? I believe it is because I have not built up a reserve of resolve. It is also because I fail to pause and pray before I think and speak. Here in the cool of the garden let me sweat to keep my heart sweet and kind and my mouth open only to your praise. If I can't (or won't) say something good, may I be like my savior who was excessively tired as he carried the cross for me. He said, “Forgive them, they know not what they do” — or *he said nothing*. Forgive and cleanse me.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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 ransom to Jesus have fled?

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

HIS WORD

⁹He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed
¹⁰and called out, “Stand up on your feet!” At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.

¹¹When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, “The gods have come down to us in human form!” — *Acts 14:9-11, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How many men and women who sit along the highway of life, or in the market place of living, have never walked? I'm sure you can see and identify every cripple in the whole wide world. It is sad, and in comparison to those who can walk in this life, but how many are there who will never walk the streets of

gold? I take the latter to be the purpose for the healing. How is it that faith on the part of the lame man is here mentioned, and was not mentioned in the case at Jerusalem? It would seem it was Peter's and John's faith not the lame man's that made him whole. Dear Lord, I know you want all men to be whole, whether it is through my faith or theirs. If I do not preach they will never believe and be made well. Help me!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

That men could so widely misunderstand your purpose seems more than remarkable and yet they do! Men have and do and will misunderstand my purposes — at times will give to me far more credit than is due (since *none* is due). How zealous and creative was Paul! How enterprising! Did he make a mistake in his evaluation of the possible response of the people? Did he expect the same response as Peter and John at the gate beautiful? We do not know — the candid report of Dr. Luke casts no blame, we are out of place doing so. How do we relate to the principle today? I.e., what are we doing to attract the interest and attention of our audience; with one, or a thousand?

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, thank you: (1) That human need does become a catalyst for listening to the one who can help. (2) For the direct, personal interest of Paul. (3) For Paul's adventuresome willingness to do anything to get an interest in the good news. (4) For the record of work in totally heathen culture. (5) For the power to heal — used as a sign — not an end, but a means to an end. (6) That somebody understood the Lycaonian language — was it Paul — who "spoke in tongues more than anyone"? (7) For the wonderful power of public speaking.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Stand up on your feet! How could God better describe our permanent posture? We are not animals, so "stand up on your feet!" We need not grovel to any man — "stand up on your feet!" We have strength and health — and in him all things — so "stand up on your feet!" I have a journey ready for you — a real important, urgent task for you to do. "Stand up on your feet!" At the same time how better could we describe the man outside of salvation than "crippled in his feet, who had never walked from birth." At one time sin crippled us, but Jesus healed us and we have been made to walk in the presence of men and God with the assurance of freedom and strength. In him, indeed we are whole — "stand up on your feet!"

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the midst of those who do not believe I need prayer: (1) Thank you for the miracles of Paul (of you through Paul). Teach me all their meaning. (2) When do men not need faith to be healed? (I expect to get an answer from your word.) (3) Why did Paul heal the lame man? (4) What response did Paul expect from the healing? (How I do want to meditate on these questions.) (5) Which was the most important to the man healed — his healing or his salvation? (6) Someone understood the Lycaonian language — who was it? (7) Dear Lord, I labor among people who misunderstand motives. Help me.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Through this experience you spoke to Barnabas and Paul — speak to me: (1) "Men will interpret your actions in different ways than you intended." (2) "Healing the lives and homes of people is a greater work." (3) "Men are hero worshipers — turn them from yourself to me."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Tanzania — Points for prayer: (1) *The growth of the Church* has been good, but patchy. Evangelical churches have been more successful. Pentecostal, Evangelical Anglican and AIC churches have grown fast; the large Lutheran Church more slowly. Yet there are problems: a) There are extensive areas where the churches have stagnated; and many potentially open villages unreached. b) Western cultural forms and formalism are common where revival has not touched the lives of churchgoers. c) The lack of Christian workers and lay leaders. (2) *Leadership training* needs to be given top priority in the churches. Pray for the 15 or so Bible schools and seminaries in the country. Many need upgrading to higher levels to prepare leaders for an increasingly literate population. (3) *Response among young people* has been particularly encouraging. There has never been such responsiveness before. Workers for this ripe harvest are needed. Religious education is taught in schools, and Christian teachers have had a big impact — more national and expatriate teachers are needed. It is difficult to integrate young Christians into the churches.

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 NINE

—Saturday—

In you is "no darkness at all." I want to be taught by yourself to more closely "walk in the light."



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Light. Such a beautiful representation of yourself! There are several qualities of light that tell me and all the world of yourself. To illumine is the first quality of light. How truly do you open and uncover and make plain all things. There is nothing in the dark that cannot be set in the light. How beyond human thought it is for you to live in eternal light — in you and of you there is no darkness at all. You are the light, the Father of lights, and when we walk in you we find warmth — and comfort.

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

Light for me! How very, very much do I need light in so many areas of life. I am glad to acknowledge you can and will and do give me light — or I have none. Your word is a lamp for my daily path and a light at the end of the road; and illumination all along the way. I need and want light on how best to teach the students who sit in my classes. Dear God, you do open my mind with your light as to how best to present what you have said in your word. Another name for this would be what James 1:5 calls "wisdom," i.e., the best use of knowledge. Praise you, how I depend on you and ask in total confidence and receive!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

I have so often become frustrated in one area or another because I did not ask for your light. I walked and stumbled in the darkness. When I trust in my own wisdom it becomes darkness. How mean and hard we can become when we know not where to turn for light! How relaxing and softening is the illumination of the whole picture. Dear, dear God, forgive

me. Such a circumstance is no excuse for perverseness and unkindness — it is a plain indication of a lack of trust in the one who can see the end from the beginning and who dwells in everlasting light. I claim 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

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

¹³The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them.

¹⁴But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed into the crowd, shouting: ¹⁵"Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. ¹⁶In the past, he let all nations go their own way. ¹⁷Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy." ¹⁸Even with these words, they

had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them. — *Acts 14:13-18, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How sad must have been your heart when you saw the procession of the followers of Zeus — animals to sacrifice to a god who is no god at all. But then, it has been repeated millions of times since — and even today you can see men sacrificing to dumb idols. Do we get as excited as Paul and Barnabas? Are we as jealous as you are about the homage that really belongs to you? Dear God, how apathetic I have been! How I long to let the whole world know of your greatness — the “one who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them.” Oh, open my ears and eyes to hear and see your testimony: rain, crops, food, good health. How good to acknowledge the creator who is a giver!

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 identify with your two missionaries or apostles, your “sent ones.” How, oh how, will I stop idol worship and turn the hearts of men to you? Dear Lord, I need motivation, not only information. I want to listen with my heart to the message I must speak to others. You are saying to me: (1) “You are only a weak human vessel but you are the only vessel I have for the little part of the world where you live.” (2) I have “good news” — I will never, never hear it enough, i.e., that you have given me GOOD NEWS! GOOD NEWS! GOOD NEWS! Put a smile upon my heart! (3) I must preach repentance — “turn from” as well as “turn to.” (4) I serve a living God who created all! Impregnate 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

How gladly I do this. Thank you: (1) For flowers I can enjoy as the expression of your creative genius. (2) For animals as the means of food and service to man. (3) That you want me to be very upset with idolatry. (4) That you want me to try to stop man’s onward rush to hell. (5) That you have plainly said some activity in this life is worthless. (6) That you have a permissive will — you “let” the nations go their own way, not that you wanted it. (7) That we should see the physical world about us as your “testimony.”

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“They had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them.” Once popularity is established a sore temptation assails the man of God. It can take various forms, i.e., he has several choices: (1) He can

disclaim man’s adoration and worship in such weak terms that it becomes but an invitation to continue. (2) He can interpret the worship as but the ignorant expression of the masses to the real God who is seen through him. (3) He can reject it in such a decisive manner that he even risks the wrath of those who worship him — very much like the example before us.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How I do need your help in the midst of misunderstanding: (1) Keep me aware of who I am and whose I am. (2) Teach me how to relate to those who worship other gods. (3) How I need the power to turn men from the vain things of this world. (4) Keep me aware constantly that I have “good news.” (5) Open my eyes to see the world as created by yourself. (6) The next time it rains may I see it as your testimony of goodness. (7) May I remember that all joy comes from you.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What do you say amidst all this confusion? (1) “I am not confused — only men.” (2) “Men must be told many times before they hear.” (3) “My goodness can and should lead to repentance.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Tanzania — Points for prayer: (1) *The Muslim challenge.* Between 1880 and 1960 Islam grew rapidly. That growth has slowed, and a small, but increasing number of Muslims are coming to Christ. Pray for decisive breakthroughs in every Muslim community. Pray also for the calling of those from a Muslim background into the work of evangelizing them. (2) *Bible translation* is a partially met challenge. The increasing use of Swahili lessens the need for translation into some languages. However there are 18 languages that definitely require a NT translation and possibly a total of 82.

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 TEN

—Sunday—

Being able to balance several factors into a design for my good and your glory is true understanding. Help me to appreciate it.



PRaise GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Understanding. How glad I am that someone understands everything and everyone — your understanding is total! Nothing escapes your notice. I worship before you in calm assurance that all is well — with you and your plans. All is not at all either calm or right, here in the maelstrom of human affairs, but you are not confused or tired since you are *perfect understanding*. What an amazement. Won't it be an amazement when one day all is explained to all men? I can rest in you. I can rest in you. I can trust the one who has never made a mistake. You who are the originator of all the complexities of this physical world have no problem with the social, emotional, mental, moral complexities of man. It is all clear and clean and right with you. Dear God, it is too much for me. I trust 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

Understanding of myself — my amazement at the outer world is only matched by that of the inner world. "The heart (intellect, will, emotions, conscience) is desperately wicked and full of deceit — who can know it?" You can and do! It is *my* heart that you understand. I'm glad you do — I have given up the effort long ago. I am constantly surprised at my selfish willfulness. Dear God, forgive me! I do believe if I am ready to read and accept you are ready to reveal your will for my life. You understand me in a way (ways) that no man ever could, or that I could myself. How comforting it is to give myself to the one who not only understands, but is at work to help and bless and use my life.

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

CONFESSiON OF SiN

With no reservations I admit my willfulness, my stubbornness, my resistance to your love. It is kindness,

meekness, gentleness, tenderness that I resist. Why? Why? Because there is someone lying to me who himself is the very antithesis of each of these virtues. He appeals to my selfish interests and says: "They (your interests) are being threatened, demand your rights" — and such an expression becomes very unkind in attitude and word — and in all areas he lies to me but why do I believe his lies? It is the weakness of my flesh; it is because I have lived such a long time in this sick, sinful environment — but most of all — because I can't or won't or don't hear your voice. 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

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

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

HiS WORD

¹⁹Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. ²⁰But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe. —Acts 14:19,20, NIV

READ HiS WORD TO HiM

How very good it is to attempt (and how poorly I succeed only you can know) to relate these two verses

just as you would! Your own people opposing your own servants — how it must have broken your heart! How such an attitude today does grieve your heart! What words were used to persuade the multitude who but a little time before were ready to worship Paul and Barnabas. They are now ready to stone them. You heard them. They are recorded. Will they be rehearsed at judgment? Where was Barnabas? Perhaps there is much in this account we do not know — you know — and I do so want to hear it when I am in your presence. Was Paul dead? Did he come into the third heaven and “see you”? Did you encourage him?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I want to gather around the prostrate form of Paul. I see Timothy, Lois, Eunice and several others there. I see tears streaming down the face of Timothy — years later Paul was to write to him and say “remembering your tears” (II Tim. 1:4). If Paul left the next day — and he did — a healing must have taken place. Dr. Luke’s careful report does not mention it. What a wonderful man is Paul, but what a wonderful Savior, and divine Father! Oh, that I might remain in Lystra to think and meditate and pray over all I had heard and seen.

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, how gladly do I thank you: (1) For the plain fact that crowd approval is not based on truth — not on evidence but emotion — and is *never* dependable and should always be balanced with facts. (2) That Paul was ready, even glad, to suffer for his name’s sake, to bear in his body the sufferings of our Lord. (3) That what men think is often blessedly wrong! (4) For the love and concern and courage of the learners at Lystra. (5) That God raised Paul from whatever suffering he had to endure. (6) That Paul was ready to go back to the very place where he suffered the most. (7) For the vast understatement of Dr. Luke about Derbe — I would like to hear about each conversion — one day I shall. Praise him!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

They preached the good news in that city (Derbe) and won a large number of disciples.” It is so unusual to read an understatement concerning evangelism. The whole book of Acts is such an understatement. The appearance of the country through which they journeyed is not mentioned. The conversion stories of the thousands who became Christians does not find a place here. The personal impact of the sermons is not a part of the record. Where did they preach? Since both Lystra and Derbe were Gentile cities it must have

been in the market place. How could they proclaim the word in the winter? Just what constitutes a “large number”?”

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

If I were present at the stoning of Paul I would surely have had several requests and so I do now: (1) Help me never to underestimate either the ignorance of “the crowd” or the persuasiveness of Satan. (2) Prepare me to suffer physically and respond as did Paul. (3) May I use the freedom I have while I have it. (4) Thank you for your mercy in Paul’s life. What an example! (5) Give me the same tender identity with those of Lystra. (6) May I remember the tears and prayers of those who have ministered to me. (7) I need the courage to carry me beyond the opposition of men.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As you spoke to Paul, speak through Paul to me: (1) “What men think is dead is often very much alive.” (2) “Suffering binds people closer to each other than any other one thing.” (3) “There is always a blessing in every suffering.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Thailand — Points for prayer: (1) There is much to praise God — even in this land where the response has been so slow: a) Thailand means “Land of the free.” Praise God that it has remained so despite fears to the contrary. b) The marked increase in interest in the gospel since 1975 (the time of the fall of Vietnam). The emptiness of Buddhism has brought disillusionment to many. c) The increased emphasis on evangelism and church growth by a new generation of Thai leaders, and widespread and effective use of media: radio, drama, cassettes, films and audio-visuals. (2) The long-awaited spiritual breakthrough has yet to come despite 160 years of missionary effort. Prayer must break down: a) The fear that keeps people from Christ. The social cohesiveness of Buddhism is strong, and Christianity appears foreign. b) The bondage of demonic powers is real. Behind Buddhism is a complex world of venerated and feared spirits. Nearly every building has a spirit shelf and most Thais wear charms to ward off evil. c) The power of sin. The social erosion caused by corruption, drugs and violence comes from the heart of man, but few have a concept of the need to repent.

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.

WEEK TEN

—Monday—

There is a sad void in our lives when someone we love dies. It is so good to worship Someone who can eternally say "I Am"!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

I am. Blessings and praise to yourself — the great Self, existent one — there never has been a time when you were not. In time past, in time present, in all time to come you are the "I am that I am" — your dear Son so described himself. What an encouragement to all men to know they worship one who is never surprised, or confused, or asks a question — all things are immediately known to you. All the qualities of love, mercy, power, wisdom, etc. are static. Praise and wonder is my totally inadequate response to such qualities.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

"I am" for me. How shall I possibly tell you all I see and feel in your divine permanence? "Change and decay in all around I see — oh, thou who changest not abide with me" — so sang the poet and so sings my heart. When I know of the fluctuations of my own heart and try to comprehend what it would be to be always and constant in character — I am like Moses, on holy ground, and an unholy man, unworthy, and full of need for forgiveness and your strength. It will be altogether glorious to one day enter into a static state where I shall not struggle with the changes otherwise known as wrong choices — when I have no option how glad I will be!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Why should I, why do I choose to accept Satan's offers? Is it because I have not developed the attractiveness of your choice? Perhaps. Is it because I have been such a long time repeating sin? To repeatedly accept is to make acceptance easier than rejection. If I knew that the next time I accepted Satan's suggestion I would never be forgiven, would I accept it? No! Am I not then sinning twice over in presuming on your mercy? Dear Lord, forgive!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Give me a faithful heart,
Likeness to Thee,
That each departing day
Henceforth may see
Some work of love begun,
Some deed of kindness done,
Some wand'rer sought and won,
Something for Thee.

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

HIS WORD

²¹They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, ²²strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. ²³Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord in whom they had put their trust. ²⁴After going through Pisidia, they came into Pamphylia, ²⁵and when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia.

²⁶From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. ²⁷On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. ²⁸And they stayed there a long time with the disciples. — *Acts 14:21-28, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

My heart always skips a beat when I try to truly enter this expression of prayer and devotion. How can I *really* and *truly* read the word as you would? I can't. It is an impossible task, but one I love to try each day!

How pleased you must have been to follow Paul and

Barnabas back into the houses of your children in Lystra, Iconium and Antioch. Every one of them is a learner — were they good students? They were better students after Paul and Barnabas came. They were “strengthened and encouraged to remain true to the faith.” Faith is something they had both subjectively and objectively.

How is it that Paul and Barnabas led in the appointing of the elders for them in each church — three sets of elders in three churches. The word “appoint” means “to stretch out the hand.” I am embarrassed to mention this to you — how much, much more you know about this than I do.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I have been unable to keep from reading for my own personal help before now, but let me now devour every word! Just how did these preachers “with prayer and fasting commit the church and its leadership to the Lord in whom they had put their trust”? There must have been a time set aside for fasting and prayer for the whole church and the elders — in each church — was it just one day? A three-day fast? Or perhaps a seven-day period? One day is the most common practice, but a three-day fast would not be unusual. Where is this practice today? Gone with the devotion and evangelism that accompanied it? Perhaps the words of Paul and Barnabas are a key to our problem: “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.” We do not want and will not accept the hardships and therefore reject the rule of God in our lives.

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 for: (1) The supernatural gifts or abilities of the Holy Spirit which kept the assemblies alive in the absence of the apostles. (2) “The Faith” to which they could be true — indeed that there was such a distinction made between truth and error. (3) The sharp rebuke I feel in my own conscience when I read of the faith and devotion of these disciples. (4) The “grace of God” that accomplished all that was done. (5) The fact that “the church” could be gathered — the people were “the church” not the building where they gathered. (6) The credit given to your working through your servants. (7) The “door of faith” opened to anyone, everyone, when there are men of faith like Paul and Barnabas.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“And they stayed there a long time with the disciples.” What did they do? Wouldn’t it be interesting to follow Paul and Barnabas through six months of day-by-day activity? They *did* spend six

months or more in the large city of Antioch. Did they keep the Jewish hours of prayer? If so, then nine o’clock found them in prayer. At what time did they arise in the morning? Was the example of our Lord in often finding a place of prayer a part of their daily routine? Was Paul supported by the Christians at Antioch so it was not necessary to make tents? What was the occupation of Barnabas? Most of all we would like to know how they won others to the Lord in this large metropolitan city. We can answer this last important question: they did it one at a time.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What courage and love led Paul and Barnabas back to where they had been mistreated! Such action promotes requests: (1) May I love people and your word more than I fear trouble. (2) Help me to have the same goals in my ministry — of “strengthening the disciples.” (3) How I want to encourage people — help me! (4) There *is* a faith to which we must remain true. I want to know it and teach it. (5) The rule of God is always attended with hardships — help me to remember! (6) Dear Lord, give me wisdom in the appointment of elders. (7) Open my desire to fast — fulfill its purpose in me.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

From your word speak to me: (1) “People are eager to hear what I have done — tell them.” (2) “I am in the ‘door opening’ business today, but I do not have enough Pauls and Barnabases.” (3) “Paul and Barnabas stayed a long time with the Antioch church — you can do the same where you are if your purpose is the same.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Thailand — Point for prayer: *The slow growth of the Church is cause for concern.* The potential is great, but has yet to be realized. Pray for a much greater prayer burden and zeal to grip believers. Most of the congregations are poor, rural, and the believers are only partly literate. About half the believers are Thai, the other half are among the Chinese and tribal minorities.

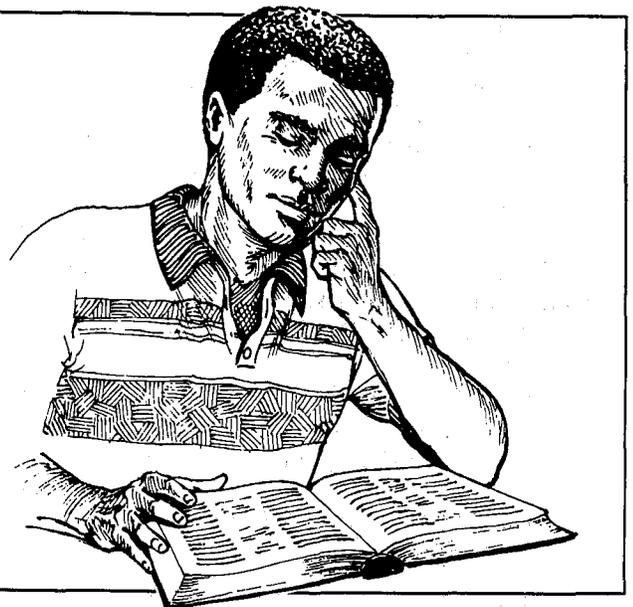
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK TEN

—Tuesday—

To have some power is one thing, to have great power is another, but to have ALL POWER — ah, this is yourself! I bow in wonder before you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Omnipotent. All powerful God! To put no limitations on your power in any area of expression — this is an awesome thought, but it is much more than a *thought*, it is a *fact*. Evidence of your “everlasting power” is all about us — being clearly seen — and has been available since the foundation of the world. The power of your intellect is what impresses me. My little feeble efforts at prayer and praise are known to you and are not counted as either little or feeble. But as compared with your knowledge and person, they do look but what they are: the expression of one of your billions of beings in your likeness. Power in the moral realm is the most impressive since it is where we are the weakest — to will and to do and to always do is indeed an awesome thought.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Omnipotent for me. To be able to link myself with the one who has total power in the physical, mental and moral realm is a wonder of all wonders. It excites me more than I can say, or express, although I do indeed want to try. If I but yield myself, give myself away to you, integrate my being in you, surrender in faith — it can happen. How much more I need and want the inward strength — shall I call it “grace” for that is what it truly is — to fulfill the desires of your heart — and my heart — “according to the *power* that worketh in us, both *to will and to do* his good pleasure”! Dear God, give me the grace to let go and let you fulfill your promise!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Forgive — I have been selfish, prideful, afraid and just plain unwilling to let your power be manifest through or in me. It is easy to say, “I want to” — but do I? If I did you would! Forgive me! I am the

poorer, weaker, for my sin. Dear, dear God, change me! I am a congenital liar — from the birth of sin in my heart (James 1:13-17) I have lied when it would have been easier to tell the truth. I could say that most of the time — (there I go, lying again) at least *some* of the time I have been inhibited by fear — perfect love casts all such fear out. Cleanse me — oh, cleanse me!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

15 Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.” ²This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. — *Acts 15:1,2, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

First the folk in Antioch were called “disciples” — now they are “brothers.” How good it is to be in your family! The record of the Antioch church is not

ancient with you — all the incidents of all the people there are as well known to you as are all the events of our lives today. The legalists from Jerusalem were not the first, and by no means the last, who taught, "Unless you agree with us you cannot be saved." Why, why do men do this? I want you to speak your answer right into the depths of my heart! Because man has mistaken a gift for a possession he has somehow earned. Salvation will always be a gift. I have it but it is only mine as a gift. I have had it for such a long time. I have become so familiar with it that somehow I believe I deserve it. Once I do then I can ask others to adopt my attitudes or they cannot have the gift. How ridiculous!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I want to listen with the "brothers" at Antioch for the first time to these jarring words: "Unless you are circumcised according to the law of Moses (the custom taught by Moses) you cannot be saved"! I do wonder just what form of expression the arguments took as the sharp dispute got under way. It was extended into a debate. Essentially it must have been a careful separation of the response of law such as circumcision or a thousand other acts of devotion and the nature of salvation which is grace or unmerited favor. Let me try to stand now with Paul and Barnabas. Would I have been willing to go to Jerusalem to settle this question? Hadn't it already been settled? Didn't I already know God's answer? Where is my humility and love?

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Thank you dear Lord: (1) That even legalists are our brothers and I can treat them as such. (2) For teachers in the church like Paul who have the courage to correct. (3) That disputing and debating are not wrong in themselves. (4) That there was a body of men (elders) in the church at Antioch whom Paul respected and accepted. (5) That "other believers" were also responsible and respected. (6) That apostles and elders were the leaders at Jerusalem. (7) That supernatural powers of the Spirit do not eliminate free discussion.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"To see the apostles and elders about this question." How we do need to see the same people about any question we have as to who is a Christian, what a Christian should or should not do. Are we to understand that the elders of the Jerusalem church were on a par with the Apostles? If so (and so it would seem) they must have had supernatural aid in their oversight. How is it that an apostle had to ask apostles when both were supernaturally guided? Are there

elements in the divine direction we do not know?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Debate and questions can also lead to prayer. I want this to happen here: (1) I like the constant use of the term "brothers" — help me to use it. (2) May I know false teaching when I hear it. (3) Impress upon me all over again that we are saved by grace through faith. (4) Say it again to me! "Nothing, nothing we do earns salvation or the forgiveness of sins"! (5) Help me to be as well prepared in debate as were Paul and Barnabas. (6) If Paul and Barnabas were "appointed" with others by the elders of the church in Antioch who am I to resist elders' oversight? (7) May I also consult the apostles (as found in the New Testament) about every problem.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In the midst of many voices let me hear your voice: (1) "Without me all men are liars." (2) "Unless you know everything and do everything, you must be saved by grace." (3) "Be humble-minded; you can learn nothing if you are not."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Togo — Points for prayer: (1) Togo is the least evangelized non-Muslim country in Africa. For years the door for Protestant missionaries was open, but the opportunity was lost. Entry for new missionaries is only practicable at present for service with existing missions. Pray for the entry of missionaries adequate to evangelize every people. There are at present only six missionaries serving in the northern 70% of the country, where 65% of the population and most of the ethnic groups live. (2) The growth of Islam during this century has been marked and, as yet, unchallenged. There has never been any real attempt to evangelize Muslims or win those peoples being attracted to Islam. SIL has translation work among the Kotokoli and Chokossi, but where are the church planters to exploit the approaching availability of the Scriptures? (3) Bible translation is a major need. Pray especially for the completion of the Kabiye Bible now that it is one of the two indigenous languages used in education.

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 TEN

—Wednesday—

There is utterly nothing you do not know! Gladly do I pause before you — I am so ignorant! Help me!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Omniscient. This refers to your total knowledge — you know *all things*. This does not refer to the fact that you will know all things or that you have known all things, but that right now and always you know all things about all things. What a source of amazement! When man's knowledge is increasing, when man's confidence is in his own efforts such a quality strikes straight across man's self-sufficiency. What we learn you have always known. I want to face before you and worship in silence. I have no words to respond to absolute omniscience — even the adjective is a redundancy. "Holy (set apart)" is all I can say.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Omniscience — I shall try to personally respond as best (so poorly) as I can. It is one thing to consider that you know all things of the world around me; it is quite another matter to know you know all things that relate to the world within me. To even state this truth is to ask "why can't I have access to such knowledge?" The answer is that I do! Your word will furnish me wholly (thoroughly) for every effort of this life — my response to your omniscience is to meditate on your word day and night! You have given me access to your knowledge of my heart in answer to prayer. I come to you for character development and you do hear and I am being formed into the likeness of my dear Lord by your chastening and blessing which are but an extension of your omniscience.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

To lean upon my own understanding when such omniscience is available is more than folly, but I have

often played the fool. Dear wonderful, all knowing Father, forgive me. "Stealing" — to take what belongs to another without their permission. I have taken out of pure selfishness what I wanted for myself — of so many things. Most of my stealing has been from you — the precious moments loaned to me by you and so many, many of them used up as if they were mine. Intellect — but an extension of yourself — how often have I used it for the Giver? Dear God, forgive. Let him that stole, steal no more! Amen!

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

³The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the brothers very glad. ⁴When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them. —Acts 15:3,4, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How wonderfully good to read "the church" sent them, or gave them provisions and money for their journey — it is more than three hundred miles from Antioch to Jerusalem. Oh, oh what a day when there

was only one church! There were even in that day several congregations, perhaps more than I could imagine — but only *one* body — one called out assembly. Here were Jewish Christians talking to despised Gentiles about the good news of the success of their first evangelistic journey among non-Jewish people. It was the same church that welcomed them that sent them! Dear, dear Lord, how do you see us today?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Indeed I do! I want to be a member of that same church — it is the one that is right and cannot be wrong. I want to do exactly what they did to become a member, and be the same kind of person they were. The names used here are most interesting to me: (1) brothers, (2) apostles, (3) elders, (4) church. It would not seem to me that we could have successors to the eye witnesses of Jesus or the apostles — but for the others — how I want to be a true living, loving brother to every other Christian. How I do want to honor and respect the older men of the faith. How I long to see all men called out of the world into the one body! His church!

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

Read this word with real thanksgiving — Amen! Thank you: (1) For a body of believers who placed confidence in and gave generously to their leaders. (2) For men who were willing to walk 300 miles to settle a matter that was already settled in their mind. (3) For men who were not so ego centered that they forgot the real meaning of the Christian life is the conversion of sinners. (4) That there were brothers in Phoenicia and Samaria — how did they get there? (5) For the mutual joy, happiness, delightful meaning we can all share in our salvation — even as then, so now! (6) For the open acceptance by the apostles and the elders. (7) For the wonderful new creation in the old city of Jerusalem.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“This news made all the brothers very glad.” Oh, that we might always rejoice over the success of others! It could seem that such would easily be always true as related to the salvation of the lost. Such is *not true* — for somehow we see what others are doing as a threat, or reflection on what we are (or are not) doing. We are so guilty of impugning motives that we just know “those ignorant Gentiles really never knew what they were doing” — or “they will not be Christians long.” How we can learn from the ignorant brothers in Samaria and Phoenicia. We overcome this sin by faith in the power of God and unselfish love

for the lost.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

There is a whole volume of instruction in these two verses: (1) The church sent Paul and Barnabas. I want to be sent by the same agency. (2) I believe this means the church at Antioch paid their way. Am I right? (3) May I have the same kind of unselfish joy in my heart as the Phoenicians and Samaritans. (4) Teach me that *conversion is what you want*. (5) Open my heart to count *all* Christians as my brothers. (6) How I need to see your work as you do — simple, clear, alive. (7) Give me joy in the midst of conflict.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You can say so much to me in just two verses: (1) “My church is my sending agency.” (2) “I want men converted today as they were in Antioch.” (3) “Elders are not apostles but they are important.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Tonga — Points for prayer: (1) *The Tongan church* has had a glorious history of missionary outreach. Pray that the vision may be restored. (2) *The last century has been one of spiritual decline*, bitter schisms within the Methodist groups, and the rapid growth of Mormons to almost a quarter of the population. Oh, for revival! (3) *Leaders anointed of God* to proclaim the truth in love must be raised up. Unity among the evangelical groups is hampered by doctrinal extremes. (4) *Scripture Union* has had considerable impact on nominal Christians, with many coming to the Lord and with branches in nearly every village of Tonga.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK TEN

—Thursday—

In the beginning of any — and all human experiences you are there. As I open the prayer-closet's door you are there — waiting. Thank you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Alpha — the author, cause, establisher — “from everlasting to everlasting.” How well does this word describe you, both in the form of your Son and yourself! You are the author of not only the literature of the Bible but of this book of nature in which we live. What a careful, accurate, colorful, knowledgeable writer you are. You are the cause as well as the conclusion of all things. I try to stand back and appreciate fully the meaning of “establisher” or “from everlasting to everlasting.” The best I can do is to fall before you in wonder and praise.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Alpha to me. Indeed, indeed, I want you to be first in all of my life — if I begin with you, you are indeed and in truth my author. Do I truly mediate on what you have written? How is it I have not memorized every word of your book, the Bible? Dear Lord, forgive me. I am delighted by reading the book of your creation all about me! I thank you for the beauty, but more do I thank you for the purpose. You are indeed the establisher or it will never be established. Dear God, wonderful Savior, blessed present Holy Spirit, may every day — this one, all of them — begin (and end) with you. How I want you to be the first cause of all I think and do today!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Self-interest and “what do I get out of it” has been too often the first cause of my choices — forgive me! “Before the mountains were brought forth, or even thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God” (Psa. 90:2). It

does seem incongruous that I can live so independently of the one who “upholds all things by the word of his power.” I am the poorer — what strength and help I refuse. Dear Lord, I renew my desire to “seek first your rule in my life and your order of living.” Forgive and cleanse and remove. Praise your name — it is done!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

All to Jesus I surrender,
All to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him,
In His presence daily live.
I surrender all, I surrender all,
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,
I surrender all.

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

HIS WORD

⁴When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.

⁵Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, “The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses.”

⁶The apostles and elders met to consider this question. ⁷After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: “Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe.” —Acts 15:4-7, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I try to stand back and objectively read this passage

as if you were reading it. I know I can not do this, but I want to read it to you with as much appreciation of your point of view as at all possible. As Paul and Barnabas report to the crowd in Jerusalem, "everything you had done through them" — did you protect them from any exaggeration or false interpretation? If I were telling it no doubt I would overemphasize some things and forget other matters that should have been said. How was it on that day? If there was any impatience with the bigotry of the Pharisees it was not mentioned (maybe it was not bigotry), but there was much discussion. What did they say? Thou knowest!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I have unavoidably been doing this, but as an act and expression of praise and confession and adoration. I want to travel again with the apostles and see and hear all over again what happened at Salamis, Paphos, Perga, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe. I want to rejoice and feel the wonder of your work through these men. I do want to be as generous and sympathetic as the apostles and elders who met to consider carefully and fully this emotion-packed subject. How do I relate to those who sharply disagree with me?

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Yes, yes, thank you: (1) For the willingness and responsibility of Paul and Barnabas in reporting all. (2) For the humility and honesty of the apostles in recognizing your power working through them. (3) That we too can look back over their first journey and share their joy. (4) That the gospel does have an appeal to even those who misrepresent it. (5) That the apostles and elders were not all "easily offended." (6) That the question has been carefully considered and settled. (7) For the total beautiful example this whole incident is to us in the church of today.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"The party of the Pharisees." The record of the Pharisees is not all bad. This group of men believed in the inspiration of every word of the Old Testament. They accepted the supernatural occurrences of the Old Testament. They knew there would be a resurrection and judgment. They believed in purity of life. However, their fundamental flaw was in their trust — they trusted in law — it became a source of pride and failure. What a galling yoke trust in the law principle becomes! How easy to trace the record: we lie and cheat and deceive to hide our failure — open confession and humble confidence in our Lord did not occur to them.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

While some question, others pray: (1) May I always believe you are at work through my feeble efforts. (2) Give me the joy of sharing the good news of your work with others. (3) May I expect some to disagree. Help me not to respond in pride. (4) Open my mind to know one more time that nothing I do will provide merit for heaven. (5) May I listen to the apostles through their writings for your will on all matters. (6) Give me a working association with elders in your Son's body today. (7) Shut my mouth that I might allow others to contribute.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As you worked through the body then speak to me now through your word: (1) "It is good to testify to others what I have done." (2) "There are Pharisees today." (3) "In the counsel of apostles (their word) and elders is the solution of all church problems."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Trinidad and Tobago — Points for prayer: (1) *The East Indians are the largest non-Christian community in the Caribbean*, and present the greatest challenge. Traditional standards and strong East Indian links are loosening. Pray for a turning to the Lord Jesus. About 14% of all East Indians are now, at least nominally, Christian. (2) *The 88,000 Muslim East Indians* have proved less responsive, but very little effort has even been made to evangelize them. (3) *The Hindus have been more open*. The Presbyterians and now TEAM, WT, and several Pentecostal Churches are seeing a pleasing growth. Pray for the breakthrough! (4) *Religious instruction in public schools* presents an exciting opportunity for the gospel. In 1981 there were 118 Trinidad Christians engaged in this ministry. Pray for the young people of all races.

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 forms the hallowed page,
A lantern to our footsteps
Shines on from age to age.

WEEK TEN

—Friday—

When you speak — and I respond from my heart with “Amen”! I say “so be it” but also I speak your name. Gladly do I do it in worship.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Amen — credible, true, finality, the God of truth or amen, faithfulness — our Lord is the final “amen.” I think of your dear Son who was born in Bethlehem. Oh, oh, I love to pause and bow before you and tell you all (or a small part) of what you are. Life makes no sense at all without you. Life is nonsense without you — credible, true. In all you have said, or promised, you are *truth*. Truth I define as that which coincides with fact or “that which equals reality.” Without you there is no point of reference. I do not know who I am, why I am or where I’m going without you. You are life’s reality, life’s truth.

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

Amen to me! In him, even my Lord, is the *Amen* — the finality, the final and first word. To say that Jesus, even your dear Son and my Lord, is alpha and amen is to say the beginning and the end. I have nothing I want except him. I want, just now, to renew my worship before him and as much as I can to give myself again to him. Here is a lovely little poem that expresses my desire.

I’m but a slave!
 I have no freedom of my own,
 I cannot choose the smallest thing,
 Nor e’en my way.
 I’m a slave!
 Kept to do the bidding of my Master!
 He can call me, night or day.
 Were I a servant, I could claim wages.
 Freedom, sometimes, anyway.
 But I was *bought!*
Blood was the price my Master paid for me.
 And I am now His slave—
 And ever more will be.
 He takes me here, He takes me there,
 He tells me what to do;

I just obey, that’s all—
 I TRUST Him too!

—M. Warburton Booth

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

So often do the words of the frantic father come to my mind — “Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief.” I want you at the beginning of every day — and in everything. I want you in and through and among all I do or say or think. I want your conclusion to all I do. I do, I do *want* to be your slave, your clay, your wife, help thou my unwillingness. I am so insensitive, so dull of perception, so slow in hearing your voice, so unwilling. Is it my environment? No, no. Jesus lived in a worse, much worse place. Is it my nerves? How could it be when God made them? He is larger than nerves. Just deepen my desire to accept your ownership in every area of life. Forgive and cleanse.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Come, ev’ry soul by sin oppressed,
 There’s mercy with the Lord,
 And He will surely give you rest
 By trusting in His word.
 Only trust Him, only trust Him,
 Only trust Him now.
 He will save you, He will save you,
 He will save you now.

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

HIS WORD

⁷After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: “Brothers, you know that some time ago God

made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. ⁸God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. ⁹He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. ¹⁰Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? ¹¹No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."

¹²The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the miraculous signs God had done among the Gentiles through them.

—Acts 15:7-12, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How good it is to try to take my place with you as I read these verses! From the lips of Peter the fisherman — your "called one," your "sent one" — I hear him tell of your call to him; it became your call to all of us, i.e., all of us Gentiles. It was through the hearing of the good news we obtained faith. Yes, yes, it was *your* gift, but through the lips of man and our acceptance of that message. I am more than delighted that you know my heart — no one else does, not even myself. You do!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

It is most difficult to separate the points of view — indeed I couldn't — but I open my heart wide to receive each word! Your acceptance of me is indicated in the presence of the Holy Spirit in my body! But in the case of Cornelius your acceptance had to be seen and known by the Jews, so they would "make no distinction" between themselves and the Gentiles. I love that little phrase "purified their hearts by faith." My *mind* can be pure, whole, clean; my *will* can be pure, one, whole; my *emotions* can be pure, united, not divided, clean, whole. I believe in your marvelous provision for such purifying — it is done!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you I am free of the yoke and burden of the law. I am not saved by what I do, but by what my Lord did at Calvary and the open tomb! (2) Thank you that grace moved me to do much more for my Lord (not for merit) than law ever could. (3) Thank you for your great persistence and patience in moving Peter to tell the good news to us Gentiles. (4) Thank you, thank you for the blessed Holy Spirit. May I relate hourly to him. (5) Dear God, how thankful I am that I need not test you at all — I flunk the test; you know all the answers so you need not take it. (6) Thank you that "I am saved" just as are all Christians. (7) Thank you that I am being saved — and I

will be saved.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"God made a choice among you." God has always made choices of men among men. We would surely question some of his choices, i.e., in our own fallible, human judgment. Peter seems a poor choice to us, but he is such an encouragement to the weakest, most limited among us. If God could change Peter, then he could change me.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

The apostle Peter always had a message worth hearing. In it and from it I want to make some requests: (1) May Gentiles hear the same message from my lips as fell from the lips of Peter. (2) Keep me aware if men do not hear they cannot believe. (3) Search my heart — forgive me. (4) Thank you for the Holy Spirit — may he fill my heart. (5) Thank you for a pure heart — keep it pure. I want to see you. (6) Break the yoke of works salvation, in my life, in my teaching. (7) Thank you for your amazing grace — may I offer it to others.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What are you saying to me? (1) "I have chosen all men to be saved. Tell them for me." (2) "I know the sin in the lives of people — if you do not preach, I cannot forgive." (3) "Salvation is free but it must be accepted."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Tunisia — Points for prayer: (1) *In early centuries the Christian Church was strong.* Schism, heresy, foreign invasions and finally Islam brought about its demise. There are only about 50 indigenous evangelical believers today. Pray that a living, growing Church might become a reality again in this land. (2) *Indigenous believers* are often isolated, fearful, weak in their faith and prone to backslide or to marry a Muslim. To some, emigration is an easy option. Only a few have dared to openly share their faith. May they become "a threshing instrument having teeth" in the hands of the Lord!

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 TEN

—Saturday—

How ancient is ancient? You live in the absence of time so this is my frame of reference. But I gladly come to "the ancient of days." He knows the answer.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Ancient of days. This is a prophetic description of our Lord and refers to his eternality — like one who never dies. It is so beautifully descriptive of yourself! There has never been a day since Eden's garden that you have not been alive and well and awake and alert and interested in all that happens in every life upon this terrestrial ball. Praise your wonderful name — and of him who was The Word — and of the Eternal Spirit — no event in any day has escaped your notice, yea more, your intense interest! We all know men of age who have acquired deep wisdom and patience, kindness and the gentleness that comes with much experience. Such qualities are to be associated in our minds with yourself and your Son — there is so *much* more — but this is enough now.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

The ancient of days for me. I am comforted by the thought that there has never been a day, and there never will be one, when you, dear Lord, loving Father, are not a part of it. There have been many days of which I am ashamed, but you know; you are more unhappy about them than I am. You forgive because I want — indeed, I do want — to love you and serve you. You are not a great, great grandfather — for all such lose capacities — you change not, but the kindness and thoughtfulness and personal interest of my grandfather was a real source of strength to me. Multiply that by ten million for you and your Son!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

"Gossip." This is repeating what we have heard and have not confirmed. It is usually negative and critical of some person. Dear Lord, you know just how guilty I am in this area. I have tried to go to the ones I have offended in this way, but there are too many in-

volved, and I am repulsed by this sin. It is the total antithesis of love. How could we lie about people, when we love them? We somehow become important when we know something no one else does, but we really do not know it — it is pure hearsay gossip. Oh, dear Lord, would I want this said of me? Why *must* I find importance in such a poor, miserable manner? You have made me so very, very important as a Christian, and this is no gossip! Forgive, and put a hold on my tongue!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

¹²The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. ¹³When they had finished, James spoke up: "Brothers, listen to me. ¹⁴Simon has described to us how God at first showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for himself. ¹⁵The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:

¹⁶" 'After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent.

Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, ¹⁷that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things,

¹⁸that have been known for ages.' "

—Acts 15:12-18

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, how many more signs and wonders were done that Dr. Luke did not record? Oh, how I want to appreciate fully each sign. I want to be filled with the same awe and amazement that filled those who first saw such signs. But more than this, I want to buy the product these signs advertise — even the deity of your own dear Son — the truthfulness of the message Paul and Barnabas spoke, their authority as apostles of yourself. The signs and wonders were only a means to an end. The words of my Lord speak to me, “He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; *and* greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father” (John 14:12).

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! God through miracles spoke in two instances: (1) Peter, and (2) Paul and Barnabas. He spoke again through the prophets. In all cases of miracles they were a means. The message was in the *words* of Peter and in the *words* of Paul and Barnabas, and in the *words* of the prophet. Your word is yet with me — do I hear and heed it? Do I read and memorize it? Yea, Lord — not as I could or should, but I do believe I *do* accept! I do hear! Open my inner ear! Do we need miracles to confirm your message today? Your word includes the evidence for its acceptance — the same writers who give us what you said, tell us what you did to credential what you said. Will the miracles today do a better job than what has already been done?

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

How delighted I am to do this: (1) Thank you for your power to heal the sick and cast out demons, raise the dead, etc., as seen in the Acts account, but most of all for the product these signs advertised — even your wonderful Son, my Lord! (2) Thank you for James, my Lord’s half-brother — he once did not believe, but now he is a leader of the believers in the very city where he disbelieved. (3) For the knowledge of the prophets on the part of Jesus. (4) That we Gentiles are “a people for God’s own self”! (5) That we are the very “house or temple of David” rebuilt as the dwelling place of God in the Spirit. (6) Thank you, oh, thank you that you have made provisions for all mankind through us. (7) That there are no hasty plans with you.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“All the nations that bear my name” — The only nation we know who bore the name and accepted the authority of our God was Israel, and they were poor, poor examples. This is a prophecy of Amos fulfilled

in the “new Israel.” How encouraging to read this prophecy and anticipate its fulfillment. Will there be a day when the nations of the earth honor and respect the name of God? The spread of the good news in the first century made this prophecy a reality. We believe what Paul wrote to those living in what we now call Turkey is true: “. . . the gospel . . . which has been preached to every creature under heaven, . . .” (Col. 1:23). Has any other generation fulfilled this prophecy? Sad, sad admission of disobedience and failure! The gospel hasn’t lost its power — it just hasn’t been preached.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How easy it is to see needed requests in these verses: (1) Miracles were a sign of your approval. May I accept what they approved: the apostle’s word. (2) I thank you for the humility of Paul and Barnabas — they didn’t need to defend their authority. (3) I am so glad to be a part of the people you have chosen for yourself. May I be grateful enough to tell others. (4) How good to be a part of the new temple of David — dwell in my heart and life. (5) Thank you for the words of Amos fulfilled in the Gentile church — there are others not yet in it. (6) For the privilege of bearing your name, I thank you. (7) Thank you that I can live at the end of the age in which the promise of salvation is mine.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I want these men to speak from you to me. (1) *Paul and Barnabas*: “You have greater signs to do than God helped us to do.” (2) *Peter*: “There are many more people I did not call.” (3) *James*: “You have all the reality of which prophecy was but a shadow.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Turkey — Points for prayer: (1) *Turkey is the largest unreached nation in the world.* Ironically Paul, the first great missionary to the Gentile world, came from Tarsus, and much of his early ministry was in what is now Turkey. Fifty million completely unevangelized people need to hear the gospel somehow and soon. (2) *Islamic fundamentalists* are applying strong pressure on the authorities to take a harder, and unconstitutional line against believers to hinder witnessing and Christian outreach. Pray that both the courts and state may uphold the laws protecting religious freedom.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

When my life-work is ended,
and I cross the swelling tide,
When the bright and glorious morning I shall see;
I shall know my Redeemer
when I reach the other side,
And His smile will be the first to welcome me.

WEEK ELEVEN

—Sunday—

When we live in a democracy it is difficult to truly relate to the rule of a king. I want to change this in the closet of prayer.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Anointed. Messiah, Christ, Prophet, Priest, King. What was said of our Lord can surely be said of our heavenly Father — nowhere can I find a reference to you as anointed, so I'll worship my Lord who said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." To consider one who knows all the future as easily and as fully as I know the past or present is a source of wonder to me. Bless his holy name forever. You anointed him with the Holy Spirit and power. You gave him the Spirit with no limitations, i.e., in expression the Holy Spirit by reason of his nature has no limitations. To talk with such a prophet, priest and king is an awesome thought.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Anointed for me. To consider this one as fulfilling his ministry through, or because of me is amazing. He was anointed as a prophet to teach me and all other men your will for our lives; to predict all the future of my life; to look all the way down the corridor of time and see every part of the changing scene. To be *my priest*, to listen patiently to my babblings and interrupt them to read the motive — to know the *real* need. Oh, oh, to be my king — you have a right twice over to the throne of my heart. Dear Lord, speak, intercede, reign. I gladly own you and worship you.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

How poorly have I expressed my love for you — forgive me! What a sin it is to accept you as my prophet and not heed what you say — to know you are my intercessor but leave you unemployed. To claim you as king but refuse your rule! In all these ways I am blood guilty and I ask you to not only forgive but give me grace to fulfill what those names mean in my life!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Come, Thou Almighty King,
Help us Thy name to sing,
Help us to praise;
Father, all glorious,
O'er all victorious,
Come and reign over us,
Ancient of Days.

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

HIS WORD

¹⁹"It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. ²⁰Instead we should write them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. ²¹For Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath."

²²Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, two men who were leaders among the brothers. ²³With them they sent the following letter:

The apostles and elders, your brothers,
To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia:
Greetings.

²⁴We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. ²⁵So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul — ²⁶men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

²⁷Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. ²⁸It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements:

²⁹You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid

these things.

Farewell. — *Acts 15:19-29, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear God, what a penetratingly real text there is here for me to share with you — for you, indeed, to share with me! How very often I have made it difficult for men and women who have been turning to you.

I have bound on them certain regulations of my own judgment. I want always to immediately relate them to your word, not mine — forgive me! Are the four prohibitions of this letter for me today? (1) I want *nothing* to do with idols. (2) Blood is not appetizing to me — and I see in it your price for my redemption — I'll not eat it. (3) Eating the meat of strangled animals would be dangerous to my health. (4) I want nothing to do with any form of immorality!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I have read to you, but I have applied to me — now I want to do so even more. Somehow I get the impression that such prohibitions were accommodations, or provisions for the benefit of the Jewish believers. The law of Moses speaks out most clearly against such practices *under the penalty of death*.

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Somehow this always becomes the easiest time of worship — joy and peace! (1) Thank you for James' judgment which was accompanied by the Holy Spirit. (2) For the wonderful way the Gospel appeals to all men. (3) For the practical nitty-gritty interest you have in what we eat and feel. (4) For your involvement in social distinctions. (5) That there were indeed elders (no mention of deacons or "the pastor") in the first century church. (6) The apostles, elders, and whole church could and did give "authorization" to men and decisions. (7) That our work is not unappreciated. It is not wrong to be complimented, or to compliment someone else.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." May this ever be the deciding factor in all my actions and attitudes. "What do you think about it?" must be asked of the Holy Spirit. His word has much to say. There are four ways I believe he will use in directing my steps: (1) His word — much of it is not read; we just talk about reading it. (2) His teachers — God set teachers in the body for the purpose of direction — listen to them. (3) His providence — which is only perceived in retrospect. (4) Answer to prayer. Until I have searched out all these areas most carefully, I cannot say the Holy Spirit did not speak. He did. He

is. I'm just not listening.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

There is so much for which to pray in these verses: (1) Help me not to make it difficult for anyone to accept you, i.e., through my own selfishness. (2) Deliver me from all idolatry. (3) From all forms of immorality, dear Lord, deliver me. (4) May I respect those who have rules I do not know. (5) May I include "the whole church" in my decision making. (6) Somehow show me how the leadership and the whole body can agree on decisions.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me through this letter: (1) "There are unauthorized men who trouble my people. Are you one of them?" (2) "The decisions of the apostolic church are the decisions of the Holy Spirit." (3) "If the first Gentiles needed to abstain from these things, so do you."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Turkey — Points for prayer: (1) *The barriers to the gospel appear insurmountable*: a) *History*. Turkey's long association with Islam and bitter wars with "Christian" European nations make conversion appear almost an act of treachery. b) *Culture*. To be a Turk is to be a Muslim, even if nominally so. Family pressure is usually acute on any who want to follow Christ. Every conversion to Christ is a miracle of grace. c) *Attitude*. A deep seated resistance in the general public to anything Christian makes any form of witnessing difficult. A radical change in public attitudes must be prayed for. d) *Wrong understandings*. Evangelical Christians are lumped together with Armenian terrorists and Jehovah's Witnesses. Muslim preconceptions about Christian doctrine are also a major barrier. e) *The god of this world* has blinded them. In the name of Jesus we can pray for supernatural illumination! (2) *The Christian Church* as a whole is in decline, largely because of heavy emigration, but the number converted out of Islam is rising. Most Christians are nominal, introspective and are not evangelizing. The majority live in Istanbul.

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 ELEVEN

—Monday—

Movement is surely a part of your very nature. You are the Great Sender. "Here am I, send me" — direct my ways!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

The Apostle and high priest of our calling. This is said of our Lord and he often said it of himself, i.e., that he was "sent" from heaven or your presence. Both the sent and the sender are involved. I could never thank you enough for sending your Son. I could never thank him enough for coming! I need to understand more fully what happens when you come and what happens when you do not, i.e., in my own experience. It is one thing for my blessed Lord to leave the wonders of the eternal world and come to this earth; it is quite another to be as prepared as was the earth when he came. He came "in the fulness of time." He came when many, many prophecies were being fulfilled.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

The Apostle for me. Am I as prepared as the stable in Bethlehem? Surely there is an obvious comparison. What an unworthy, unholy, filthy place to be born. Am I to understand he is growing in me as he grew in Nazareth? I believe (thank you, Lord!) this is the key to the change I want in my life — that you want more than I do! "Until Christ be formed within you." Dear God — the Sender — I want to open my mind, yield all my will, totally identify with the One who lives inside! How shall I think his thoughts? Memorize the record of his life! Review those words until they become spirit and life! Pray into your will the words you memorize! Do this over and over again and Christ will become real to you! (I write this to you for me.)

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

How miserably I have failed in the highest, most joyous of experiences! I.e., of emotionally identifying with the Living Presence within! You are the sender,

he is the "Sent One." I am the recipient — my heart the manger! Could the tragedy of Bethlehem be repeated all over again? "He came to his own and they who were his own didn't receive him" — or know him.

Until the desires of the body and of the mind are satisfied repeatedly in you, there is no option but to seek satisfaction where there is none. Dear Lord, for today: let me discover all over again your coming into the world and into my heart. I freely, openly confess my sin, my violation of your law. Forgive me, cleanse me!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

There is a place of quiet rest,
Near to the heart of God,
A place where sin cannot molest,
Near to the heart of God.
O Jesus, blest Redeemer,
Sent from the heart of God,
Hold us, who wait before Thee,
Near to the heart of God.

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

HIS WORD

³⁰The men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. ³¹The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message. ³²Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers. ³³After spending some time there, they were sent off by the brothers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them. —Acts 15:30-33, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

What an understatement is found in verse thirty! It is a 300-mile walk from Jerusalem to Antioch, but

distance is no distance with you — or so it would seem with your historian, Dr. Luke. The purpose, not the distance, was important — help me to remember this. The church was not a building — it was a people who needed to be gathered into a building. How I would like to have been there! The letter essentially said “how to get along with Jews”: Respect them, accept them, love them, learn from them. Am I right about this? I love the little designation “*the brothers*” repeated twice in these four verses. Thank you for speaking to me of this. Prophets encouraged and strengthened — aside from the direct supernatural input of their message I have the same job. Praise you!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

This will not be difficult. I want to read each word into my conscience. Who paid for the expense of the trip? I travel almost every week and someone has to pay for the trip. Money never seemed to be mentioned — because it was no problem, any more than it was for our dear Lord who had to depend on others to cook his meals and wash his clothes and pay the inn keepers. Is a servant above his master? Who read the letter to the assembly? “The people” — or was it available for all to read? There was only *one* copy. Who were Judas and Silas? Praise God there were several men named Judas who did a good work — one of them our Lord’s brother and another this wonderful prophet!

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 beautiful dedication of Luke the writer of this record. (2) Thank you that we can be the same church today they were in Antioch. (3) For the education you permitted (or directed) in the first century that gave us your word. (4) Thank you that encouragement is such a large part of the light of the church in Antioch. (5) Thank you that words from you can produce such inward joy and strength. (6) For every precious day we can spend together worshipping and learning. (7) Thank you, thank you for “the blessing of peace.”

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“*With the blessing of peace,*” Just what is involved in this little expression? When we consider carefully it becomes not a “little” expression at all. The term “blessing” can have the following meanings: (1) A bounty or benefit from God or man — such as the creatures of air and sea (Gen. 1:22). The benediction God placed on Adam and Eve (Gen. 1:28). (2) A recognition of God’s favor in a thankful and adoring manner (Psa. 103:1; Matt. 26:26). (3) The invoking of God’s favor on another — such as is indicated in the

reference we are considering.

The meaning of peace is far more than the absence of hostility. Essentially peace is an attitude of the heart — this wish or prayer for Judas and Silas is for God to so arrange the circumstances and the attitude of their heart that they might confidently face every circumstance of life with total trust in God.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

It was a 300-mile walk from Jerusalem to Antioch. Dr. Luke was so anxious to tell us of the events in Antioch he totally ignored the distance. There is much in this to prompt praying: (1) Give me the same attitude toward the body of Christ as seen here. (2) Remind me again that there is just one church — the body of your Son. (3) How I long to meet in heaven some of the men and women who were first called Christians. (4) How I want to be an encouragement to others — enable me! (5) Lift up my heart that I might help others. (6) Open the eyes of my heart to see all Christians as my blood relatives. (7) I need the blessing of peace in my service for you.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these three verses speak to me: (1) “Deliver my letters of joy to my body today.” (2) “There is nothing men need more than encouragement.” (3) “Spend enough time to get my task completed.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Turkey — Points for prayer: (1) *Missionary work* began in 1821, but was soon directed to the more receptive non-Muslim minorities. Since 1960 renewed prayer and effort is slowly yielding fruit among the Muslims. (2) *Other means of witness* are profitably employed, and need prayerful support: a) *Literature*. 3,500,000 pieces of literature have been distributed over the past few years in door-to-door work, postal evangelism, advertisements in the press, etc. Pray for fruit, and the development of effective ways of follow-up. b) *Postal evangelism* through pen-pals, direct mail and correspondence courses have yielded a response. *Friends of Turkey* and other agencies are further developing this means of outreach. Pray that the postal system may function well and without interference. c) *Radio outreach* in combination with literature distribution is generating a good response.

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 ELEVEN

—Tuesday—

The beginning of so many things is exciting — interesting — promising — this you are. Open my heart as I start this new day with you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Beginning — the cause and author. Everlasting Father. I love the beginning — of the day, of a new project, of life, of most things I like the beginning best. It is wonderful to know someone who is the Everlasting Beginning — actually the first cause or origin, or head, or the One who stands as the ruler. In every life that has been a failure, you are the beginning. There is a place (it is a Person) of “beginning again.” How marvelously thoughtful to know Some One like that! Today at the beginning you are there to make it the very best day I have had, or anyone anywhere has had. You are the freshness and strength of new energy. You indeed are the essence of energy and hence always Beginning.

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

Beginning for me — how often I do need a fresh start! How gloriously good to only use those things of the past which help — all else is forgiven and forgotten, i.e., with you! I should like today to begin and develop a new thought — I need your help. Oh, bless your holy, pure, separate name, you are beginning! Dear Lord, I want to begin the outreach to your children — my brothers and sisters in encouraging them to pray. Only you can teach us to pray. You did so, best of all, by your example. Dear Beginning: Give me the wisdom (the best use of the knowledge I have) to approach and develop this concept in just the way you want it done!

How do you personally relate to the beginning of all, and God who is the Beginning?

CONFESSION OF SIN

There have been beginnings when you were *not* in them! Dear God, if somehow I could be so aware, so wise, that I would pause — wait — consider — and then “in faith” or “trust” move, I believe you would

be honored. I’m not at all sure I have pure connections so I can not say all my beginnings are right, but now they will surely be much better than many others. Forgive me for ignoring the most obvious need I have. In the sins mentioned in your word Satan offers an “easy way out” — a way with no responsibility — but a way that leaves guilt and unfulfilledness! Forgive and make me whole!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

³⁵But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord.

³⁶Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.” ³⁷Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, ³⁸but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. —Acts 15:35-38, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, it is easy to see how Paul and Barnabas

could teach and preach the "word of the Lord," but "many others" did it too — where did they get "the word of the Lord"? The most obvious answer is the only right answer: They were directly inspired or instructed by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit programmed their minds and they, out of their mouths, gave the "read out" or "the word of the Lord." There *was no* New Testament to consult to prepare them to "teach and preach the word of the Lord." I write this in your presence O Lord — am I right?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Lord! If inspired men have disagreements and cannot decide your will, i.e., who is right in a given circumstance, how can I possibly decide when I do not even have direct inspiration? The answer is in the purpose of inspiration — not to make a "better Christian" — that is move in my personal response to your will for life, but to give information from you that is not otherwise available.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

There is so *much* for which I can thank you in this text: (1) Thank you for the combining of teaching and preaching in the same men (since this is what I do). (2) Thank you for the unnamed prophets in the church in Antioch (we have the names of three of them in 13:1), but for the "many" others we will wait until we see them and ask them all about it. (3) Thank you for the unselfish interest of Paul and Barnabas in their converts. (4) Thank you for the confidence Barnabas had in John Mark. (5) Thank you for Paul's concern for the work and the workers. (6) Thank you for human disagreements since it teaches us you can use us. (7) Thank you that there were two missionary journeys instead of one and both could fulfill the same original purpose.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Why rebuild the fallen house of David? James quotes the very words of the prophets in answer: "That the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord. . . ." The allusion in this text is the beautiful Temple of Solomon. When we consider the church as the rebuilt Temple we stand back in wonder. Remember its beauty? Its value? Its impressive size? It should have been built of the living stones of the Jewish nation. The purpose was to evangelize the Gentiles. How sadly did that purpose fail of fulfillment.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the midst of personal disagreement there is a need for prayer: (1) How could "many others" or even Paul and Barnabas teach your word unless they had

direct inspiration? (2) Give me such an earnest desire to spread your word today. (3) I want the same concern for those I have taught as filled the heart of Paul and Barnabas. (4) Could both be right in the disagreement over John Mark? (5) Was Paul applying his definition of love to John Mark? (Cf. I Cor. 13:3-9.) (6) Thank you for the encouraging words of I Pet. 5:13; Col. 4:10; II Tim. 4:11 and Philemon 24.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me for my service in your body today: (1) "The service of my Son's body requires many to teach." (2) "Disagreement does not necessarily mean anyone is right or wrong." (3) "Sometimes more is accomplished because of disagreement."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Tuvalu — Point for prayer: *Unreached peoples*: The few Christian groups are almost all confined to the Istanbul and Syrian border areas. The rest of the country and its many cities and provinces are virtually without any witness. Specific minorities for prayer: a) *the Kurds*: there may be only two to three believers in Turkey, and no outreach in their own languages. Pray both for the penetration of their mountain homeland and expatriate communities in Europe and North America with the gospel. Many follow the Alevi teachings, which give high regard to the Lord Jesus Christ, and are only nominal Muslims. b) *The ethnic Muslim minorities*. None have been evangelized in their native tongue; many are living in communities separated from the mainstream of national life. c) *The Iranis* have been streaming over the border to flee the war and radical Islam in their homeland. Most are too poor and ignorant of other languages to emigrate elsewhere. No one is reaching them. d) *The Central Asian refugees* from Communism; many from the unevanglized areas of the USSR and Afghanistan. There are Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kirghiz, Tatars, Turkmen, etc.

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 ELEVEN

—Wednesday—

Emotional identity with you is so very, very important! I renew this relationship just now!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Beloved. This was said by God of his Son at his baptism and his transfiguration. It could well have been returned by the Son to the Father — “This is my beloved Father in whom I am well pleased.” This is indeed true of all men as they relate to you. Of all men you are the sum total of their emotional, mental and physical need! All the qualities of your being enhance you to us. We find in you the perfect expression of love. For ten thousand reasons we can call you “Beloved.” It is like some wonderful person whom to know is to love. *Only* when we know you do we love you. Left to ourselves, we feel a great loneliness that only you can fulfill. The one essential ingredient is “communion, or fellowship 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

Beloved for me. This is a delight to express. How very, very much I have found you “The Beloved One”! I am not ignoring the days — and nights — of struggle, nor my disappointing coldness toward you, but you have not changed! You are and always have been “the beloved.” I surely agree with your estimate of Jesus — “your blessed Son” — our (my) beloved Savior and Lord — in him I also am very, very well pleased! I want to hear him and see him all over again — just for today — just right now! See him at the happy wedding feast; see him in the house of Levi around the banquet table; see him in Simon’s house addressing the prostitute; hear him say, “My joy I give to you and no man shall take it away.”

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

I cannot say that I have even consciously thought of

you as anything less than “beloved.” I have failed, however, to make this objective fact as subjectively personal as I should have and could have. To feel estranged from my beloved is sad, and for which I do indeed seek forgiveness. I rush again into your open arms! One sin listed in your word is “profanity” — to lower the pure to the dirt, to treat lightly and of little account that which is so important and valuable! Dear, dear God, how I need, how I want to make all of life sacred, holy, true, beautiful; to not “put down” what you have lifted up. All men are precious to you. Help me to look up beyond their words and actions as you do.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

⁴⁰but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. ⁴¹He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

16 He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek. —Acts 15:40-16:1, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I never tire of attempting to adopt your point of view in reading this text. It is so, so good to thank you, adore you and seek forgiveness as you speak to me. I

thought Silas left and returned to Jerusalem. Perhaps the time element is the answer — he did leave — time has gone by and he was returned, perhaps in answer to Paul's request to accompany him. Just how did "the brothers" at Antioch commend Paul and Silas to your grace? Did they pray? Did they fast? Were their hands laid on their heads? Thou knowest! What churches were in northern Syria? What churches were in Cilicia other than Tarsus? How I would like to know — one day I shall!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Lord, forgive my self-centeredness. I do want you to speak your word into my heart. Didn't Paul and Silas further evangelize in the areas of Syria and Cilicia? We cannot build a case on what is *not said*, but the strengthening of the love and devotion of those who were already Christians is what Luke deems important; so do I! There were several congregations in these two provinces. Did the prophets establish them? Was it better to have those who had direct inspiration rather than everyone with a copy of your revelation in their hand? Dear, dear Lord, it is not a matter of inspiration or revelation, it is a desperate need for motivation! Even in the primitive church of pure direction there were those who had a divided house.

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, thank you for your grace that will protect me and direct me as well as forgive me. (2) Thank you for those who were willing to be missionaries without a missionary organization — or were "the brothers" at Antioch their source of support? (3) Thank you for telling me all over again my task is to strengthen churches as well as establish them. (4) Thank you for telling me churches can grow from the seed planted by anyone. (5) Thank you so much for Timothy — as Paul said, "There is none like him." (6) Thank you for "fruit that remains." Eunice and Lois and Timothy were probably all converts from the first trip. (7) Thank you for the challenge of winning Timothy's father.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... whose father was a Greek." There are so many wonderful people in the Bible who have just one flaw in their character — just one exception in an otherwise flawless record. Was it Timothy's fault his father was a Greek? Of course not, but it is always mentioned when we discuss Timothy. What is the "chink" in your armor? What is the hole in your dike? All of us have one. And we do not have one flaw; we have a thousand. There isn't one opening in our armor, there

are a hundred. The dike is all but swept away in the flood.

We have just described Timothy as man sees him, but as God sees him Paul's word could well describe him: "I have none like him."

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

As we travel with Paul and Silas we pray: (1) Choose the very persons with whom I should work for you. (2) Thank you for those who pray for me today. I claim your grace. (3) Keep me aware that there are many more churches than those I have visited. (4) Lead me to men like Timothy. (5) Enable me to influence women like Eunice and Lois. (6) Give me the humility and honesty necessary to be like Timothy. (7) Thank you for the faith of mothers who share their treasure with their children.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Out of the experience of Timothy speak to me: (1) "There are jewels in the most unlikely places." (2) "I have a Timothy to take Mark's place in several of life's relationships." (3) "A Christian home is fine, but all my children are born again."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Uganda — Points for prayer: (1) *Pray for the government.* The economic and moral devastation caused by 20 years of unrestrained murder, tribal hatreds, and corruption have left a legacy of deep bitterness. Only deep spiritual transformation can bring about an effective, lasting reconciliation and reconstruction. (2) *The persecution of Christians* during Amin's reign of terror was a dark time. Nominalism, formalism and failure to check tribalism in the churches prevented the Church from unitedly standing up for the right. The result was the destruction of many churches and institutions, the loss through death and exile of some of Uganda's finest Christian leaders, and heavy loss of life among Christians. (3) *Ugandan missionary vision* has been expanded through exiled leaders and movements of refugees. Pray that the Ugandan believers may continue to develop missionary concern and send out workers to serve in other lands. Especially needy is nearby southern Sudan.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK ELEVEN

—Thursday—

All that you are can be summed up in the one word "Blessed" — Eagerly do I meditate — and express myself before you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Blessed. This has primary reference to our Lord (Luke 1:42), but God is in the highest possible sense of the word "THE BLESSED ONE." Indeed, indeed! How exalted above man. In every way I can think of you, you are blessed, i.e., have all things, all the qualities of beauty and goodness or moral excellence. You have all the capacities of ruling in power and love — the accumulation of all the more than one hundred qualities of yourself accumulated and multiplied could not truly express how much you are "blessed" — and in the same context, a blessing to 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

Blessed for me. I want to praise or pronounce a blessing upon your name — to love you from my heart. I do so want to identify with you. "Bless the Lord O my inward being (soul) and forget not all his benefits." He has, he is, forgiving all my sins; healing all my diseases. Since this one word comes from the very heart of human-divine relationship I can only fall before you in speechless praise! Every blessing, or benefit in my life comes from the Blessed One — even yourself! Can I not pause now and review a thousand blessings given in the past year?

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

The sin of ingratitude strikes so close to the cause of sin — selfishness! Dear God, forgive me for at any time associating myself as the source of any good thing — every good and perfect gift comes from you — not just some of them. The sin of "hatred" — i.e., for any man or woman — hatred — abhorrence for my sin and for sin itself should increase. Dear

God, I want it to! But the same attitude cannot, should not, will not be directed toward any man. Vengeance and revenge are too heavy for me; they belong to you. Dear Lord, you have heard from my heart my failures and disappointments — cleanse and 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

My soul in sad exile was out on life's sea,
So burdened with sin and distress,
Till I heard a sweet voice saying,
"Make me your choice";
And I entered the "Haven of Rest"!
I've anchored my soul in the "Haven of Rest,"
I'll sail the wide seas no more;
The tempest may sweep o'er the wild, stormy deep,
In Jesus I'm safe evermore.

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

HIS WORD

²The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. ³Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. ⁴As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. ⁵So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers. —Acts 16:2-5, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How gladly I take up the reading of your word with yourself! I try to take Timothy's place. I try to imagine how you saw Timothy. He must have asked many questions of the people from Antioch, Iconium, and his own house of Lystra. Did he go to Derbe too?

I.e., to make inquiry? As he inquired of Paul, others were inquiring about him — it is always so. What others only heard — and poorly reported — you knew perfectly. *Why* did Paul want to take this young man? Did Paul have need of a cook? An apprentice? I appreciate what I do not know, as well as what I do know about this journey. I'm so glad to worship and to inquire about the blank spaces.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How I want to imitate Timothy. I can learn so very much by following closely all that happened to him. I can and want to learn of his total devotion to carrying the good news — the number one priority in Paul's life was evangelism. Paul needed help and helpers — Paul was conscious of culture distinctions and problems, I must have, and even look for help in the work I do for my Lord. I cannot and will not run roughshod over the taboos of others. Dear Lord, help me to believe with Paul and Silas and all the disciples in each town that there are decisions reached by the apostles that *must* be obeyed. What was "the faith" in which the churches were strengthened? How could they grow so rapidly?

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

Yea, Lord, gladly. (1) Thank you for the power to raise Paul from stoning at Lystra. This story has blessed untold millions. (2) Thank you that brothers who are not of the same town can recognize quality of character when they see it. (3) Thank you that team work is our Lord's work and Paul's work. (4) Thank you that you let me know here that it is sometimes better to ignore a problem than to fight it. (5) Thank you for men who are willing to overcome heredity defects that could hinder the spread of the word. (6) Thank you for the Holy Spirit's ability to work through apostles and elders. He must do that today. (7) Thank you for the emphasis on evangelism in the first century church.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"So the churches . . . grew daily in numbers." With no Bible — no publishing company — no TV or radio — with none of our special programs; i.e., campaigns of any type — without even a preacher, for Paul soon left — the increase of disciples was large and daily! How could it be? What caused it to happen? Dear Lord, how I would like to be able to answer these questions! I cannot say, I will not say, that these people were all so different and more easily persuaded than the people in my own town. Of course the direct input of inspired speaking must have been a telling factor, but we could speak the word of the Lord in

such a clear, interesting manner today if we would. These people allowed their relationship with our Lord to break through all barriers of social resistance.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Timothy's experience prompts us to pray: (1) Help me to follow again the experiences of Paul in these cities, to appreciate all that happened. (2) May I gather with Timothy, Eunice and Lois as we kneel before the broken body of Paul. When Paul opened his eyes he saw the tear stained faces of these loved ones (so we interpret II Tim. 1:4). (3) Give me such a consistent life that men might speak well of me. (4) I want to be a help to all those who work for you. (5) May I submit to anything necessary to better open the hearts of those who hear me. (6) How I want to deliver from town to town the decisions reached by your inspired writers. (7) Somehow may I be used to strengthen the church where I worship.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

There are several messages to hear from your word: (1) "Keep on following closely all Paul did." (2) "So live that men will see your good works and glorify me — not you." (3) "Churches can and should grow in numbers daily."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Uganda — Points for prayer: (1) *The Refugees*. The ebb and flow of refugees within Uganda and to and from neighboring lands has been enormous. There were estimated to be 800,000 Ugandan refugees in 1983. Pray for: a) *Stable political conditions* to help resettlement. b) *Aid* to enable the destitute to re-establish family life and a reasonable living standard. c) *Banyarwanda refugees* on the Rwanda-Uganda border. About 80,000 live in squalid camps and are rejected by both governments. Their economic status and long-term future is bleak. (2) *Christian leadership* for the growing Church is a pressing need. Many pastors bear responsibility for numerous congregations. Bible schools and seminaries will have to be re-equipped and staffed. Pray for the return and reintegration of former exiled leaders into the life of the churches.

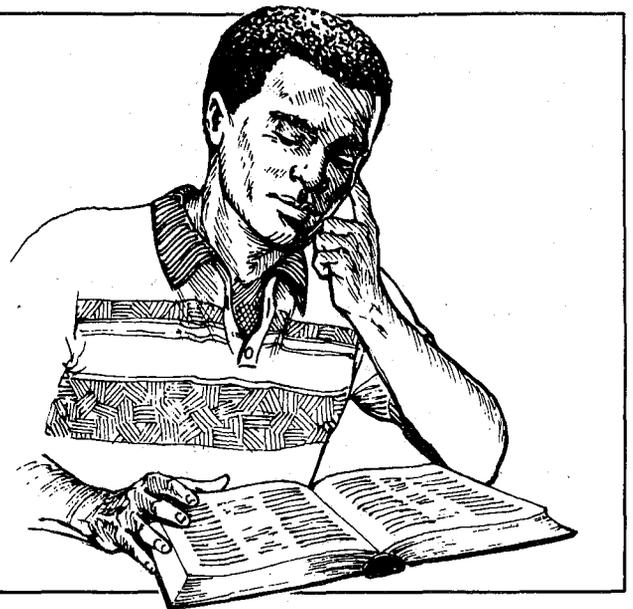
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK ELEVEN

—Friday—

I am so glad to bow and worship the One who is even now building an eternal city for me.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Builder. God is portrayed as a builder in Psa. 102:16; 127:1; Matt. 16:18; 26:61; 27:40; John 3:13-22; Amos 9:11,12. It is wonderfully good to consider you as the builder and maker of all days! You are indeed “the builder” of everything, all the time, but it would be so much more meaningful if I would consider you as the builder of one life — representative of millions, even billions of lives: (1) You built the spirit which contains all powers of expression. I believe at this moment I am writing words because you built into my spirit or “programmed” my spirit with this capacity. (2) You also built the body in which man lives — it is wondrously made — out of the dust of the earth. The capacities and strength and durability of the organs you have built into the body are a constant source of amazement. Truly, truly on this day I want to praise you!

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Builder of myself. I have anticipated this quality of yourself, but it is here that you, the Builder, become real, powerful, personal! I want to watch your handiwork in building abilities into man. Let’s meditate and praise around the ability to paint. To be able to put on canvas or paper — or some substitute — a representation of what you have put before us is a true gift from you and surely one of your higher forms of building. To copy or transfer from sight the surface is one thing, and is truly a blessed thing to do, especially when we but try to express our appreciation of the physical world you have built — but to be able to see with the eye of the imagination and transfer that to a surface and then to see all the shades and shadows of the scene and express it. That is a true source of wonder and praise from my heart! What tremendous capacities you have built into man! Oh, praise and glory be to your name!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

To admit that I have not at all accepted your capacities for building in my own life is almost too obvious to be mentioned, but I do want to enter into the depth of confession and guilt and admit this very fundamental sin. I am far, far, far below what you could make me. I am speaking primarily of moral building. I believe you can (and will) enable me to “present my body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to you” — no longer as a vessel of selfish dishonor, but of honor for your service, by the renewing of my mind I can be transformed! Dear God, dear Lord, I this day do commit myself to a mind renewal; to a body giving. Forgive me for my unwillingness to receive your work in 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

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

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

HIS WORD

⁶Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. ⁷When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. ⁸So they passed by

Mysia and went down to Troas. ⁹During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

¹¹From Troas we put out to sea and sailed for Samothrace, and the next day on to Neapolis. — *Acts 16:6-11, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Now it is "Paul and *his* companions" — it used to be "Paul and Barnabas" or even "Barnabas and Paul" — why the change in leadership? I am glad to acknowledge this change; it teaches me much for today — ability expressed and used and matured is your way of change. Praise your name! How did the Holy Spirit keep them from preaching the word in Asia? *Why* would the Holy Spirit want to hinder the preaching of the word at any time, any place? Once again they are held back — was it by a direct audible voice? Was it through a set of circumstances they attributed to you? Was it through mutual intuition that was defined as your voice?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Yes, yes! Dear Lord, you *do* have priorities in places for preaching! Is this a one-time occurrence that has no principle for repetition? It would seem here that Europe would never have heard (at least at this time) if Paul had not been sensitive to the leading of the Spirit. Was there something in the hindrances of Asia and Bithynia that made them think about Macedonia? Am I to read into all the activities of my life the direction of your Spirit?

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 negative answers — without them we would all have much less. (2) Thank you that the one job of these men — and your men today — is preaching the Word. (3) Thank you that the Holy Spirit is called "the Spirit of Jesus." I know what type of person he is. (4) Thank you that you appeal to us through men. (5) Thank you that you are willing to beg us to do your work. (6) Thank you that even the man of Macedonia didn't expect Paul to do it all — "help us" was his request. (7) Thank you that Paul acted at once — no procrastination or rationalization.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them." Here is a good example of being called to preach. Notice the factors involved: (1) Complete trust by the preacher. (2) Total desire to

preach anywhere to anyone. (3) Paul and his companions were already serving in whatever way they could. (4) The need of the people to be evangelized was communicated to Paul. (5) He had a vision of what could and should be done.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

While Paul was seeking direction for his service we can seek answers to our prayers: (1) Why am I sometimes prevented by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word? Give me wisdom to know. (2) Help me not to mistake my unwillingness for the hindrance of the Holy Spirit. (3) May the "Spirit of Jesus" give me definite help in my efforts to reach men with your word. (4) I do want to be responsive to any Macedonian call I might hear today. (5) Give me as good helpers as Paul had in Silas, Timothy and Luke. (6) I am glad to rest my travels in your hands.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In ways past my understanding, speak to me from these verses: (1) "There are many calls for help if you only had your ears open." (2) "Passing by a place where lost people live does not necessarily mean you are insensitive." (3) "Without your response to my message people will perish."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

USSR — Point for prayer: *The Church in USSR has suffered more severe and sustained persecution than that of any nation in recent history. Yet there is much cause for praise: a) The survival and spiritual growth of the Church.* The steady drop in total numbers has been compensated by a corresponding increase in spirituality and commitment. There has been steady growth among Evangelicals; 100 years ago there were hardly any in Russia itself. There are a large number of deeply committed Orthodox and Catholic believers too. *b) The bankruptcy of atheistic propaganda.* Enormous effort has been expended by the state to propagate atheism and discredit religion. The Marxist claim that the Church would wither away with the advent of Communism has not been fulfilled even with active efforts to destroy it. The proportion of believers steadily increases for many are converted as they grow older and become more disillusioned with atheism. *c) The impact of radio gospel programs.*

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 ELEVEN

—Saturday—

You have chosen me — all other choices are unimportant in comparison. I bow to worship you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Chosen. In response to our Lord, but also related to the One who does the choosing (Isa. 28:16; 42:1-4; Haggai 2:23). In a sense we of ourselves could never know my Lord is *your Chosen One*. You are the One to make the choices. In the mundane matters of daily life it is good to know “our lives are ordered” or chosen by you. You have prepared our minds in the study of your word and in this way you direct our conduct, or exercise influence. In the larger arena of history you have been so very active in the choices of kings and rulers. I like to believe that at the final judgment we will all be able to see and understand your choices in the nations and peoples of the world. Most of all you have set aside your dear Son as *the Chosen One*, chosen to be given as Personified Love for us that we through him might live with you. Bless your wonderful name!

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Chosen for me. As you chose your Son, so in every life you have chosen us. Because I have chosen you, you have chosen me! Why? “To bring forth fruit” in my own life the fruit of Spirit-sponsored character — your kind of love, joy, peace, kindness. Dear God, may your purpose in choosing be fulfilled! Why have you chosen me? Not only to be, but to do. If your purpose of the salvation of the world is accomplished it will be through poor, weak people like myself. Dear Lord, I know you didn’t make a mistake in choosing me. May I not disappoint you, or myself! Why did you choose me? That I might be conformed to the image of your Son. He was the prototype for all who were chosen. Dear Lord, be formed in me! May I yield myself to him.

How do you personally relate to the choosing of God, and God who is the Chosen?

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, forgive me for choosing my own way — choices *were* made each time I sinned! Dear Lord,

how clearly do I see that *discipline* is the first quality for development — *all the time!* I hear you speak to me: “If any man (this is me) would be my disciple (learner), let him (first) deny himself — take up his cross (a public declaration of the death sentence) and follow me” — does this mean that without this disciplined denial I cannot, or will not, follow you? What else *could* it mean? It no doubt means more but it will never mean less. Thank you for opening my mind. Forgive me for my selfish, undisciplined indulgence. Dear God, I want to choose your way that I might be chosen by you, i.e., in the area of overcoming sin. Thank you for 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

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

¹²From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

¹³On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. ¹⁴One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message.

15When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us. — *Acts 16:12-15, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How I do want to go from Neapolis to Philippi! I know it is no problem for you to go every day. (For there are no days — you live in the everlasting now — so all past, present and future are open to you. What an amazing thought!) Could we walk in the streets and look into the shops? What did the river look like? How many women were present for the prayer meeting? What were they praying before Paul arrived?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Why not preach on the streets? Why not call in the homes? Why go to a place of prayer for women? And on the Sabbath besides! Paul is my example in evangelism. I must search out those who have a felt need that relates to you. Not all religious people are saved. I can almost hear the message Paul preached to these sincere women — the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah fulfilled in Jesus. Do I know the scriptures well enough to do 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

I am glad to do this: (1) Thank you for the adventurous spirit of Paul and Silas and Timothy. (2) Thank you for religious associations we can use for telling the good news. (3) Thank you for all the beauties of your own outdoors — it makes it easy to pray. (4) Thank you for the Sabbath rest for the people of God toward which we all press. (5) Thank you for the strange fact that the first convert in Europe was from Asia. (6) Thank you that there are business people who love you more than money. (7) Thank you for the clear example of how to become a Christian.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message." Just who is a good prospect? How do we know who is "not far from the kingdom of God"? Lydia is a real good example. Those who choose God are chosen by God. The sincere openness on her part to worship God was a marvelous preparation for Paul's preaching. The arguments from the Old Testament fell upon receptive ears. Here was "the good and honest heart" that produced a harvest unto eternal life. We are glad to acknowledge the presence of God in all that happened, but we cannot ignore Lydia's attitude. She

herself referred to her attitude — "If you consider me a believer in the Lord." Our Lord said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned." Lydia believed and was baptized and was saved.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Upon arrival at Philippi there are many things for which we can pray: (1) Is there a pattern for the choice of places of evangelism as seen in these verses? Grant me wisdom. (2) Did Paul keep up his personal devotional life in the midst of his travels? Help me to learn how. (3) How precious was the Sabbath to the Jewish people — do we have a *day* of worship? (4) Lead me to a group who will meet regularly with me in prayer. (5) Help me to share with women in the same concerned manner as Paul. (6) Open the hearts of those to whom I speak your word. (7) Open my mind and heart to always baptize converts for the same reason as Paul did.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me dear Lord: (1) "Accept hospitality; it helps those who offer it." (2) "Business people can sometimes be the very best prospects for salvation." (3) "Find those who have a felt need and meet it."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

USSR — Point for prayer: *Specific churches* need prayer: a) *The Orthodox Churches* survive under severe pressures such as the closure of 88% of all Russian Orthodox Churches, and infiltration of the leadership by agents of, or those prepared to compromise with, the atheist authorities. b) *The Roman Catholics* have suffered probably more than any other major ecclesiastical tradition. Most Catholics are now concentrated in Lithuania, Eastern Byelorussia and Western Ukraine. c) *The Lutheran Churches* are predominantly national churches in the two Baltic States. The Russian occupation of these independent states in 1940 brought great suffering and years of persecution. d) *The Registered AUCECB* is a government-engineered union of Baptist, Brethren, Pentecostal and Mennonite churches that submitted to government restrictions, which, if rigidly enforced, make evangelical Christianity and effective outreach extremely difficult.

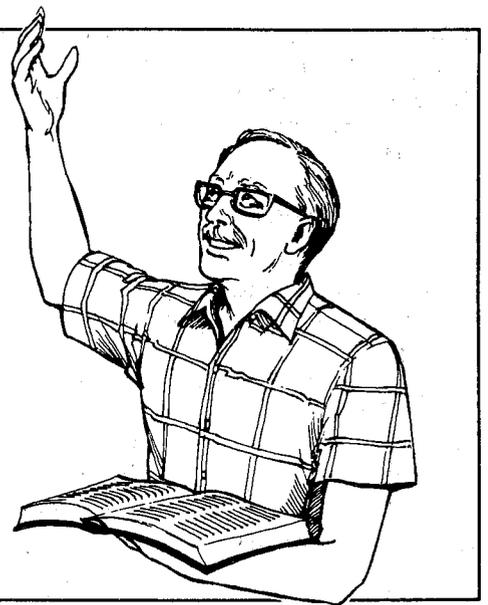
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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 TWELVE

—Sunday—

Speak to me dear Lord, I am listening. I do need your counsel!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Counsellor. Isa. 9:6 — applied to our Lord — Isa. 11:2; 25:1; 40:13-28; 46:10; Jer. 23:18; 23:22. One who has absolute knowledge and wisdom — what a beautiful expression to describe yourself! Counselling is such a large part of the preacher's work today. How do you view some of our efforts? With your capacities our efforts must indeed seem feeble! How you long to be the confidant of all men on all levels with all problems. What a careful listening ear you would (and do) give to all men! What marvelous advice, what penetrating counsel you have for those who have ears. It was the habit of your dear Son to walk and talk and counsel men. Dear Father! May I hear him today!

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Counsellor for me! Oh, this is indeed how I view yourself. I am such a child, such a poor student. I do need so sorely your words of light and life. Dear Lord, how I long to sit like Mary at your feet and eagerly grasp each word. At the same time I lose interest when my energy lags. Dear Lord, you know my limitations. Forgive my negligence, strengthen my weakness. How good it would be to read and absorb every word you have spoken on 100 subjects! Such can be done in searching your word. It is so much easier to think of you as a counsellor in some subjective manner that requires no effort on my part but listening (and full many a time I do not want even to do this), but to suggest a careful research project! Do I have a greater need or a more important task?

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

How slow and dull I am in listening with the inner ear! Forgive me. It is more than rude not to listen when someone has an important word he wants to

share. It is more than impolite to be occupied with my own interests when you are speaking to my deepest needs. It is a sin! Forgive me. Oh, stop me! Unstop my ears! Shut my mouth! Make me to lie down in your green pastures to be healed by your words! It is in quietness I learn more than in the rush of many words! Forgive me, speak deep peace and calm to my whole life! For other sins that are only a result of this lack of attention, forgive! Cleanse, release!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

¹⁶Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. ¹⁷This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." ¹⁸She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her.

¹⁹When the owners of the slave girl realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. ²⁰They brought them before the

magistrates and said, "These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar ²¹by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice."

²²The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten. — *Acts 16:16-22, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I perceive that Dr. Luke joined "Paul and his companions" (Timothy and Silas) at Troas. How did Paul find Luke? Or how did Luke find Paul? Why did Luke join the work? Was Luke a Christian at the time Paul first met him?

How often did they go to "the place of prayer"? Was it every day at 9, 12 and 3? Could Lydia interrupt her business so often? We do for coffee! Our hours are 10, 12 and 3, but we do pause for refreshment.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Demons could and did predict the future. Slavery was a very real part of first century society! I am so delighted to be the slave of the only one who knows unerringly all about the future. How often can the lost find me on the way to the place of prayer? Paul did have the capacity to discern spirits or identify the presence of a demon in this poor girl. However, Dr. Luke seems to indicate in his historical record that the presence of an evil spirit was evident to all: the actions and attitudes of the girl clearly indicated this. What strange words came to her mouth. But no different from those from demons who acknowledged the deity of my Lord.

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

How anxious I am to do this: (1) Thank you for the slave girl. What was her name? Surely she later became a slave to King Jesus. (2) Thank you that I am told again and again of the regular schedule of prayer time. (3) Thank you for the persistence in Paul's prayer and preaching pattern — he did it "for many days." (4) Thank you that it is *not* necessary to correct a problem as soon as you know of its existence. (5) Thank you that Paul was ready to pay the price of misunderstanding and judgment to help a possessed slave girl and to exonerate the name of our Lord. (6) Thank you I can be warned that whenever money is involved danger is present.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar." The contrast here is a little different than we face today, but what a change it would be if Christians

had the same testimony today! How many total cities have been affected with the good news? In Paul's day the real issue was ignored — the trumped up charge was money and politics, not the facts of salvation or miraculous powers. Dear Lord, somehow we are afraid of the consequences of challenging Satan's power in the lives of people.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

As we read of the occult, we all need prayer: (1) Give me a place of prayer — with others and for myself. (2) May I always link prayer and evangelism. (3) Keep me, guard me from the evil one. (4) Deliver me from those who would distract hearers of your word. (5) Give me the courage to rebuke Satan in the lives of those who would be helped. (6) Overcome the prejudice of men in my efforts to teach the lost.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

There are so many things you could say to me in these verses: (1) "Never minimize the power of the love of money." (2) "Truth from an inconsistent life does not say anything to anyone."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

USSR — Point for prayer: The unregistered Baptists and Pentecostals have grown prolifically and have suffered intensely because of their refusal to compromise. In some areas the persecution has been particularly severe and the KGB is very much in control of the situation. The majority of the present leadership is in prison or exile. Pray for: a) A new generation of younger leaders to emerge. b) Those in prison, also their families and children who suffer so much. Maybe 400 leaders of the unregistered Baptists are behind bars in the infamous Gulags. Many Christian organizations in the West have details of such martyrs and their families for prayer and communication of letters of encouragement. c) The continued growth and multiplication of the churches, and the conversion of persecutors and informers.

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 TWELVE

—Monday—

The joy of a new day is mine in you — only in you and because of you can I say this. Teach me to pray!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Dayspring. Luke 1:78; Isa. 11:1; Zech. 3:8; 6:12; Isa. 61:11. The uprising — the rising of the sun or a star. How lovely — and so much to be desired is the sunrise — to relate you to the sunrise — there could be no more beautiful figure of speech. The charming pastel colors I see in the sunrise do indeed remind me of you. There are so many ways you are the *Dayspring*! As is your dear Son: (1) A fresh, new beginning — the very source of this is yourself! How good to find we can start all over again! Bless your wonderful self! (2) Cool and still and calm, more than placid the silentness of all your movements, this is emphasized in a beautiful way at sunrise! (3) The colors of the morning — how soft and mysterious they are! Unknown except to the observer — soft and magnificent in shading — so is your total being, beyond human understanding, but soft and lovely. We can look and look and look at sunrise and wish it were always this time of day — so we do with you dear, beautiful, heavenly Father. The *Dayspring* on high! How full of amazement you are to us!

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Dayspring to me. To continue the qualities of sunrise I have seen in you, and to relate them to myself! Oh, praise your name! (4) The promise of a new day — each day is new, has never been here before, is different and distinct. So is yourself — I shall never find enough days to reveal all the phases of your Being. Bless the Source of infinite variety! (5) The source of light is reminding us again that without him we would have no light.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Oh, to confess that I have been so unappreciative of the newness of life you give to all of life. Indeed, I do so confess! Forgive me! Lest I become only generic in

my admission of sin, let me say specifically that from sins listed in your word, “anger” is my sin. I do become angry with those I should love the most — my dear family. Oh, dear God, keep my heart soft and open, and like you. I know you can empower me to overcome this sin of the temperament. It is a pure form of sin for it comes as a direct extension of my own selfishness. Do, do forgive and cleanse me! Help me to relax and let you work out the problems of life.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!
That calls me from a world of care,
And bids me at my Father's throne
Make all my wants and wishes known;
In seasons of distress and grief,
My soul has often found relief,
And oft escaped the tempter's snare
By thy return, sweet hour of prayer.

HIS WORD

²³After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. ²⁴Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

²⁵About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose. ²⁷The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸But Paul shouted, “Don't harm yourself! We are all here!”

—Acts 16:23-28, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, how can I relate these verses to yourself? Our high priest was so beaten, so misrepresented, if he hurt I know you did. I am sure in a way I cannot fully appreciate, you do suffer when any one of your children hurt. This is a capacity I just do not know how to express, but it is a great source of strength and identity for me, and all men with you. The first night in a strange place — with antagonistic strangers — there have been thousands (millions?) since who wondered if you knew or felt the deep hurt of a beating! Dear Lord, I believe you do — help my poor, limited understanding!

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I truly have a difficult time relating personally with this circumstance. I have never been so beaten. Never, under such conditions have I sung hymns. I am so glad to acknowledge the liberating power of song, i.e., to the human spirit. We are somehow lifted right out of our environment into the meaning of what we are singing. I wonder what Psalm or hymn or spiritual song Paul and Silas were singing? Whatever it was, it was loud enough to be heard by the other prisoners. Why is it that so many of your actions in human affairs are so sudden, so shocking? It must be that we poor mortals do not pay attention to your daily silent messages of your world about us.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the clear record of total commitment of these men. We could have never known of their beating if Luke had not recorded it. (2) Thank you for the example of the jailer who became one of the first trophies for King Jesus in the church at Philippi. (3) Thank you for the comfort of song. (4) Thank you for your answer to prayer in the form of an earthquake. This is not the first time (Read Acts 4:31). (5) Thank you for the insight this incident gives us into Roman law — the jailer's life was held forfeit — we appreciate our law system more. (6) Thank you for Paul's immediate reaction of concern for others. (7) Thank you for the unnamed prisoners who shared the jail with Paul and Silas. Were some of them converted? I plan on asking Paul one day.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Do yourself no harm for we are all here." What a good phrase to use for the church in the midst of a world bent on self-destruction. The injuries of most of the world are self-inflicted. Man seems determined to commit suicide regardless of his bounties. It is a strange but true fact that all men have within them the capacity for self-destruction. Such is a part of the wages of sin. How this old sad world needs more men like Paul, ready to lift up their voice like a trumpet and assure men that life *does* have meaning — all is *not* lost; there *is* hope.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

An earthquake moves many to pray: (1) Lord, prepare my heart to suffer for you. Forgive my lax, even luxurious living as compared with those who even now are suffering for you. (2) How can I truly understand the conditions of "the inner cell"? Speak to my conscience. (3) Oh, for a song to sing in every situation — teach me. (4) I want wisdom to be able to teach "prisoners" today the song of deliverance (5) May I be reminded of my Lord's words about those in prison today. (6) Give me the spontaneous courage to call out to the lost. (7) Lead me to someone who is even this day about to end his life. Open my heart to stop him to teach him.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

There are several messages from you to me in this text: (1) "No prison can hold my message prisoner." (2) "Find someone who hurts — he will hear my word." (3) "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

USSR — Point for prayer: *Persecution is a very real factor for believers.* It takes many forms: a) *Constant propaganda* and crude attempts at conversion to Communism at school, work and at home. Pray for believers to stand firm. b) *Discrimination* in education, job opportunities and housing condemn many believers to a life of privation and poverty. c) *Ambiguous legislation* which enables heavy fines and sentences to be handed down by courts for "criminal" activities. d) *Psychiatric treatment.* To many atheists, those with a religious belief suffer from mental illness. Pray for believers suffering in such "hospitals" — some estimate that around 1,000 prisoners of conscience are being maltreated in this way. e) *Imprisonment.* About 10,000 Christians are believed to have been sent to Siberian "gulags" or exiled for their faith. During the terrible purges in Stalin's rule during the '30s it is believed millions perished. Pray for those suffering because of their Christian testimony.

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 TWELVE

—Tuesday—

It would seem man is in constant need of a great deliverer — it is so today! I bow before you to receive your deliverance.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Deliverer. (Isa. 59:20; Rom. 11:26; Isa. 61:1,2; Psa. 14:7.) I truly empathize with this name. It seems to me you have been in the delivery business for a very long time with a great number of your people. Let's start at the beginning. Most of the deliverance was subjective, i.e., delivering man from himself as he yielded to Satan. Adam was delivered in the blood sacrifice from his own nakedness and guilt. Noah was delivered through water in an ark you helped him prepare. You delivered Abram from the pagan worship of idols. You delivered Lot from Sodom, but you had real problems in delivering Sodom from Lot and his daughters. You delivered Jacob from Laban and Jacob's own selfishness. Then there were those who would not be delivered! What a wonderful deliverer you are — in history and my own experience!

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

A deliverer for me! How many thousands of times you have delivered me! Oh, praise your wonderful name! How often have you delivered me from an accident that could have happened, but didn't? From how many bouts of sickness have I found blessed escape? From encounters with unreasonable men or circumstances, how often have I been delivered? Dear, dear Lord, you have made my way one of pleasantness and peace! How often, how many ten thousand times ten thousand have I been delivered from overbearing temptations? I have prayed so, so often, "Lead me not into temptation" and you have delivered me! Bless your marvelous hidden name! What other men call coincidence I *know* is your deliverance! As a father pitieth his children and gets up before they awake and provides in many ways for them, even removing some of their toys so they will not stumble, so you have done for me.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear, dear Lord, I have been so very negligent in seeing your deliverance. I have been so lacking in perception and faith. Please forgive me! It seems to me this is one of the most serious sins I have. It is such a sad reflection on my insensitiveness and selfishness — do forgive me and open my eyes! "Railing" is a sin mentioned in your word. At times I have done this — at my dear wife, or children, or myself — and in all such sin I am only railing at you. I was mad because I could not have or do or be something I thought was right. Oh, oh, the sin of it all! Forgive me! This is Satan's substitute for praise.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove 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 every hour,
Most precious Lord;
No tender voice like Thine
Can peace afford.
I need Thee, O I need Thee;
Every 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

²⁹The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰He then brought them out and asked, "Men, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and your household." ³²Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. ³³At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. ³⁴The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal

before them, and the whole family was filled with joy, because they had come to believe in God.

³⁵When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: "Release those men." —Acts 16:29-35, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Oh, holy Father! How I do want to see these verses as you do! How very near to death and loss was the jailer! You know him as an individual — you know his family. How I would like to know his name and ask him how he transformed his interest from saving his life so quickly to saving his relationship with you. Somehow he associated the earthquake and safety of the men in his prison with Paul and Silas. How did he do this? Why did he? Dear Lord, I have so many questions you alone can answer. It would seem that physical safety and teaching about yourself and your Son were all a part of the same subject. Is this right? Why was everyone so concerned about baptism — even in the middle of the night? A meal was eaten in the early hours of the morning — how unusual!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Here I am a part of the jailer's household! What do I know about you before I meet Paul and Silas? Did I hear Paul or Silas speak in the synagogue? Perhaps my willingness or deep desire to believe is what led me to open my heart to the word of the Lord. All was accepted at face value as soon as it was spoken. How wonderfully good it is to embrace and cherish each blessed thought! I never tasted a meal that had such flavor and nourishment. There is no joy like that of the first opening of the eyes of my heart to the meaning of life from your perspective.

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 lights" that illumined the evidence of your destruction, but also the opportunity to hear your word. (2) Thank you for Paul — always ready to turn events to your advantage. (3) Thank you for the sincere evidence of repentance on the part of the jailer in washing the wounds of Paul and Silas. (4) Thank you for the preaching of baptism as a part of "the word of the Lord." (5) Thank you that this Gentile jailer could learn enough in a few hours to become a sincere Christian — yea, with all his house. (6) Thank you for the influence this father had over the members of his family. (7) Thank you for this clear model of evangelism and salvation.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"The whole family was filled with joy, because they

had come to believe in God." Here is surely one of the first Gentile families. There are several things to say about these wonderful people: (1) The father and mother had some really strong influence upon the children and in this case for good. How many members were there? (2) We must be discussing persons of an age of reasoning because they are "filled with joy" because of what they believed. (3) Their baptism must have been a part of their faith for it just preceded their expressions of happiness.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

The jailer's needs call forth requests in our own lives: (1) May I often fall down before you with a request for deliverance. (2) Keep me as aware of my need for a Savior as was the jailer. (3) Open my heart to know all that is included in believing in my Lord. (4) Dear Lord, save my whole household! (5) May I show my repentance as clearly as the jailer. (6) Help me to supply the same source for belief as given by Paul and Silas to the jailer. (7) Give me the joy of salvation — may it be based on the same foundation as that of the jailer and his household.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

How clearly you can speak to me out of this text: (1) "It will take a moral earthquake to save some people today." (2) "Men are saved today by the same word spoken to the jailer." (3) "Please notice *when* the jailer rejoiced."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

USSR — Points for prayer: (1) *Young people and children* are singled out for abuse, mockery and harassment if they follow their parents in believing and refuse to join the Communist youth groups. It is illegal for parents to teach their own children about the Lord, or for churches to allow those under 18 to attend services. (2) *Christian printing presses* have multiplied in the USSR despite the energetic efforts of the KGB. The work is dangerous; supplies are difficult to obtain and home-made presses hard to construct. Pray for those involved, and for their protection. There are reckoned to be only three million Bibles in the USSR.

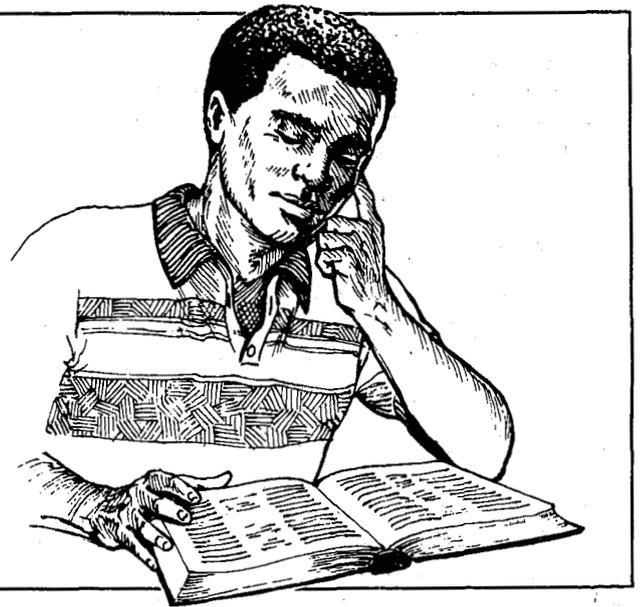
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I love Thy Kingdom, Lord,
The house of Thine abode,
The Church our blest Redeemer saved
With His own precious blood.

WEEK TWELVE

—Wednesday—

You are at work in the nations of the world. I want to share in your work. Teach me!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Desire(s) of all nations (Haggai 2:7). Precious, pleasant. “Whom you delight in” — “desirable.” Of our Lord, but of God also. Surely all nations — all men of all time desire him (you) not in a definable form. The deep dissatisfaction and yearning is but a reaching out to you. You give all men life and breath and everything else. You determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. Since you have such an investment in man, it is only a part of your design that men would once they found you, or better, you found them, would find you precious or most desirable. How wonderful it would be to have universal worship and love for you. Indeed you are my desire — my desires are fulfilled in you.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Desire of all nations for me. What a high and exalted Person I worship, i.e., as man would look at him — the focus of interest and desire for all nations of the world! All 220 nations reaching out to find fulfillment in you. Surely I should be mightily encouraged in this fact. At the same time I should stand aghast that more than half of the world’s population does not know you. Dear Lord, forgive me and help me to fulfill your intention that the knowledge of yourself should cover the earth like the waters cover the sea. Dear Lord, may this same kind of knowledge at least cover the “world” where I live! You are sending me out into it that I might be true.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

When I think of “blood guiltiness” I think of the lack of world evangelism. We now live in the year of

1982 [when these words were penned -- now 1990!], almost 2,000 years since our Lord gave the command — and yet, nations wait, full of desire not satisfied! What a reproach! Forgive me — I cannot ask for others. “Railing” (a sin I need to mention again) — yes, I’m guilty — I do not now think of a specific time or place, but I have railed at others, at circumstances, at an act poorly performed at least by my standards, and what good came of all these angry words? None! Sin came of it. Dear Lord, dear Lord as near as I can remember I have not railed at you. I am not immune, but I do want to be. Forgive my lack of love and faith.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

³⁶The jailer told Paul, “The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace.”

³⁷But Paul said to the officers: “They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out.”

³⁸The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman

citizens, they were alarmed. ³⁹They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city. ⁴⁰After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and encouraged them. Then they left. — *Acts 16:36-40, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It seems each day is a new beginning in the worship and praise to you through your word — and indeed it is! Can you hear the words of the messengers who came to report the decision to release Paul and Silas? I am sure you can! These words were spoken 2,000 years ago, but time is no hindrance with you. "Instant play back" on any event of any life is no problem at all! How surprised and pleased the jailer must have been to hear the words of Paul. Evidently the rights of a Roman citizen were a proper claim when they would help the cause of yourself. How I would like to have been a spectator at the meeting of Paul and the magistrates. What happened to the good work at Philippi?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How can I use the privileges of my American citizenship to the advantage of my Lord? The magistrates and officers, indeed the whole colony-right of Philippi, was put on trial by Paul's words. No wonder they were alarmed. Dear Lord, am I as ready to stand up and be counted as were these intrepid servants of yourself?

May I learn that the essential facts of many a case have never been considered. How many millions have lost their very lives — to say nothing of freedom — because of their love for you and your Son? How is it with my courage and boldness?

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 jailer who was so full of joy and gratitude. (2) Thank you for Paul who spoke up and stood up for your place in the community. (3) Thank you for Silas who was glad to sing the second verse — to back up all Paul did — all you did through Paul. (4) For Timothy and Luke who began the experience in Philippi with Paul and Silas. What happened to them? (5) Thank you for the shock-wave that was sent through the Roman Colony. (6) Thank you for the maid who was "free indeed." (7) Thank you for Lydia and "the brothers" whom I confidently hope to meet in your home.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Shall we consider three thoughts on the work at

Philippi? (1) The blessed facts about the slave girl: (a) She found the greatest treasure — she obtained it from her owner. (b) She transferred masters — she was a glad, willing slave. (c) She found what she proclaimed: "The way to be saved." (2) Three helpful facts about Timothy: (a) He, like us, was a witness to all that happened at Philippi. (b) He somehow escaped the imprisonment. (c) He no doubt taught many people in the city. (3) How did the jailer come to have saving faith? He was moved by the earthquake and freeing of the prisoners to ask for salvation. Paul spoke the word of the Lord to him. He felt his lostness and welcomed God's answer through Paul. His saving faith included repentance, indicated in washing the wounds of Paul and Silas — it included baptism as indicated in the same hour.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Paul's actions and attitudes are the basis for many requests: (1) Give me the wisdom to answer those in power so you can give the advantage. (2) Keep me aware of my privileges as an American citizen — and to thank you for it. (3) May I right now review the privileges of my citizenship of heaven. (4) Help me to be able to separate what is an action of selfishness and pride — and what is not. (5) Thank you for the candid honesty of the Acts account. (6) May I have words of encouragement for "the brothers." (7) Thank you for those who continued the work in Philippi after Paul left.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In the fleeting hours of change speak to me: (1) "You need not always heed the words of officials." (2) "The most surprising actions for the advantage of the gospel are possible if you have courage." (3) "My church will be well and strong long after you leave."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

USSR — Point for prayer: *Christian radio* has been an exciting success story. Pray for: a) *The 10 or more Christian stations* that ring the USSR; important ones being *FEBC Manila, HCJB Ecuador, TWR Monaco*. There is one short-wave radio for every two people in the USSR, and millions listen! Yet the ministry is expensive, and spiralling costs must be met to continue the ministry. b) *Those preparing radio programs* need a deep understanding of the different cultures and intimate knowledge of the languages. Such are hard to find! c) *Follow-up* is complicated and demanding.

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 TWELVE

—Thursday—

Show me your goodness yet once again. It is in prayer this can happen. Expectantly do I approach you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“And he said, I will make all my *goodness* pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee” (Exod. 33:19). Indeed this is just what you have done throughout all my life. I wish to acknowledge this quality of yourself. How you did fulfill the promise to Moses: (1) He was an unusual child when he was born (is not every baby so considered by the parents?). Thanks be to you, such was indeed true of this son of Jochebed. (2) He was born into a loving, caring family. How good it was to find a mother and father with such courage. (3) What unusual goodness came his way when he was “found” by the Pharaoh’s daughter — he could have been discovered and destroyed by any one of many others. (4) What a good education you gave him! (5) What you did in the past life of Moses was only typical of what was to come. 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

Your goodness has been more than evident in my life. Oh, bless and adore your very essential Being — which is altogether good! If I believe you are good — and I do — then I will look for expressions of this in my life. They are not hard to find: (1) I was born into a loving home. I believe my father almost worshiped my mother in his love for her. He was born into a very humble circumstance — commercial fisherman and logger. His mother died when he was born; his father raised him. A good deal of raising me was done by him; my mother was sick a good deal of the time, but I’m sure I was very much wanted and loved when I came. I thank you for this. (2) The care and provision of food and clothing and a home was a very big concern of my parents — thanks to you through them. (3) A trust and love for my parents was easily transferred to you. Praise your name! And praise you for Marie and Charles, my dear mother and father.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Surely your goodness has led me to repentance — and more than once this has happened. I want to change my mind again and again as I rethink your word in the two books of nature and the Bible, to say nothing of the record of your blessing and direction in my daily living. How totally selfish and thoughtless I have been. Forgive me! I would have long been in hell had you given me what I so richly deserved. “Shameful speaking” is a sin mentioned in your word. Dear Lord, if you could play back examples of this sin in my life — and I know you could — what ones of the many would you choose? I know I would bow my head and heart in shame as I do now, and no doubt I would be as surprised as much in what you included as what you left out. Dear God, 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

Open my eyes, that I may see
Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me;
Place in my hands the wonderful key
That shall unclasp, and set me free.
Silently now I wait for Thee,
Ready, my God, Thy will to see;
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!

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

HIS WORD

17 When they had passed through Amphipolis and Appolonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. ²As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. “This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ,” he said. ⁴Some of the Jews were

persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women. — *Acts 17:1-4, NIV* Read also II Thess. 3:7,8

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Gladly, gladly do I approach this time of worship with you. How I would like to go into the Jewish synagogue of Thessalonica. Can I hear the conversations of several groups gathered? Is it dark or light inside the building? What were the fragrances? Paul was in the custom of attending, i.e., from his childhood. He had a new, delightful message in a very old setting. Dear Lord, I want to hear it.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

What did Paul and Silas do during the three weeks? I.e., between Sabbath days? "Out of the heart proceed the issues (or actions and motivations) of life." They spoke personally and door to door about our Lord (i.e., if Ephesus is an example). I want to listen ever so closely to what Paul is saying: "He reasoned with them from the Scriptures." His reasoning was in the form of explaining and "proving." This says *so much* to me. The Holy Spirit supplements and implements all that Paul says, i.e., the Holy Spirit gave the Old Testament scriptures. The Holy Spirit gave Paul wisdom (the best use of the knowledge he obtained by his study of the Old Testament).

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, for the example of the apostles who were selective in where they preached the word. (2) Thank you for good habits — such as regular attendance of public worship. (3) Thank you for your wonderful Scriptures — the same ones Paul used. (4) Thank you I can reason — explain and prove in the use of your word. (5) Thank you that I am convinced Jesus is your Son and my anointed King. (6) Oh, for the meaning of his suffering and resurrection — how could I ever thank you enough? (7) Thank you for the power of the gospel in all social strata of mankind.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"We worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you" (II Thess. 3:7,8). What an example Paul and Silas were to the Thessalonians — and to all of us. Would he be classified as a workaholic? As compared with whom? Our Lord?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

While working for you in Thessalonica there was much reason for prayer: (1) Give me "customs" or habits that lead me to places of worship. (2) I need your wisdom to be able to reason from your word. (3) I do want the same approach to religious people today as seen in the life of Paul. (4) Open the eyes of my heart to see again your suffering Servant put to death for my sins. (5) Show me again the open tomb. (6) What an example of energy under your control is seen in the life of Paul and Silas. I want to be like them!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I am glad to hear you speak to me from these verses: (1) "Paul passed by some large cities to find one where he would have the ears of the people." (2) "Men are fickle and inconsistent, but so are you." (3) "I am always the same and I love you and will use you."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

United Arab Emirates — Points for prayer: (1) *The radical changes of the last two decades* have made UAE citizens more cosmopolitan and open to new ideas. Many are in daily contact with foreigners and with all forms of media. Yet the effects of Islamic fundamentalism have increased restrictions on communicating the gospel. Pray for open doors and open hearts. (2) *Several Christian medical agencies* were invited in to serve the people. The continuance of these ministries is dependent on good relationships with the authorities. Christians serve in difficult conditions with little visible fruit. (3) *Expatriate Christians* have considerable freedom for witness and worship. Pray for the various English, Arabic, Urdu and Indian language worship groups and congregations that meet. They need grace to evangelize their own ethnic groups in a materialistic society. They need even more grace to evangelize across cultural barriers to other un-reached peoples.

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 TWELVE

—Friday—

You have my way already charted — I gladly pause to learn your plan for me today.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“... unto a land that I will show you” (Gen. 12:1b). *You are our guide!* Bless and praise your name. As he guided the wise men to Bethlehem by the finger of light, so he makes so plain the path of duty that “the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein” (Isa. 35:8). How reassuring to know our way is under *your* direction. We can place ourselves confidently in your hands. Just for today (I have no other). I give myself to you to show me the path I should take.

“And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.” Dear Lord, let me learn the lessons in this for me: (1) It is your very self manifested in the circumstances of my life today — you are *in* the phone calls, letters, people, etc., of today’s activities. (2) You are present to guide at night — I can choose to stay in my tent and not look for the fire!

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

Guide for me. I apologize for the personalness of the above — what I said of myself, I say for all — “as thou very well knowest”! Dear Lord, how glad I am to acknowledge your direction for my life. (3) The cloud was high in the sky to give general direction. It was up to the people to step over the stones and avoid the snakes. So it is with the plain principles in your word — my pillar of cloud and fire. You said “to prefer one another fervently from the heart” — even those who are not at all lovable. (4) God expects us to move — we *are* moving whether we know it or not.

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

How easy and “natural” it is to make up my own mind and ignore your presence or interest in the “affairs of this life.” Dear God, this must be the ultimate sin — forgive, forgive me! Kindly, patiently, let me walk through this day!

A sin listed in your word is “passion.” This is a synonym for illicit sex, i.e., arousing the desire of sex with someone other than your wife. Dear God, forgive me! The sex desire is generic — like the desire for food is generic — we make the choice of where and when and how these desires will be fulfilled. If we decide that your choice of food is not adequate or attractive, we look elsewhere. We are essentially saying, “You do not know what you are doing — I know how better to satisfy these desires than you do.” Oh, oh, what a 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

Are you weary, are you heavy-hearted?
Tell it to Jesus, tell it to Jesus;
Are you grieving over joys departed?
Tell it to Jesus alone.
Tell it to Jesus, tell it to Jesus,
He is a friend that’s well known;
You’ve no other such a friend or brother,
Tell it to Jesus alone.

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

HIS WORD

“But the Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason’s house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. —Acts 17:5, NIV

“for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. —Phil. 4:16, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Father, how I do want to stand back from the text and attempt to see it through your eyes — at the same time to praise you for what I see. Paul was truly in need in Thessalonica. Again and again he was hungry and had no certain dwelling place. Even with his working night and day, he was overjoyed with the gifts from Philippi. Am I right in this estimate? There must have been some exchange between the two cities. These people were truly interested in each other — they cared! So much like you! I know you care for me, for you have sent me aid again and again when I was in need.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

There are always “bad characters” around. They frequent the “market places” of the whole wide world. It is only because someone did not get to their parents or grandparents with the “good news” of regeneration. What terrible things jealousy will cause men to do, will cause *me* to do! What a lesson there is for me in these few words. Paul stayed in the most difficult town in spite of all opposition — up until his life was threatened — then he left, but not until then. How did Jason react to this circumstance? We believe he gladly paid the bond. Even in the distortion of the truth there is an element of truth. There is another king and *his name is Jesus!*

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 dear friendship of those who care — and “put their money where their mouth is.” (2) Thank you for those who do not care once and forget until next Christmas, but come again and again to help. (3) Thank you for the aggressiveness of Paul and Silas that caused a real threat to someone’s status. (4) Thank you for the “ring of truth” in all this account. (5) Thank you for Jason who helped an unpopular cause and leader. (6) Thank you for yourself as the silent observer of all that happened. (7) Thank you for Dr. Luke who researched so carefully the facts of this incident.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“*Bad characters from the marketplace.*” There never seems to be a lack of such persons. How many millions are there today in the marketplaces of the world? Why are they “bad”? Only because their purpose in life was bad. When there is no reason for living beyond the daily routine of today and tomorrow, frustration sets in and anger and meanness become a way of life. Such a lifestyle prevents responsible work — a “quick dollar” is a welcome offer to such persons. Dear Lord, shall we ever break out of our little mold of middle class respectability and go to the

marketplace?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

The opposition in Thessalonica moved Paul to pray, and it does the same for me: (1) Thank you for those dear people who remember with gifts those who labor for you. (2) Keep me aware that jealousy is a very common sin. (3) Guard my heart with your peace that I might not envy others. (4) Thank you for every person with whom I have stayed in my many travels. (5) Keep me aware that there are men in today’s marketplace who will do anything for money. (6) Dear Lord, deliver me from the deadness of a “*religious club*” with a social emphasis. (7) Give me the excitement of suffering for your name’s sake. (8) Guard me from seeking sensationalism.

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 your word: (1) “There are those who work for me today who are in need — you could send them a gift.” (2) “Jealousy is self-destructive.” (3) “Violence is still possible today.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

United Kingdom (Britain) — Points for prayer: (1) *The century-long decline in church membership and attendances is slowing; many congregations are starting to grow, and there is an air of faith and expectancy that the long-awaited revival is round the corner. May it come; and may Britain become a spiritual blessing to the world!* (2) *Traumatic social change, increasing violence and the breakdown of moral standards before the tide of secular humanism has shocked many to realize that something has gone seriously wrong. There is a willingness among young and old to consider the claims of Christ. Pray that millions may yield to Him! The campaigns of Billy Graham and Luis Palau (1982-85) were respectfully received and fruitful. Effective church-based evangelism must become more important.* (3) *There is a new confidence among evangelical believers. Decline is predominantly in non-evangelical congregations. Liberal theological institutions are nearly empty, and evangelical ones are full to overflowing.*

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK TWELVE

—Saturday—

No promise of yours has ever failed in fulfillment — I pause to review and renew what you have promised.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Faithful who promised. Dear Lord, this does so fully describe you. In so many promises you have demonstrated your concern and your faithful interest in the affairs of men. Bless your name for this wonderful quality. It is awesome to consider your promises of wrath were just as real and true as your fulfillment of blessings. The promise of a flood, the promise of destruction for Sodom, the promise of the death of the first born — all these are now historical facts that were once only words. The promise of a great nation — of the land of Canaan — your presence in the sanctuary and Temple as well as in the bodies of your children are also eloquent testimonies that you are faithful to your promises. How I rest upon your promises for this day.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Faithful to me who promised. You promised to me release from all the weight of my sin. Bless your name — you *are* faithful. You promised my name in the eternal roll book of heaven — it is there even now! Dear God, I purpose to remain faithful, not perfect (in the sense of sinless), but mature and in this sense perfect. You have promised to treat me as a needy son and supply my lack. In a wonderful way you have done this physically, and I would not minimize this, but in so many other precious ways you have, and are meeting my heart needs. You are so good to me!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

That I have not always relied upon your promises — dear Lord, I have not even known them — forgive me! I have so often wandered as an orphan when all

the while you were a searching Father. Dear Father, forgive me and receive me!

Another sin listed in your word is “covetousness.” This is essentially wanting that which belongs to someone else — another form of stealing, but it refers not so much to the act as the desire to act. What have I wanted, yearned after, that belonged to my neighbor or relative? Right here and right now I cannot think of anything, but I’m sure I have done so — reveal to me the deceitfulness of my heart, the frailty and pride of my memory. The desire to be accepted among men is a form of covetousness. Dear Lord, open my mind and humble my spirit. 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

Thou, my everlasting portion,
More than friend or life to me;
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

⁶But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials, shouting: “These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, ⁷and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are defying Caesar’s decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus.” ⁸When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. ⁹Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.

¹⁰As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. ¹¹Now the Bereans were of

more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. —Acts 17:6-11, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

The cry of alarm still rings in your ears. I am sure however we represent the gathering before the city officials it is less than complete. But I do want to identify with you and each person at the trial. Who expressed the charge? It *was true* that men like Jason had effected the "whole world." (Read again Col. 1:23.) It *was true* that there is another king than Caesar and his name is Jesus! It *was true* that these men defied the laws of the government when they contradicted your laws! What excitement! What turmoil! But it was all so clear and obvious to you.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How can I sit passively by and not reason and persuade men? I refer to men who have not heard what you have said. Dear Lord, I purpose to reach every man and woman, every boy and girl, in the city where I live. I cannot be personally responsible for people in Africa or India, but I am going to be held for those right next door or in the next block. I believe there are many faithful, trusting men like Jason, but they will never be discovered without men like Paul and Silas. Dear God, at least I can be Jason.

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 unnamed brothers who shared the unjust trial with Jason. (2) Thank you we can affect and effect society. (3) Thank you some are ready to invest their money in the cause. (4) Thank you for the example of leaving as well as staying. (5) Thank you for the noble Bereans. (6) Thank you that we do not have to travel far to find an entirely new environment. (7) Thank you we have your wonderful scriptures today we can search and believe just like those of Berea!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Meditate on this word: ". . . they received the message with great eagerness." Does not your message merit eagerness? They were eager to hear of the fulfillment of prophecy in Jesus of Nazareth — their Messiah. We Gentiles can never appreciate the long hopes of the Jewish nation. They were eager to hear how they would "escape the corruption that is in the world through lust." Oh, to find "the Way," to be the overcomer instead of the overcome, to be the victor instead of the victim. To not just drag along and live somehow, but triumphantly! Our blessed Savior

fulfills his name! They were eager to find the relief of forgiveness, which could never be found in the law.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In Acts 17:6-11 several reasons for prayer arise: (1) Dear Lord, help me to so live and work for you that at least men will do more than yawn. (2) In several areas of my life I need Jesus to be king. (3) Give me friends like Jason who will risk life and money for you. (4) May I have the courage of Paul to leave when your work is helped by my doing so. (5) Thank you for those I meet who have the same attitude as those of Berea. (6) Keep me always aware that just nearby is a much better response to your word. (7) Give me wisdom as I read again the two letters Paul wrote to the Thessalonians.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I am sure Paul prayed often and sought your direction while working in Thessalonica. What do you say to me from this text? (1) "There is another king — his name is Jesus." (2) "Appreciate those who suffer unjustly — sometimes because of you." (3) "I have a nobility in the world — they are all who are like the Bereans."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

United Kingdom — Points for prayer: (1) *Social breakdown* and increasing violence in the cities, divorce, drug abuse, immorality, and a helpless despair could take the country further down the road to disaster. Pray for a national repentance, and return to God that will once more restore this nation to the spiritual greatness that made it one of the greatest moral and spiritual forces in modern history. The government needs prayer that legislation may be both just and morally uplifting, and not passed for expediency. (2) *The lack of concern of many evangelical believers for the spiritual and moral collapse around them.* Many believers are smugly ignorant of the stagnation and lack of outreach to the many without Christ and without hope. Revival is the need once more. (3) *The influx of non-Christian religions.* Many of the spokesmen of Islam, Buddhism, etc. vociferously push for legislation that will favor their religions, and demand freedoms they would never grant Christians in their lands of origin. The mission field has come to Britain, but few stir themselves to win these people to Christ.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

To God be the glory, great things He has done,
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,
And opened the Lifegate that all may go in.

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Sunday—

What a beautiful royal banner you have given to us. It is yourself, in the person of your Son! I prostrate myself before you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Ensign — “The Lord our banner” (Exod. 17:15; Psa. 60:4). I love this beautiful figure of speech — “Hold up the banner and call the troops to move forward”! Dear God, you have been my banner, my Ensign for more than 40 years. The real standard held up before me has been your own dear Son. He has always been and is today so attractive and compelling and he has always led the way — I have wanted to follow him. How wonderfully good it is to have a standard, a goal, a mountain to climb. You have put within us such a desire and you are the top of the mountain. You are the ultimate goal of all of life and of every day in it. I see you now beckoning me on!

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Ensign for me. Of course what has just been said applies to all men as well as myself but just here I have the privilege of personal relationship to you as *my ensign*, my flag of triumph! There have been days when I did not have the commensurate emotion, but this is not one of them. I am full of joy and praise and eagerness and I am delighted to expend it before you. I gladly exclaim over the conquests you have already given and those ahead: “Lead on, O King Eternal — the day of march has come! Henceforth in fields of conquest our tents (bodies) shall be thy home.”

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

That you have led and we have not followed is many times sadly true. Dear Lord, forgive. Oh, Father, why are we so reluctant? It is the fear of the unknown and the untried. Fear of our own weakness and inability. All of this is indicative of the sin of unbelief. We are “more than conquerors through him who loved us and gave himself up for us.” Dear Commander, forgive me!

Another sin mentioned in your word is “sexual immorality.” I have been intrigued of late in the use of the expression, “. . . we have divine power to destroy strongholds” (II Cor. 10:4). I take this to mean that any area of sin repeated often can become a “stronghold” of Satan. Sexual immorality is one such sin, one such stronghold. How shall we tear it down? By his divine power — it is his strength, not ours. Exodus 23:29 says, “I will not drive them out in a single year.” Little by little take possession and be faithful in the territory conquered. Dear God, forgive and lead 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

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

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

HIS WORD

¹¹Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. ¹²Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.

¹³When the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God in Berea, they went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up. ¹⁴The brothers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea. ¹⁵The men who accompanied Paul brought him to Athens and then left

with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible. — *Acts 17:11-15, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How grand an example the Bereans offer to all of us. Where the work hours less in this town than in our own? We can see how the men and women with means would have time, but what of the slaves and the "common people" who are always the ones to hear the message with gladness? Evidently there were enough copies of the Old Testament scriptures for such a daily general examination. There are three groups identified in Berea: (1) Many Jews believed. (2) A number of prominent Greek women. (3) Many Greek men believed. How helpful to me to know your message appeals to everyone.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How persistent is hatred! The Jews in Thessalonica just would not give up! Why did they feel so very negative about Paul? Perhaps a re-reading of Paul's letters to the Christians in Thessalonica would help us. Dear Lord, I want to be open as the Bereans, not closed like the Thessalonians. I know my source of liberty is the same as theirs — your word, I want to examine it all over again today! It is good to read that Silas and Timothy were with Paul in Berea — no doubt they came from Philippi and Thessalonica. The term "brothers" says so much!

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you that there is a norm called "truth" — it is your word. (2) Thank you, you expect us to be able to make evaluations you will accept. (3) Thank you for the intensity of investigation — a good example I want to follow. (4) Thank you that the lines of truth and error can be drawn so sharply. (5) Thank you for those who care enough to leave their jobs for the help of a brother, i.e., to accompany Paul. (6) Thank you for the second mile (miles) they went with Paul all the way to Athens. (7) Thank you for the example of Paul — he wanted and sought the company and help of others.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

We shall look at three principles in this record: (1) Paul reasoned and explained but one fact; it became the source of all his trouble — a real "stumbling block" to the Jews, the fact was: "that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead." This gave Paul no end of persecution and misunderstanding. (2) The text gives us the reason for the opposition: "But the Jews were jealous." Can it be that men would go to such extremes as those of Thessalonica just for

envy or jealousy? Of course the Jews would not so define their motive, but the Holy Spirit has already done so. (3) It is interesting to notice that three groups believed in both Thessalonica: (a) Jews; (b) Greeks; (c) prominent women; and in Berea: (a) Jews; (b) Greeks; (c) prominent Greek women. What does this say to me?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

While some opposed and others believed, Paul prayed — and so do we: (1) Give me a great consuming hunger and thirst for your word. (2) Open my mind to see your Son in all the scriptures. (3) How can I influence the influential? (4) Keep me aware that there are men who will do almost anything to oppose your work. (5) May I be willing to trust others with your work. (6) Lead me to the very place where I can work most effectively for you. (7) Teach me the patience, and yet strong zeal I see in Paul.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me from Acts 17:11-15: (1) "The ratio of converts is proportionate to Bible study." (2) "Disbelievers are much different from unbelievers." (3) "I still want Athens evangelized."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

United Kingdom — Points for prayer: (1) *Missionary interest* has waned, and many congregations have never sent out their own missionary. There is a widespread conviction that either the job has been done, or that efforts should be concentrated on Britain's need. Pray for a) *A renewed commitment* by local congregations to world evangelization, to pray out their members to the areas of greatest need, and to adequately care for those who go. b) *The 5,800 British Protestant missionaries* around the world, and that their numbers may be increased by dedicated long-term missionaries. About 26% of all UK missionaries are short-term workers. (2) *Unreached immigrant minorities*. Post-war immigration from the New Commonwealth (Third World states formerly ruled by Britain) on a large scale, brought in many ethnic minorities from lands that have minimal exposure to the gospel, and where entry for missionaries is restricted or forbidden. Most have found homes in the larger inner cities; in Bradford 20% of the city is Asian.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

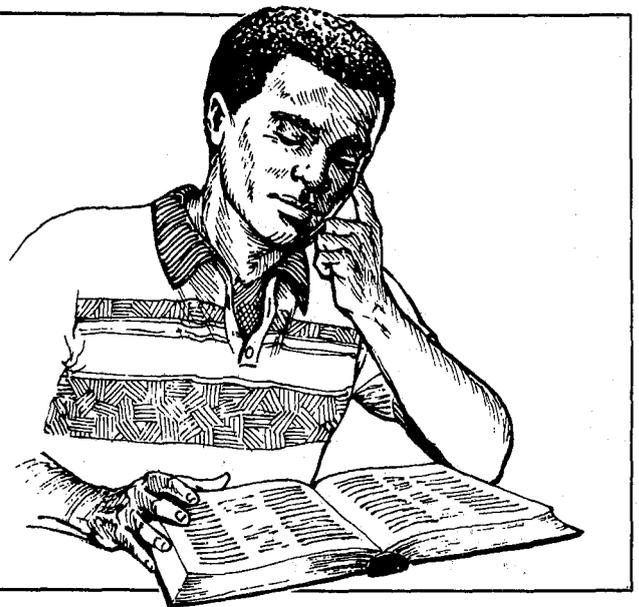
We are redeemed! the price is paid!
What a wonderful Savior!

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

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Monday—

What a “sure” — “eternal” — “solid” foundation you have laid for us. I rest myself upon it.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Foundation (Isa. 28:16). How good it is to contemplate God as the foundation of all things — surely of all life. This whole visible cosmos and billions like it have their foundation in yourself! You are the original source — the planner and builder of all we see, and all we do not see. What incredible power and wisdom is yours! Blessing and praise, wonder and amazement is mine and all the men and women of this little speck of your creation called earth! When the foundation is faulty, the whole structure is in danger. But when the foundation of life is: absolute knowledge, total wisdom, unending love, infinite mercy, unquestionable justice, how permanent is the life of the superstructure. Dear God, once again I am shocked into silence and wonder! You have not only laid the foundation of all things, you yourself are the foundation. Thank you, 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

Foundation for me. Let me explore the various areas of my life which need and have found a strong foundation in yourself: (1) My home life — my marriage — Dear Lord, without you and our mutual love for you we would have long ago been living our own selfish lives apart from each other. We are in love with each other because we are both in love with you. (2) My job — what a wonder and amazement it is that I can spend my whole time meditating on and teaching and preaching your word. But if I do not keep a close, personal foundation contact with you even this task can be a bore. But when I build my task directly on you in personal devotion it is a joy no man can express!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear, dear Father, that I should ever start the day or plan a project without first building the foundation for it in yourself is surely the greatest of all my sins. This is my daily original sin. Please forgive me! Deepen my awareness of my need!

Idolatry is a sin mentioned in your word. An idol is anything or anyone who gets our heart, thought, will, emotions. More than this an idol is whatever gets our worship, adoration, supplication, dependence. What is it in my life that gets my total, constant attention and upon which I depend? Dear Lord, if it is anyone or anything but you I have an idol and I am an idolater. Some of the projects in which I have been (and am presently) involved could come dangerously near to this definition. Dear God, open my eyes! Forgive me!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

¹⁵The men who accompanied Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

¹⁶While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols.

¹⁷So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there.

—Acts 17:15-17, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Blessed experience: to travel again to Athens! Here is Paul about to leave his friends and go into the streets

of Athens all alone, but not without you. At the same time Paul felt your presence he felt the real lack and loss of human companionship. Paul was gregarious and needed and wanted companionship in preaching and teaching. Even while Paul was by himself he was thinking of others. "So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left alone at Athens (left by ourselves in Athens). We sent Timothy, who is our fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ (to Thessalonica)."

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Am I as greatly distressed as Paul? Or am I distressed at all as compared with him? "A city full of idols." Dear God, what did he do about it? "So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks." He didn't smash the statuary! Someone else could do that, someone else would do that, someone else *did* do that. I have been to Athens — the statues are all gone, but the idols are still there. It is *only* in reasoning, teaching, motivating, challenging, awakening, that idols will fall and Christ will be Lord! Paul did it, but the ground gained has been lost again.

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 attitude of confidence, and even dependence upon those who worked with him. (2) Thank you for the wonderful insight that says: his we are whom we serve (worship) — slaves to God — or "no gods." (3) Thank you for Timothy who is an example for all of us — "our brother," God's fellow worker. (4) Thank you for the work Timothy had to do: (a) spread the good news, (b) *strengthen* the Christians, (c) *encourage* the Christians. (5) Thank you there is "a faith" and "the faith" in which we can be strengthened and encouraged. (6) Thank you for the same Scriptures out of which we can reason today. (7) Thank you that Paul was shocked, but not overcome by the idolatry of Athens.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Slaves to the *things* that are no gods" (Gal. 4:8). Why serve something or someone who will not respond to your service? Fear of the unknown and a misinterpretation of the calamities and blessings of life is the explanation. Man is indeed incurably religious. If he is not introduced to the One True God, he will invent gods of his own to fill the void he feels within himself. How restless we are until we find rest in the bosom of our heavenly Father! Such a comment by Paul shows us the proper relationship. We are glad for willing slaves of our Master who is Love.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Paul's spirit was moved to concern as he considered the needs of Athens — so we are moved to pray: (1) Send me helpers in the gigantic task of evangelizing thousands of people. (2) Open my eyes to see idols as idols. (3) Keep me constantly aware of the futility of self-service. (4) There *are* men like Timothy and Silas today — may I learn from them. (5) I need the wisdom to know how to relate men to tasks — or tasks to men — help me. (6) May I remain steadfast amid trials. (7) I need your wisdom to add depth to my reasoning.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I open my ears to hear what you have for me in these verses: (1) "You always work better with others." (2) "Keep your eyes open to life as I see it." (3) "Reasoning precedes converting."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

USA — Points for prayer: (1) *The vitality, diversity and size of Christian organizations and activities* defy a detailed description. Many generalizations have to be made! How much we need to pray for this nation and its leaders. The spiritual and material resources of the USA are of such vital significance for the world and, more, for its evangelization. (2) *There is much for which to praise God* in this great country. a) *A religious awakening* has been gaining momentum since the mid-1970's. The spiritual roots of the first settlers and founding fathers are being rediscovered. Young people are in the forefront of this interest in the things of God. b) *The USA is probably the most evangelized society on earth.* Major evangelistic campaigns have won a respect and credibility for the gospel. c) *A strong reaction* is developing against drug abuse, pornography, permissive legislation, abortion and crime. These evils have been encouraged by a vocal anti-religious minority, and promoted by unwise use of the media. The latter is the distorted image by which the USA is commonly perceived by foreigners.

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 THIRTEEN

—Tuesday—

*What refreshment — cleansing —
beauty I see in the fountain. I jump in
just now!*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Fountain. (Psa. 87:7; Jer. 2:13; 17:13; Ezek. 47:3-10)
How refreshing to appear before you this day and relate you to the bubbling, sparkling water of a great fountain! How I would love to jump in! Bless your wonderful self, I can easily see the comparison — a fountain opened for sin and poor, weary, dirty sinners. How sore and old I feel — I represent ten million more — how delightful to be well and young again! I have found the fountain of youth — come to the fountain, stand by my side — come to the waters — you won't be denied — jump in, quench your thirst, wash your body, relax in the strength and unfathomed depth of the clear, warm water — suddenly you can swim, no fear, what excitement. But most of all you are as clean and renewed on the inside as you are on the outside. Bless your name!

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Fountain for me! I have so closely related to this lovely figure of speech and Person that what I intended for this whole world had much personal involvement. But just now let me think and praise as I stand before the fountain: (1) the fountain is both blue and green in color. Because blue is royal and blue is the sky, it seems so very appropriate, but this blue color is alive, moving, changing blue! Green — as green as the growing, luxurious vegetation all about me. So is your clear, beautiful self — the King of ten trillion galaxies — alive in the eternal strength of an endless life. (2) This fountain is never the same, and yet always the same. In you I find infinite variety and unchanging character. Oh, how I love you!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear, dear Lord, I have not always felt this way, nor have I always even made the mental, emotional effort

to do so. I am the poorer, but you have not been honored as you should in my life — forgive me! A sin mentioned in your word is *witchcraft*. At first thought I can see but little relationship to me, but on second thought, I had better reconsider. Satan is not dead; witchcraft is a real thing. I am so glad I can “bind Satan” not only by the simple verbal rejection of his influence, but by the aggressive refusal to consider even his name, I thus remove his thoughts from my mind. The positive, active presence of my Lord does more than anything else — after all, it is Jesus who binds the strong man.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

HIS WORD

¹⁷So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to dispute with him. Some of them asked, “What is this babbler trying to say?” Others remarked, “He seems to be advocating foreign gods.” They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. ¹⁹Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? ²⁰You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we want to know what they mean.” —Acts 17:17-20, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Oh, dear Father, it is a rare privilege I have to each day pause before your word and think with you your thoughts. Your man, Paul, is in the marketplace of Athens. Wasn't it frustrating for him to address those who had almost no knowledge of you? The ones who did listen called him "a babblers." Bless your holy name, there is always something attractive and captivating in the message of the resurrection of your dear Son. It sounded strange and foreign but the call of "deep to deep" was there. They had to hear more, and so do I.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Among the general populace I surely do not have the reputation of "a babblers" — they have never heard from me. Paul was not forever and always known as "a babblers," but for a while in Athens this was his reputation. Could it not be so for me for at least a little while? Would I receive rebuff or interest? I will never know till I try. Would I ever face men of the same syndrome as the Athenians who "spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas"? How sad that the ideas from heaven are still "strange." I am more than delighted to commit myself to making such ideas very understandable and popular.

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 unqualified courage of Paul. (2) Thank you that the gospel meets the needs of both the Stoics and the Epicureans. (3) Thank you for the determination of Paul against great odds. (4) Thank you that I need not preach any more or less than "Jesus and the resurrection" to accomplish God's purpose in this world. (5) Thank you that Paul was willing to speak anytime, anywhere to anyone about his Lord. (6) Thank you that Paul's preaching was also "a teaching." (7) Thank you for every Athenian who heard Paul and that there are probably more in Athens today who have never heard than in the time of the Apostle (what a field!).

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

May we know what this new teaching is? The teaching of John 3:16 is brand new to millions and millions of people upon this earth. How could it be that we have so miserably failed to do the one thing above all others our Lord wants done? Such was not true in the first century. By 130 A.D. all men had heard, and the teaching was no longer strange or new. Perhaps it is because the gospel has lost its freshness that we have not fulfilled the commission. But this is only a symptom — the real cause is our failure in a personal relationship with our Lord. Commercial fisherman from the Sea of Galilee, a tax collector and a super-patriot

are not the kind of people to lead in world conquest, but they did! Peter and John gave the secret: "We can not but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Surely Paul on Mars Hill can prompt prayer requests: (1) Evangelism with Paul was not so much what he did as what he was. I want to be like him. (2) Give me wisdom to answer the Stoics of my day. (3) Our nation is overrun with Epicurean disciples — I need your help in communicating your Son to them. (4) May I learn how to relate my Lord to the life of all. (5) Give me an audience with important and influential people. (I really do not know how you will answer, but I have not because I ask not.) (6) May I have wisdom in relating to the lifestyle of my generation your message. (7) Open my heart to see the total depth of meaning in the resurrection.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

May I hear your voice in the words of Paul: (1) "There are yet many marketplaces where I need to be heard." (2) "People will still mock — but some will believe." (3) "Philosophy will never satisfy until I am the philosopher."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

USA — Points for prayer: (1) *The potential perils of the resurgence of evangelicalism* are matters to turn into prayer. a) *Popularity* can lower spiritual standards, bring in worldly attitudes, and lessen commitment to the Lord Jesus by those who bear His name. Divorce, among other wrongs, has become a major factor in Christian homes. b) *Political power* should be exercised with sensitivity. The Christian Right is likely to become a major influence on into the 1990s. It would be tragic to taint the purity of the gospel with political scandal. The promotion of regional or national interests could be at the expense of the credibility of the message the world needs. c) *Christian leaders* with high moral principles are needed. However, in an increasingly mixed society, prejudice and intolerance could easily be manifested. (2) *Young people* are one of the major areas of spiritual battle today. The bitter fruits of humanistic philosophies are now being harvested in the disorientation, rootlessness and rejection of authority by many.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

O Worship the King, all glorious above,
And gratefully sing His pow'r and his love;
Our Shield and Defender, the ancient of Days,
Pavilioned in splendor, and girded with praise.

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Wednesday—

I am in your will! A very large inheritance is mine! I review in anticipation some of these riches in the closet of prayer.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Heir — possessor of heaven and earth (Gen. 14:19). How beautifully poignant is this word. You are the heir of all things — our Lord an heir with you and you have made us joint-heirs with him. How gloriously good and encouraging this thought is to me! You have right to all the physical world by creation — the right or ownership of all men — every man twice over, by creation and redemption. Blessed be your name! When time shall be no more and all men are called to the judgment, as well as the innumerable hosts of angels, all intelligent beings will then know who is the real heir of this whole universe — and all others like it or unlike it! This is a mind boggling concept, but it really does not express totally your wealth or inheritance — or essential Being. I pause before you in 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

Heir to me! It would make but little more than curious interest to contemplate how much I have if it were not for two facts: (1) You are my Father and Savior and God. (2) I am a joint-heir with your only begotten Son! This changes all my thinking and surprises me with joy! I am rich beyond the wildest dreams of any man. The treasure I now have in a clay jar called a body is the total content of the sixty-six books called the Holy Book. It is *holy* in the sense of being separate or different than all other books. The precious scintillating jewels in this volume are beautiful beyond all words to describe them. Oh, how I revel in their eternal value! Your daily guidance in my life is such a wonderful part of my inheritance. And then there is a whole wide, wonderful life to come!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear, dear Lord, for living and thinking like a pauper when I am a billionaire — please forgive. How sad to walk in the dark when we can open the door to the light. How pathetic to lie in bed sick when the Great Physician can raise us to radiant health anytime we reach out for him. Oh, dear Father, forgive this blind, ungrateful son. When we are willfully blind, we even wonder about forgiveness. Dear Lord, I repent of my terrible ingrown selfishness, deception. Another sin mentioned in your word is jealousy, which somehow seems to fit. I have been envious of the poor when I was rich and didn't know it.

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

²¹(All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)

²²Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. ²³For as I walked around and observed your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.

²⁴"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. ²⁵And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything

else. ²⁶From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. ²⁷God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

²⁹"Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone — an image made by man's design and skill." —Acts 17:21-29, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I realize it is almost impossible to separate my point of view from yours, i.e., to look at this text through your eyes, but I never tire of trying. It was good that Paul could speak to the men of "the Areopagus" — but in your sight they are of no more value than the men or women in the marketplace. These men had more influence, but no more worth. Paul really addressed himself to the whole city, and all men in it! How did these men indicate their "religion"? By "worship" or that which gets our attention and admiration? Did not the idols and altars only represent the gods who were worshipped?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I am so glad I need not reach out into the dark to find you. You have reached down in the Person of your Son to find me. Dear God, right now I want to worship you, acknowledge, yield, bow, honor you as: (1) The creator of all — the heaven and earth. (2) You are not in buildings we mistakenly call your house — our own bodies are your house! (3) My service is not because you need it — I do! Others do! You could get everything I do done in a better way by a better means. (4) I owe my life (soul, existence) to you. I owe my breath (life, spirit) to you, as do all men.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you that Paul plainly puts his stamp of acceptance on the Genesis account of creation. (2) Thank you that my time on earth is set by you — as is the time for all men. (3) Thank you that because of what happened in centuries gone by I now live in America. (4) Thank you that your goodness was given to lead us to you. (5) Thank you that right now you are not far away. You are in me in the person of the "Other Comforter." (6) Thank you that Paul said all men are by right of creation "your children." (7) Thank you that our nature is our accurate reflection of your nature.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"He is not far from each of us." How beautifully true this statement is. God is just a prayer away. We

can see his character in his Son. We can see his power in his creation. We can see his children in our friends. We can see his very self in the Person of the holy Spirit — who lives in our bodies. From God's perspective he is even closer to us. He sees each of us all the time. He knows the thoughts and the interests of our hearts. How could he be any closer than he is? Dear God, may we practice your presence in us and with us.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Paul's sermon moved me to ask of you: (1) Give me faith to believe that all men everywhere can and will become your children. (2) Grant me wisdom in seeing beyond the external into the eternal needs of man. (3) Deepen my appreciation of your creative power. (4) Speak your word about a place of worship into my heart. (5) Dear Lord, I look up to you in thanksgiving as the giver of every good and perfect gift. (6) Keep me keenly aware of the plain statement of creation made here by Paul. (7) Thank you that of you, in you, from you, I live and move and have my being.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As some of the Athenians heard you speak through Paul, may I also: (1) "God made the world and everything in it." (2) "God lives in the bodies of people not in buildings." (3) "I have decided the exact places men should live."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

USA — Points for prayer: (1) *Leadership training.* There are estimated to be over 200,000 preparing for full-time service in theological institutions. In the 194 major US theological seminaries, there was a 20% increase in student numbers between 1977 and 1982, a large majority being Evangelicals, though growth has levelled off since then. Pray for staff, students and a deep level of commitment to the cause of Christ worldwide. (2) *Student ministries* have flourished in recent years. The notable impact of the complementary ministries of Intervarsity, Navigators, CCC and others has led to effective discipleship and outreach on campuses. The large Urbana conferences of IVCF, and CCC efforts such as Explo-86 have challenged many students with the needs of a lost world. The ministries of the Navigators and CCC have diversified into a wide range of activities in the USA and around the world.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

We praise Thee, O God, our Redeemer, Creator,
In grateful devotion our tribute we bring.
We lay it before Thee, we kneel and adore Thee.
We bless Thy holy Name, glad praises we sing.

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Thursday—

*In this great name: "Jehovah" the
"Self-existent One" — I see so much!
It is in worship this happens.*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Jehovah — the "Self-Existent One" — the "Absolute." Dear Lord, in a very real sense this is the greatest of your names. I wanted and longed so many, many times, before I became a Christian, for an explanation of all things, i.e., for an original Source or Cause. So many times since I accepted you I have rejoiced in the wholeness of life and the world in which we live when you are related to it. "The Self-Existent One" — what a marvelous designation. Blessing and praise and adoration are not at all adequate to describe my wonder — or the amazement of all mankind before 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

The Absolute, the Cause, the Source. Dear Father! I enter your presence with abject confoundment — I want to be silent in the effulgent brightness of your presence! As your children feared to even pronounce your name and substituted other designations such as Adoni — or Lord — so I am speechless before your majesty. At the same time I am full of eager longing to praise your name. To know that I share your nature is a thought to lift us up and move us to cry with the psalmist, "Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word."

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

What a confession of sin it is to admit I have neglected to praise or even recognize the greatness of yourself — disrespect or sacrilege is behind this sin. At times, too many times, I have been guilty. Dear Lord, forgive me! "Fits of rage" is a sin mentioned

in your word. Yes, I have sinned here — how juvenile is such action and attitude! Just what prompted such an outburst? Fortunately, I cannot remember; but I know you could replay the whole sordid incident if you chose. You have cleared the record and it is there no more! Thank you for the wholeness and that clean feeling *inside!*

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

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

HIS WORD

³⁰In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. ³¹For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead. ³²When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject." ³³At that, Paul left the Council. ³⁴A few men became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others. — *Acts 17:30-34, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

In what sense did you "overlook such ignorance"?

Are you saying you look beyond such ignorance of yourself to the coming of your dear Son? I am so glad you judge men by their motives and not by their record — their motives become their record with you. Dear God, when you judge me “with justice” I am so glad it will be “by my Lord” — because he is also my advocate, my intercessor with you. The one proof for all men of all time is the resurrection. Oh, my Father! I want to make it as important in my mind as it is in yours.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

When I hear of the judgment and the resurrection, what do I do? I want to hear about it again and again. I want to never tire of hearing of the end of time and the resurrection! One day I shall see him as he is. One day I shall be judged — not for my sins; they are already judged and forgiven — for the deeds done in the body: the bad, forgiven; the good? Dear God, to escape hell will be enough! How I want to follow Paul and believe. I accept his words as indeed they are: the word of the living God.

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 love and mercy in overlooking men’s ignorance, but judging them in absolute justice. (2) Thank you for the strong, solid assurance the resurrection gives me, for all you have said and are. (3) Thank you for the day already set when all the inequities of life will be made straight. (4) Thank you that I can constantly repent (change my mind) in light of the judgment. (5) Thank you there is something wonderfully fascinating about the gospel — even to those who have never heard. (6) Thank you that I can hear more and more about him who is raised from the dead. (7) Thank you for the prominent converts at Athens — and “a number of others.”

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“After this Paul left Athens.” We want to answer three questions about Athens: (1) Did Paul fail in Athens? Luke does not say he did, hence we can see no reason to say so ourselves. Luke *does* say he won Dionysius, a prominent man, along with a prominent woman named Damaris, along with a number of others. How large was the number — no matter, he did not fail if success is winning people to our Lord. (2) How did Paul describe God? (a) Creator of all. (b) Within reach of all. (c) Judge of all. The Old Testament prophecies were not used with these Gentiles. (3) Did Paul preach the death of our Lord in Athens? He preached “Jesus and the resurrection” — this would necessarily include the crucifixion. We believe Paul was an outstanding success by God’s standard — “he

was faithful.”

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

It would seem Paul had a difficult time in Athens — from the experience there are a number of requests: (1) Teach me how to communicate repentance. (2) Give me the sorrow from yourself that I might repent. (3) Help me to prepare men for the judgment. (4) Open my heart to the reality of your Son’s resurrection. (5) Give me the humility to receive the sneers of men as Paul did. (6) How can I reach those of position and influence with your good news? (7) How did Paul decide it was time to leave Athens?

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

You spoke through Paul to a number of people in Athens. Speak to me through his message. (1) “I still command all men everywhere to repent.” (2) “My living Son will judge all men.” (3) “The mocking of men does not alter the truth.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

USA — Points for prayer: (1) *The Black community* numbers 27,263,000. Many live in the centers of the great cities. Unemployment, poverty, frustration, broken homes and one-parent families are tragically common and, in many ways, a legacy of their tragic origins and subsequent discrimination. The civil rights movement achieved much in changing attitudes to the Black community, but there remains a lot to be done to heal the wounds of the past. Pray for: a) *The evangelization of the young people.* b) The conversion of Blacks who have become Muslims, partly as a reaction against White Christianity. There may now be around 600,000 or more Black Muslims. c) *The Black churches.* Many of the largest and most vigorous evangelical churches are Black, but they are isolated from the main stream of evangelical Christianity. (2) *Ethnic minority churches* have sprung up all over the country. The most numerous and vigorous are the Korean churches. A growing concern for, and emphasis on, planting churches among less reached ethnic minorities is encouraging.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

WEEK THIRTEEN

—Friday—

I can see you as the "mighty one" so much better while on my knees before you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Mighty — or the Mighty One. (Isa. 1:24; 49:26) Bless your wonderful name you are indeed just that to all men everywhere, to all the angels of heaven and to every need of the human heart. You are mighty in your works: (1) *Creation*; (2) *Preservation*; (3) *Resurrection*; (4) *Judgment*. To try to appreciate what you have made, I have looked at a book with pictures of some of the species of birds — what an array of beauty and variety! I am a "bird watcher" only so I can better appreciate the One who created them all. What would a book in which were drawn all the insects look like? Or all the trees? Or even all the weeds? At the same time you also "uphold all things by the word of your power." All who have ever died will by your might be recreated! All men — billions and billions of them — will stand to be individually judged for the deeds done in their bodies. *Mighty* is too weak a word!

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Mighty for me! Dear Lord, you have shown yourself more than able — yea, abundantly able, to handle all my needs — "according to your riches in glory": (1) My daily bread; (2) my protection or preservation; (3) my resurrection. I could never thank you enough for all these past many years of supplying food, shelter and raiment. How it is that I have these things in abundance and there are 30,000,000 who starve every year, I do not know! Over how many miles have you given me safe travel? From how many overbearing temptations have you kept me? I do stand in awe of the promise that the very Holy Spirit who lives in this body of mine will recreate it at the resurrection!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

I fall at your feet in praise and pause to know I am unclean and need the coal from your altar to cleanse me! The blood from Calvary, the water of your fountain. How wonderfully good it is to be clean! If ever I felt unworthy it is in the face of your greatness! A sin mentioned in your word is "selfish ambition." Dear God, if ever I had an ambition in which you were not the sole object of glory, strike it from my heart!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Redeemed — how I love to proclaim it!
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;
Redeemed through his infinite mercy,
His child, and forever, I am.
Redeemed, redeemed,
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;
Redeemed, redeemed,
His child, and forever, I am.

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

HIS WORD

After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. ²There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, ³and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. ⁴Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

⁵When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. —Acts 18:1-5, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It is so good to get acquainted all over again with these two wonderful people. I wonder how and where Paul met Aquila? Was Aquila a Christian when Paul met him? I always have questions only you can answer. One day you can tell me all about the blanks that are necessarily left in Luke's narrative. Right now I want to praise you for several things about Aquila and Priscilla: (1) Praise you for showing me that men and women in the time-consuming task of tentmaking can love you and serve you in the midst of their work. (2) Praise you for opening my eyes to Paul's attitude toward support. He did not complain or wait — he went to work.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Father, I want each word of these five verses to take on meaning for me. Luke was specific about the time of this record — no fiction writer would do this. Jews got something done, had influence, therefore were not at all popular with some people. Paul knew a trade and did not have to beg. Paul did not shun controversy — it made some people very unhappy — that was not wrong. Paul used persuasion by argument. Perhaps Silas and Timothy brought financial help from Philippi or Thessalonica or Berea so Paul could spend full time with preaching.

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 boldness and willingness to go to Corinth. (2) Thank you that political actions can be used to your advantage. (3) Thank you that Paul was ready to adapt himself to living in someone else's home. (4) Thank you for the dedication of three tentmakers. (5) Thank you that Paul was able to "work within the system" of the Sabbath synagogue service. (6) Thank you for "self-starters" like Silas and Timothy — they worked with Paul — but they worked on their own also. (7) Thank you for the strong emphasis Paul placed on preaching.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching." I wonder how much of his content was from his study of the Old Testament Scriptures at the feet of Gamaliel and how much was by divine, direct input of the Holy Spirit? We are sure that he preached in Corinth "Jesus and him crucified." The record of his preaching is right here in Acts and we can gain much by reading the two letters addressed to this church. Paul spoke to many Gentiles, but most converts among them were in the general context of their interest in the Jewish religion. They are described as "devout Greeks." Paul's preaching was powerful in

his effect on the lives of these sensual people. Dear Lord, help me to expect reaction only when people have been confronted with the message. We have no similar results because we will not "devote ourselves exclusively to preaching."

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

There is so much to pray about in your work in Corinth: (1) Give me the adventuresome courage of Paul. (2) It will be so good to hear from Paul just how he met Aquila — lead me to a servant of yours like Aquila. (3) Help me to more deeply appreciate my wife who works with me for you. (4) How I need heaven's wisdom to speak persuasively. (5) Thank you for the priceless privilege of devoting myself exclusively to preaching and teaching. (6) Thank you for fellow laborers who encourage me in your work. (7) Thank you for Paul's efforts in a difficult city — may his example move me to the same attitude.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me from these few verses in Acts 18: (1) "You can serve me in several ways." (2) "Argument is good if I am in it." (3) "I work best through a team effort."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

USA — Point for prayer: *The native Americans* have suffered intensely in their encounter with European immigrants. They lost almost all their lands, their self-respect and much of their culture. Prejudice and insensitivity have been their lot to this day. Poverty, disease and unemployment are common among those on Indian reservations, and the 50% or so who have migrated to the cities. There has been a strong move among the younger generation to reassert their political and cultural rights.

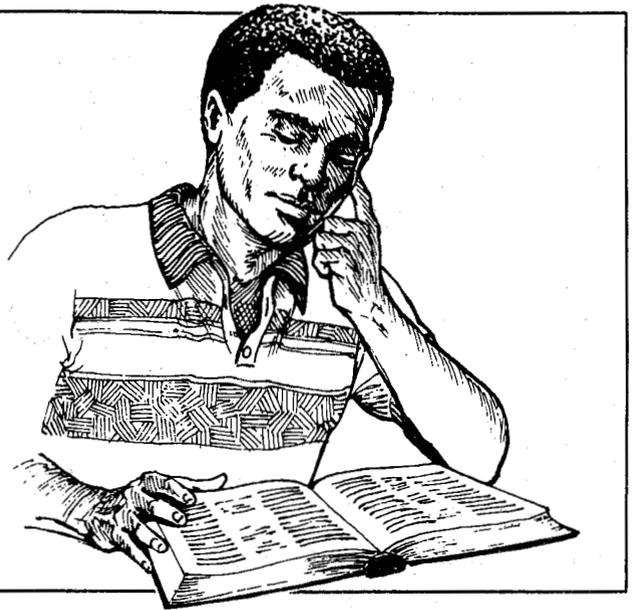
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I've a message from the Lord, Hallelujah!
The message unto you I'll 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 THIRTEEN

—Saturday—

Speak to me yet again O mighty preacher! Give me ears to hear you — a heart to obey you!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Preacher (Psa. 19:1ff.; Isa. 61:1,2). It is unusual to think of yourself — your almighty self as a preacher — yet your voice has gone out to the ends of the earth, i.e., in the form of the creation above us, beneath us and all around us. How eloquently do you speak to all who have ears to hear! The Bible is another expression of your communication to man — your written sermons — I want to give you a triple A+ in my Homiletics grade book. You have spoken to me and to all other preachers as a model of all we would like to be. How total is your preparation — your living sermon preached in the Person of your Son was prepared several centuries before you spoke to us through him.

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

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Preacher to me. Dear Lord, wonderful Father, Eternal Spirit — I hear you! Your word is clear and constant! Dear Lord, I rejoice and revel in the reading of your message to me. I want to memorize every word and not only so but to assimilate its full meaning; to listen and learn is my highest joy and I shall never, never hear or know fully; but I do purpose to know as fully as I can. Today, just for today, speak to me in the world you have made and in the book you have authored!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

I fully admit that there are times when I am not listening — when I will not hear your voice through my own conscience — when I follow the ground instead of the sky and hear no more than the creatures who creep upon it. There are times when the faculties

you have given me are focused on the mad and ignorant — to say nothing of the evil and false. What a sad admission of sin. Forgive me! The sin of *dissensions* — how could I better describe the conflicting voices heard in our lives today? If you said it; and I believe it; that settles it! Give me inner ears to hear and heed what you say!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Give of your best to the Master;
Give of the strength of your youth;
Throw your soul's fresh, glowing ardor
Into the battle for truth.
Jesus has set the example;
Dauntless was He, young and brave;
Give Him your loyal devotion,
Give Him the best that you have.
Give of your best to the Master;
Give of the strength of your youth;
Clad in salvation's full armor,
Join in the battle for truth.

HIS WORD

⁵When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. ⁶But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

⁷Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God.

⁸Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.

⁹One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent.

¹⁰For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city. — *Acts 18:5-10, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How gladly I take up your word. I want to join the crowd in the synagogue of Corinth — not to oppose but to understand. How I would like to hear the word of Paul as he testified and argued that Jesus was your anointed One. Why did these Jews object? Was it out of pride and hurt? Was it because their king could not be a lowly Nazarene? How did Paul say the words: “Your blood be on your own heads, I am clear of my responsibility”?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How many members in the household of the former (or present) synagogue ruler? All included were old enough to understand because they “believed.” Such faith came by hearing with understanding. What did the Corinthians hear? What did they believe? This seems such an obvious fulfillment of Mark 16:16. These dear people heard the same good news that I want to hear all over again — “The Anointed One — my King — died for my sins, was buried in a rich man’s borrowed grave, and was raised from the dead by your Holy Spirit on the third day.”

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

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the personalness of Paul’s preaching — it was a testimony as well as an argument. (2) Thank you for the overwhelming evidence in the Old Testament and the record of His life that Jesus was the Messiah. (3) Thank you for opposition — it is evidence the message is alive. (4) Thank you for Paul’s protest — dramatic and personal — clear. (5) Thank you for the possible transfer of responsibility when we have done what we could. (6) Thank you for Paul’s unusual boldness in speaking just next door to those who abused him.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“I have many people in this city.” It is more than provocative to read here that God knew the potential responsiveness of every member of the body of Christ in Corinth. God said something very, very important in this connection. Notice: (1) Because I have many people in this city, i.e., many who will accept if they hear the good news, “*Do not be afraid.*” Dear Lord, how I need to hear this word from you. Paul had more reasons to be afraid than I do. What raw hatred and physical violence faced Paul — what malicious jealousy and envy daily looked him in the face! (2) Because I have many people who will go to heaven

and not hell if you speak — “*keep on speaking — do not be silent.*” God used both the positive and negative for emphasis. It is always easier to stay where you are — or to close your mouth — or to talk about something else.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In the wild city of Corinth there was much of both acceptance and rejection — petitions arise spontaneously: (1) May I know how to testify in such a manner that men will accept your Anointed One. (2) How I need the grace to know when to register a rejection of those who oppose. (3) Thank you again for the holy boldness of Paul. (4) How could Paul escape the abusive treatment of the synagogue if he met just next door? (I need wisdom here.) (5) Help me to preach as Paul did — and obtain the same results — those who hear will believe and be baptized and be saved. (6) Deliver me from all fear of men. (7) Help me to call out of the city where I live a people for your name.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Open my eyes and ears to your messages in these verses: (1) “Clear yourself of the blood of those in your city.” (2) “I have those who will respond — keep on speaking.” (3) “Lo, I am with you even till the end of the world.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

US Virgin Islands — Points for prayer: (1) *Tourism and the inflow of wealth have played havoc with the moral and social fabric of society.* Crime is widespread. Pray for the evangelization of tourists, those involved in the crime “industry”, the many aliens and the local islanders themselves. (2) *The Church has become very nominal and lacking in vitality.* The Evangelicals also suffer from this malaise. The two Church of God groups and the Nazarenes are growing through conversions, but the majority of the inhabitants, who live in an earthly paradise, are not heading in the direction of the heavenly one. (3) [*Note: St Croix, devastated by hurricane in 1989, is in the USVI.*]

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

All glory, laud and honor
To Thee, Redeemer, King,
To Whom the lips of children
Made sweet hosannas ring!
The people of the Hebrews
With palms before Thee went;
Our praise and prayer and anthems
Before Thee we present.

If you have tried to maintain daily devotions and have failed – don't give up! There is a way that works.

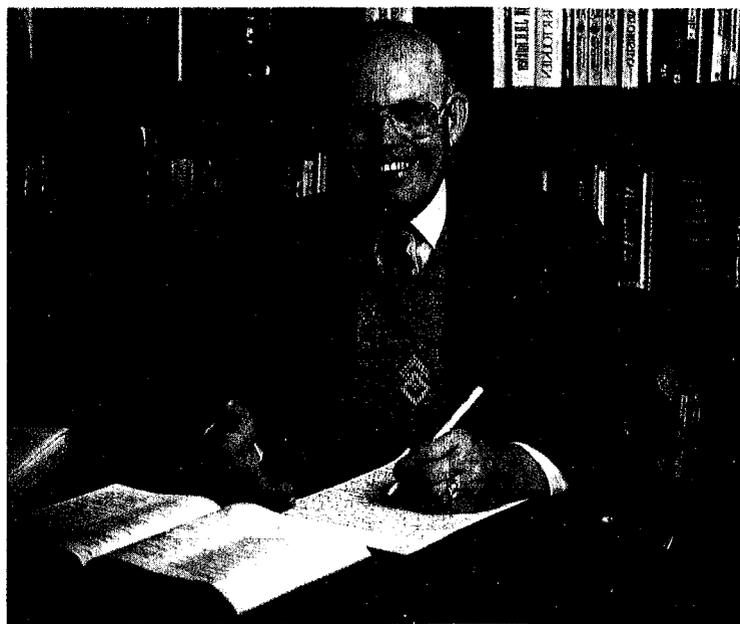
The simple effective method of daily devotions as described in **PERSONAL WORSHIP** can help you succeed where you have failed. You will know what it is to experience intimacy with God.

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