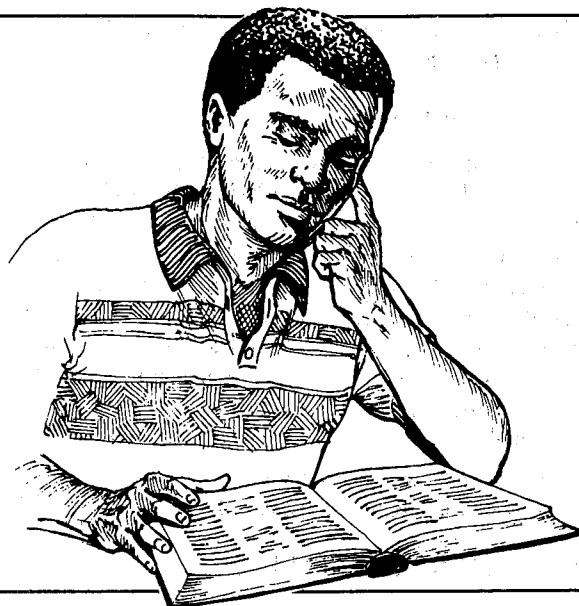


# WEEK SIX

## —Sunday—

*Every day we need — long for — look for a hiding place. I have found it in you. I enter to worship you.*



### PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

*My fortress* (Psa. 144:2). How attractive is the thought of a large protective building of some type — a castle or some other sort of hiding place. No building can stand today against a nuclear attack. But our fortress is not a building but the divine Person of your very self! I am so glad to worship and bow before you in full recognition of those qualities of your character that match this metaphor. (1) A fortress is immediately identified by those who are in its vicinity. Oh, that all men would see you and know you for who you are and what you are! You can and want to be such a refuge and strength for all men. (2) A fortress is commodious — at least when we think of you in this regard, it is true. How many millions — yea, billions of men have found you such a place? No one has ever been disappointed in the adequacy of provisions for them in this fortress.

### PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

*My fortress — personally.* Dear, dear God, I have so found you — and so I find you today! (3) A fortress reaches up high and impressive as a giant building against the sky — and yet has an immense foundation deep in the earth. This is what I have found and now find in you. All the way to the throne of heaven and yet you reach down to the deepest of human need. So strong and impressive, but fulfilling, you more than fulfill all my imagination conjures up. Higher than the highest — wider than ten million galaxies — deeper than the abyss. “A mighty fortress is my God — a bulwark never failing.” (4) We think a fortress is for another age — it was meaningful for the past generations, but is only a museum reference today. Not so with you. I never felt my need more than now. In no time in human experience have we needed a shelter — a hiding place more than now. I securely rest and view the panorama of today’s activities from my fortress.

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

### CONFESSION OF SIN

Have I always sought your protection? Have I withdrawn into my fortress and pulled up the gate? Have I rather found myself out in the open country attacked and wounded by the enemy? To ask is to answer. What was it that drew me away? “Every man is drawn away by his own desires” (Jas. 1:13-15). I need not, I do not blame you. Can I live always in a fortress? Where the fortress is in my own mind I can. It is when you dominate my mind that you become my “bulwark never failing.” The walls of this building are my own will — when my will is your will, Satan cannot and will not enter. Dear God, forgive me for not willing to do your will. My strength is in your will for me!

“Retaliation.” We retaliate evil for evil when we believe that somehow our rights are being threatened. When we have no rights there is no retaliation. When all our rights are given to you then all vengeance also belongs with you. Dear God, I believe, help my unbelief.

### SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Walking in sunlight, all of my journey;  
Over the mountain, through the deep vale;  
Jesus has said, “I’ll never forsake thee,”  
Promise divine that never can fail.  
Heavenly sunlight, heavenly sunlight,  
Flooding my soul with glory divine;  
Hallelujah, I am rejoicing,  
Singing His praises, Jesus is mine.

### HIS WORD

<sup>11</sup>The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, “Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.”

<sup>12</sup>The next morning the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. <sup>13</sup>More than forty men were involved in this plot. <sup>14</sup>They went to the chief priests and elders and said, “We have taken a solemn oath

not to eat anything until we have killed Paul. <sup>15</sup>Now then, you and the Sanhedrin petition the commander to bring him before you on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about his case. We are ready to kill him before he gets here."

<sup>16</sup>But when the son of Paul's sister heard of this plot, he went into the barracks and told Paul.

<sup>17</sup>Then Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the commander; he has something to tell him." <sup>18</sup>So he took him to the commander.

The centurion said, "Paul, the prisoner, sent for me and asked me to bring this young man to you because he has something to tell you." — *Acts 23:11-18, NIV*

## READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How remarkable you only need one small boy to overcome the power of forty men! Thank you, oh, thank you for speaking to Paul in the Jerusalem jail! Courage was to be found in your presence and promise. Your promise was not one of protection — although you provided that. It is enough to know we can speak for you. The word we speak is "a testimony." The personalness of our relationship to you can never be separated from what we speak on your behalf. A fast of death! What are you saying to me about fasting? You have a plot or plan for life and fasting is a part of it! How could the chief priests and elders of your people agree to such a plot?

## READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Lord, I know you are always standing near me — according to your blessed promise you are with me always. The Lord is at hand! Blessed be your sweet presence. I know too, that the one word you give to me at all times and in every circumstance is to "Take courage." I also know the one thing you want most from me is a personal testimony to others of my relationship to you as saved sinner. This is not all I will tell but if I do not tell this there will be little reality to the rest of my words. From how many plots of Satan have you delivered me? How many dear loved ones have spoken a word to my great heavenly commander on my behalf and saved me from death? My Lord, you know, but I am most grateful!

## READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for our Lord's personal concern in Paul's outlook on life. (2) Thank you for the promise of travel mercies. (3) Thank you for the multiple ways you have of frustrating the evil plans of men. (4) Thank you for the courage and wisdom of Paul's nephew. (5) Thank you for the measure of justice, fairness found in the Roman army. (6) Thank you for Paul's willingness to be helped in whatever way you led. (7) Thank you for the believable details of this record.

## READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... this young man ... has something to tell you." Indeed he does! He could tell us of the respect and

honor which his parents and himself had for his uncle. Evidently Paul was able to communicate his new found faith to at least a part of his family. This young man could tell us of how his faith delivered him from the confusion of the practices of the ritual and traditions of religion. The whole city of Jerusalem was full of conspiracy and unrest — this would have been so confusing to such a young man.

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

## READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Help comes from unexpected sources — it must have moved Paul to prayer — it does me: (1) Keep me aware my basic task is to be a witness for you. (2) I am aware that evil men even now plot to defeat your work — defeat their counsel. (3) Give me the dedication to the spread of your word these men had to stop it. (4) Thank you that young men are important in your work. (5) Teach me how important it is to include the whole family in your work. (6) Give me good and honest men in the government under which I live. (7) Open my mouth on all occasions to say something for you.

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

## READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I am listening — what do you want me to hear from this text? (1) "Take courage, I am with you as I was with Paul." (2) "Men's conspiracy cannot overcome my conspiracy of love." (3) "I have many ways of protecting you."

## INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

*Saturation Evangelism* (The total mobilization of the active membership of a church or group of churches to cover an entire area with the gospel)— Points for prayer: (1) *Mass evangelism crusades* have been much criticized, but they have played an important role in post-war evangelical growth in not only winning individuals to the Lord (many converts of Billy Graham's crusades are pastors or missionaries today!), but also in making many non-believers aware of the claims of Christ and uniting believers of many denominations in outreach. Pray for the successful integration of both mass and local church evangelism into the program for world evangelization. (2) *Pray for a continued development of the scriptural principles of SE.* The ideal is correct, but many mistakes have been made in the past — too grandiose schemes, involvement of the unconverted in trying to win the unconverted, too hasty a preparation time, lack of spiritual local leaders to mobilize the ordinary believers, etc.

## SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

# WEEK SIX

## —Monday—

*Every day brings its cares — nothing is just as we planned it. I lay them all at your feet — I cast them upon your heart. What a time of relief!*



### PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

*"Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you"* (Psa. 55:22). You are the one who truly cares and can and does hold us up. How good to have one upon whom I can cast all my anxiety! What kind of a divine person are you that this is true? (1) A living sympathetic person. You listen with real understanding. You know much more about every problem than anyone else. You look into the face of every man and woman with kindly eyes of sympathetic interest. (2) You are never too busy or too occupied with "other things" to give your total interest for as long as we want to talk. (3) You say things and move things so we can get through the circumstance. You have promised to make it possible for us to solve our problems.

### PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

*For me.* I do indeed gladly welcome this invitation. I do want to open my heart and share not only my mistakes but my plans and projects. Dear Lord, I have unsolved problems on the job. People make mistakes and some of them are very difficult to unravel. In ways that are only known by yourself help me to help those with whom I work. I have plans for spreading your word and helping your children to serve you. How I do need your wisdom in each and every part of these plans. Please help me to pause long enough to hear you speak. My strength and ability are all in you. Dear God, carry me through! What a wonderful quality of your character — bless you forever!

*How do you personally relate to the concern of God, and God who is totally interested?*

### CONFESSION OF SIN

Shall I admit that I carry my cares when your invitation is always open for me to cast them on you? Yes, this points up my blindness and insensitivity. But I am becoming more aware of your personal interest! If I only really knew just how much you truly care I

would be much more than ready to lay down my burden at your feet. Much of my sin is a direct result of frustration, tension, anxiety. Dear Lord, if I could learn to relax in your presence and "cast all my care on you" — cast it away from me — inwardly, truly, deeply — I could live and move and decide and speak in a relaxed atmosphere and I would not sin so often. Help me! Open my willingness!

*"Homosexuality."* I am repulsed by this sin. I have no sexual desire whatsoever for my own kind. This is repugnant to me. But I *must* try to understand and help those who do.

### SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

### HIS WORD

<sup>19</sup>The commander took the young man by the hand, drew him aside and asked, "What is it you want to tell me?"

<sup>20</sup>He said: "The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul before the Sanhedrin tomorrow on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about him.

<sup>21</sup>Don't give in to them, because more than forty of them are waiting in ambush for him. They have taken an oath not to eat or drink until they have killed him. They are ready now, waiting for your consent to their request."

<sup>22</sup>The commander dismissed the young man and cautioned him, "Don't tell anyone that you have reported this to me."

<sup>23</sup>Then he called two of his centurions and ordered them, "Get ready a detachment of two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at nine tonight. <sup>24</sup>Provide mounts for Paul so that he may be taken safely to

Governor Felix.”

<sup>25</sup>He wrote a letter as follows:

<sup>26</sup>Claudius Lysias,

To His Excellency, Governor Felix:

Greetings.

<sup>27</sup>This man was seized by the Jews and they were about to kill him, but I came with my troops and rescued him, for I had learned that he is a Roman citizen. <sup>28</sup>I wanted to know why they were accusing him, so I brought him to their Sanhedrin. <sup>29</sup>I found that the accusation had to do with questions about their law, but there was no charge against him that deserved death or imprisonment. <sup>30</sup>When I was informed of a plot to be carried out against the man, I sent him to you at once. I also ordered his accusers to present to you their case against him. — *Acts 23:19-30, NIV*

### READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How good it is to identify yourself with the incident before us — since you have a particular interest in the innocence and sincerity of young people. How sad to think that such a good man as Claudius Lysias was not saved. Perhaps he was at some time not here indicated. How did you look on the forty men? I could venture some opinions, but I do not really know. Did you place the decision in the mind of the commander to assemble such a large detachment to protect Paul? You have done this before in other cases. Is there a lie in the letter of Lysias?

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

### READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Paul had a long horseback ride to begin at nine o'clock at night. Paul must have been past fifty years old — it would not be easy for him — he had already been through so much, and now this. What was Paul's attitude? He had already told us: "I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." "I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord has given me." Do you hear these words? Do you accept them for yourself? (I am speaking this to myself.)

### READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the respect of personal privacy on the part of the army commander. (2) Thank you for the negative response Lysias was receiving from his association with the Jews — and the positive one he had with Paul. (3) Thank you for the importance of Paul (or the Roman law) in the mind of the commander. (4) Thank you for the wide influence given to the gospel through Paul. (5) Thank you for the example of how all things are working together for good. (6) Thank you for Paul's deliverance from the center of hatred and controversy.

### READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... for I learned that he is a Roman citizen.” The

order of events is conveniently slanted so as to leave the commander in the best light. It would give him credit for rescuing a Roman citizen from death at the hands of a Jewish mob, when the facts are Lysias thought he was apprehending an Egyptian terrorist. How easy it is to arrange events on paper for our advantage.

In a Roman army officer we can understand the motives. In a Christian leader we have a much more serious problem. Pride and position become more important than truth.

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

### READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Uncle Paul was really in trouble. We wonder what requests this young man had for Paul. We can lift our hearts with him in prayer: (1) Give us young men today with the same courage and boldness. (2) Warn me, through whatever means you have, of impending danger. (3) Give me the care and courtesy of the commander. (4) Thank you for the protective escort of Paul — give me protection on my many journeys. (5) Did Claudius Lysias lie to cover up his mistakes? Deliver me from such a temptation. (6) Help me to claim my rights as a citizen of heaven.

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

### READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me through these verses: (1) "I still have young men who will risk all to help my cause." (2) "There are good and honest men in positions of authority." (3) "Be always prepared to move to the third heaven."

### INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

*Short Term Workers* More and more young people (and some older ones too!) have been serving the Lord in a cross-cultural situation for periods of a few weeks to three years. This is a significant worldwide development. It is impossible to reckon the numbers of believers all over the world who give some or all of their time during one year to missionary work, for this may equal the world's entire full-time missionary force!

Points for prayer: (1) *Usefulness* in these short spells of service. Such short-term 'blitzes' can do much to revolutionize the spiritual situation in a hard field, and also inspire local believers to get out in direct evangelism. (2) *Avoidance of blunders* — through inexperience, lack of understanding of different cultures and languages, etc.

### SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

## WEEK SIX

### —Tuesday—

*Your Son called himself “the truth” —  
i.e. the essence of reality! Gladly do I  
enter and bow before you!*



#### PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

*“His truth endureth to all generations”* (Psa. 100:5). How strong is this word! All you have said — which is written truth — all you have done, which is created truth — all you are, which is living truth — or the source of truth, shall never end. Every generation shall find it even as I have found it. If a generation is considered as forty years I shall live into two generations. My father and grandfather found all you said and all you created and all you are the same as I have. Two thousand generations from today truth (that which is equal with reality) will be the same! Praise your wonderful eternal self!

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

#### PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

*Your truth endureth for me!* Dear God, I have forgotten your truth — but it did not change. I have ignored your truth, but it was the same. I have substituted for your truth, but it remained the same. How comforting to move in the context of truth! How I want our children, the next generation, to know the security and solidness of such a faith. The meaning of what you have made — the description of yourself depends entirely on the written word, therefore the truth written is the most important entity we have. May I do all I can to preserve and spread your word.

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

#### CONFESSION OF SIN

Since it is the responsibility of each generation to let every other generation know your truth, and since living it is the best means of showing the truth, I ask forgiveness! You desire truth (or reality) in the inward man — I do too. Why do I find myself hedging and vacillating when I know what is right? Forgive me! Dear Savior, you are living truth. How I want to

follow you. Cleanse my motives! I take your gracious offer of freedom!

*“Arrogance.”* Dear God, why should I ever entertain such an idea? But I have, I do, it will take a long time and many repetitions, but I want to kneel again with the One who washed feet. Arrogance begins and ends in the mind.

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

#### SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

#### HIS WORD

<sup>31</sup>So the soldiers, carrying out their orders, took Paul with them during the night and brought him as far as Antipatris. <sup>32</sup>The next day they let the cavalry go on with him, while they returned to the barracks. <sup>33</sup>When the cavalry arrived in Caesarea, they delivered the letter to the governor and handed Paul over to him.

<sup>34</sup>The governor read the letter and asked what province he was from. Learning that he was from Cilicia, <sup>35</sup>he said, “I will hear your case when your accusers get here.” Then he ordered that Paul be kept under guard in Herod’s palace. —Acts 23:31-35, NIV

#### READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How very good to relate this text to yourself! It does seem like a very large contingent of men to march most of the night in protection of one man. But then Paul was only representative of the value Rome placed on every citizen of the empire. I am sure it

occurred to you (please excuse my presumption) that this is but a poor representation of the value you place on every one of your citizens. There is a rather remarkable comparison possible here. I do believe Satan can do nothing with me or to me that you (and myself) do not permit him to. What far, far superior power we have in you and your angels and in the present person of the Holy Spirit than the forty men of Satan's force. Praise you for this assurance.

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

### READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

An all-night ride — Paul must have been totally worn out when he was shown to his room in Herod's palace. Did Paul talk to the soldiers on the journey? Did he question God's strange directions in his life? He would have been less than human if he didn't. I wonder what Paul did in Herod's palace? I am sure he prayed. Did he have anything to read? Did he influence his guards here as he did in Rome? Did he write letters we do not have? Perhaps these are all idle questions, but they represent my own relationship to this text. Dear Lord, may I rejoice all over again that I have liberty of movement and choice of residence.

### READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the well developed sense of duty that direction in the right area can accomplish. (2) Thank you for Paul's humble submission to your will in his life. (3) Thank you that Paul did not understand the immediate purpose for all things — since I do not this encourages me. (4) Thank you for the influence of the gospel in high places — even the governor. (5) Thank you for the reasonable care given to Paul. (6) Thank you for Paul's persistence in waiting out a solution to his imprisonment. (7) Thank you for your ultimate purpose which was being worked out through all man's actions for and against your servant.

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

### READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . kept under guard in Herod's palace.” What thoughts filled the mind and heart of Paul in Herod's palace? Here are a few possibilities: (1) Why is Herod so prosperous when we all know what type of life he lives? God's answer: Physical prosperity is *not* always an indication of my blessing. My dear Son had nowhere to lay his head. (2) How can my confinement advance the gospel? God's answer: You be faithful where you are and I'll handle the larger purposes of promoting the good news. (3) Why does truth always come out second best? God's answer: It doesn't — 2,000 years of reading Luke's record has told over and over again who was true.

### READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Paul's journey and arrival at Caesarea no doubt moved him to pray. We can also find here petitions:

(1) I want to be as willing to carry out some inconvenient tasks as the soldiers who traveled with Paul. (2) Help me to be as uncomplaining as Paul in my service for my Lord. (3) Is there a governor in one of our states to whom we could deliver a message from you? (4) Deliver me from the great “accuser of the brethren.” (5) Thank you for the treatment Paul received from civil authority. (6) How can we reach the leaders of our country with the message of your Son? (7) Grant me wisdom to interpret your answer to the two above questions — which are really requests for help.

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

### READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me through Paul's experience: (1) “I am able to work through all circumstances.” (2) “Every one of the soldiers is spending all eternity in heaven or hell.” (3) “Paul did all he could to be my witness.”

### INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

*Student Ministries* This is often one of the most neglected, yet strategic, fields of Christian witness (there are about 20 million university students in the world). A number of interdenominational organizations have been raised up by God to fill this need — to mention a few worthy of much prayer: (1) *Scripture Union* has an outreach to secondary schools round the world, with remarkable fruit among educated young people in Africa, Europe and parts of Asia. SU is working in 67 countries of the world. (2) *Campus Crusade for Christ* maintains a vigorous ministry in North America which also fans out to 70 other countries all over the world. CCC emphasizes mass evangelism by mobilization of believers and discipleship training, largely among university students. (3) *The Navigators* with their unique personal discipleship programs have made a deep impact on many. Their work began among the military in the USA, but they now minister among university students in 298 locations in 34 countries. Their emphasis is upon multiplying spiritual laborers through disciplined study and application of God's Word. They are moving out increasingly into local church-related ministries.

### SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

All creatures of our God and King,  
Lift up your voice and with us sing  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Thou silver moon with softer gleam!  
O praise Him, O praise Him!  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

## WEEK SIX

### —Wednesday—

*Great is my Lord, and greatly to be praised. Just here and now I wish to renew this thought. In my personal worship!*



#### PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

*"His greatness is unsearchable"* (Psa. 145:3). Bless your wonderful name — beyond the keenest minds of this earth are the laws of yourself. This is just one example of how your greatness is beyond man's ken. Like a search for hidden treasure, we find a large vein of gold — but the more we search the more we find. There is no end of the search, and there is no end of the discovery! Man will always be in search of the greatness of the complexities of this world in which he is physically but a small part. Man will be and is in search of the written revelation. We shall never fully appreciate the greatness of what you have said until we see you.

#### PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Your greatness is indeed unsearchable to me! I have been in search of your mercy. I have found that indeed "it endureth forever" — it is beyond my search. Dear God, I do not want to presume on your goodness — I want to be truly yielded to your word — to obey you. I have found your "renewing of my mind" has no end — no terminus — Bless your dear self! I want to continue this search. I want to find out just how complete, how full, how rich is your power of renewal. Right now I rethink and re-evaluate my relationship to the world: (1) I am dead unto sin — I am crucified to the world — my relationship to those with whom I live and work: (2) I count them better than myself. (3) I love them as you love me. In truth your greatness is unsearchable!

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

#### CONFESSION OF SIN

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable!" Has this always been true for me? To whom has credit been given for projects completed? Dear God, forgive me! There is no need of saying I intended to give you the praise, but did

not — the plain facts of the matter are that you did not receive the praise. You are great, not me — you are to be praised, not me. Men *are* to see our good works, but in such a way that you receive the credit. Forgive me for this terrible sin of pride.

*"Disobeying parents."* Surely I have been guilty of this. Surely this is rampant as a sin in our society.

#### SING A PRAYER TO GOD

"There shall be showers of blessing";  
This is the promise of love;  
There shall be seasons refreshing,  
Sent from the Savior above.  
Showers of blessing,  
Showers of blessing we need:  
Mercy drops round us are falling,  
But for the showers we plead.

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

#### HIS WORD

Five days later the high priest Ananias went down **24** to Caesarea with some of the elders and a lawyer named Tertullus, and they brought their charges against Paul before the governor. <sup>2</sup>When Paul was called in, Tertullus presented his case before Felix: "We have enjoyed a long period of peace under you, and your foresight has brought about reforms in this nation. <sup>3</sup>Everywhere and in every way, most excellent Felix, we acknowledge this with profound gratitude. <sup>4</sup>But in order not to weary you further, I would request that you be kind enough to hear us briefly." —Acts 24:1-4, NIV

#### READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How pompous and ridiculous men must look to one who has all knowledge and all power (strength). Who is Ananias the high priest? You know him better than he knows himself! Who were the elders he had with him? How many were there? Dear Lord, it is good to remember that there never has been a trial held

without your presence! What did you know — what do you know of Tertullus? How inadequate is his understanding of the one against whom he speaks! In your sight how incomplete is the man himself! What of this man Felix — the governor of this little province? What a sham this all must seem to you! At the same time with what infinite compassion do you view the whole proceeding. If only your servant Paul could communicate to all your love and purpose!

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

### READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Paul knew he would face trial. How did he prepare? He had no lawyer but himself! Oh, but he did! He had two advocates: (1) Your Son at your right hand to plead his innocence. (2) The blessed Holy Spirit to intercede through his prayers. Each day I awake I face the trial of the day. I must stand before men — and on some days the men are not unlike those in the text. How I need the same divine lawyers to plead my case. Paul could almost — but not quite — predict the outcome. At the same time he must give the test his best effort. Does today call for less? Most especially when I face a friendly amiable circumstance. Bless your name, you yet rule in the affairs of men!

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

### READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for our wonderful high priest who can and does plead our case before you. (2) Thank you for elders in the “called out” body of your Son — they are such good men. (3) Thank you for my wonderful lawyer who can defend me before your throne. (4) Thank you for yourself — it is indeed because of you that I have peace and reform. (5) Thank you that I feel thankful and I know whom to thank. (6) Thank you that you never tire of hearing me. (7) Thank you for the marvelous contrast I have found in the above comparison.

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

### READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... Tertullus presented his case before Felix.” It was just another job for the lawyer Tertullus. It did pay well, and it gave him further opportunity to find out more about these strange people called “Jews.” He was to be introduced to another man who undoubtedly made some impression upon him: Saul of Tarsus. Did Paul’s defense impress Tertullus? Luke does not tell us. But he did hear the governor before whom he spoke. How did the lawyer estimate Felix’s response to the trial? All such questions are interesting because they make us look at the participants as real people who lived before and after the incident described in the Acts record. Somehow I believe we will one day be introduced to the whole story of the

lives of these men we have known so long in this text.

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

### READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

As Paul faced trial before Felix he must have appeared often before your throne of grace. (1) Deliver me from the political maneuvers of selfish men. (2) How shall I reach a man like Ananias? (3) How could I possibly speak the good news to elders like those with Ananias? (4) There are lawyers today like Tertullus — how can I help them? (5) Even Felix is not immune from the power of the gospel — how can I reach him? (6) Grant me heaven’s wisdom in responding to your answers to the above questions. (7) The period of peace to which Tertullus referred was a result of the slaughter of all who disagreed with Felix — deliver our land from such rulers. (8) Give me grace to be kind even to those I know are enemies.

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

### READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me from these verses: (1) “All will one day present their case before me.” (2) “Some evil men became worse not better.” (3) “Your love for me can overcome in every situation.”

### INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

*Tape, Record and Cassette Ministries* — The arrival of cheap cassette tape recorders has made it possible to distribute Christian tapes widely and fairly cheaply to both Christians and the unconverted. This has become a valuable tool for evangelism, teaching and the encouragement of believers.

Points for prayer: (1) *Skilled laborers* are needed who can handle the expensive equipment necessary to make good recordings, maintain cassette playback machines, and effectively distribute the tapes. Few mission agencies have grasped the significance of this ministry or exploited its potential. (2) *Bible tapes*. Many new translations of the Scriptures are first circulated on tape with great blessing. This is particularly useful for illiterate people and for those who have no written Scriptures, and where there is a real threat that political events may prevent the printing and distribution of the Word of God. (3) *Teaching and church growth through tapes*. In many spiritually hard areas of the world, the few Christians are isolated and have little opportunity to learn new hymns and choruses, or receive adequate teaching. Messages on tape can fill that void.

### SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

All hail the pow’r of Jesus’ name!

Let angels prostrate fall:

Bring forth the royal diadem,

And crown Him Lord of all,

Bring forth the royal diadem,

And crown Him Lord of all!

## WEEK SIX —Thursday—

*In the most personal and practical of ways you can and do deliver me. I pause for your further direction!*



### PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

*"My deliverer"* (Psa. 144:2). How appropriate is this name! You are the deliverer of all men — for all time in all circumstances. These words are but words until turned into reality. But such has indeed happened! (1) You have and can and do deliver from death. Man brought death upon himself — but you opened the door to life. "By man came death" — deliverance from death and the grave all from you. (2) You have delivered us from hatred and separation by uniting us in your Son. (3) Most of all you have delivered us from our own self destruction. You save us from ourselves! When we lose our lives in you we find ourselves all over again.

### PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

*My deliverer.* Dear Father, I want you to be my deliverer today from the fear of not doing an adequate job of teaching. I have prepared adequately and believe deeply in what I am about to teach. Why am I fearful? Because of what man might or might not think or say. Dear God, deliver me from such an obvious sin of pride. Am I teaching to please and honor you or not? Dear God, you know I am! Deliver me from nervousness that hinders the free flow of thoughts I want to express. Give me the confidence of your presence and your approval. This is enough. Praise your name!

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

### CONFESSION OF SIN

How easy it is to confess my total inadequacy in being a true humble servant! The prayer of Watchman Nee I want to make mine: "Let me love but not be thanked. Let me serve but not be recompensed. Let me spend my strength but not be noted. Let me suffer much but not be seen. Let me pour my wine without drinking. Let me break my bread without reaping." Dear God, in all these areas I am so woefully short. Forgive me!

*"Faithless."* If faith is taking you at your word, then many times I have been without faith. Dear God I do want to press on in action.

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

### SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Savior, like a shepherd lead us,  
Much we need Thy tender care;  
In Thy pleasant pastures feed us,  
For our use Thy folds prepare;  
Blessed Jesus, Blessed Jesus,  
Thou hast bought us, Thine we are;  
Blessed Jesus, Blessed Jesus,  
Thou hast bought us, Thine we are.

### HIS WORD

<sup>5</sup>"We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect <sup>6</sup>and even tried to desecrate the temple; so we seized him. <sup>8</sup>By examining him yourself you will be able to learn the truth about all these charges we are bringing against him."

<sup>9</sup>The Jews joined in the accusation, asserting that these things were true.

<sup>10</sup>When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied: "I know that for a number of years you have been a judge over this nation; so I gladly make my defense. <sup>11</sup>You can easily verify that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship.

<sup>12</sup>My accusers did not find me arguing with anyone at the temple, or stirring up a crowd in the synagogues or anywhere else in the city. <sup>13</sup>And they cannot prove to you the charges they are now making against me.

<sup>14</sup>However, I admit that I worship the God of our fathers, as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets, <sup>15</sup>and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. <sup>16</sup>So I

strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.

<sup>17</sup>“After an absence of several years, I came to Jerusalem to bring my people gifts for the poor and to present offerings. <sup>18</sup>I was ceremonially clean when they found me in the temple courts doing this. There was no crowd with me, nor was I involved in any disturbance. <sup>19</sup>But there are some Jews from the province of Asia, who ought to be here before you and bring charges if they have anything against me. <sup>20</sup>Or these who are here should state what crime they found in me when I stood before the Sanhedrin — <sup>21</sup>unless it was this one thing I shouted as I stood in their presence: ‘It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.’” — *Acts 24:5-21, NIV*

### READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I want to enter the court of Felix — as I know you did in that far off day. It is only removed from me — it is as if it were happening now with you. I want it to be that way with me! There were four charges laid against Paul. I want to turn each of them over and see them as you do. (1) “We have found this man a *troublemaker*.” Oh, blessed trouble! That men should be startled out of their tradition and sin and made to take a fresh look on their lives. (2) “Stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world.” Yea, verily! What Tertullus calls a riot we would call a revival! It is a fulfillment of the marching orders of his commander. Oh, that men would be so stirred today! (3) “He is a ring leader of the Nazarene sect.” When the Nazarene is also “Immanuel” who wouldn’t want to lead men to know Him? (4) “Tried to desecrate the temple.” Paul was supporting and worshipping in the temple.

### READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Lord, I do so want to see these words through your eyes — set them on fire — let them burn and light up my heart and life! I want the same polite respect for those who rule over me as Paul had with Felix. It would seem that Paul knew of the governor’s background and realized he appreciated more than the Jews knew the teaching of the good news. This could also be true today for men in authority. One by one Paul answers the charges. I want to read more than Paul’s answers; I want some answers for myself!

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

### READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

How full of possibilities is this text! (1) Thank you for such a wonderful troublemaker as Paul. We have not seen his kind before or since. (2) Thank you for the world-wide outreach of this indomitable apostle. (3) Thank you for our blessed Nazarene who died and rose again. (4) Thank you for the monumental effort of Paul to be conciliatory toward those who hated him. (5) Thank you for the thousand promises and prophecies fulfilled in our Lord. (6) Thank you for

that plain promise “that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.”

### READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“. . . I shouted as I stood in their presence.” “It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.” No wonder Paul shouted; he had something to shout about. Notice a couple of startling facts: (1) “All that are in the graves” — or all that are presently dead — or all that will be dead when Jesus comes will hear his voice and come forth! There will be a recreation much, much greater than the creation of Adam and Eve. At the resurrection God begins with nothing and recreates the whole human race. (2) This will be the eternal body in which we will live for eternity in heaven or in hell. No wonder Paul shouted.

### READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In Paul’s defense before Felix there is much to prompt prayer: (1) Dear Lord, help me to be the same kind of troublemaker as Paul. (2) How little effect does our witness have on the world as compared with Paul. (3) I am glad to belong to the same so-called sect as Paul. Make me worthy of the name. (4) What a wonder to consider my body the temple of your very self. May I be holy through my Lord. (5) May I be able to speak so clearly to those who question me. (6) I want the same clear conscience before God and man. (7) May the hope of the resurrection be ever before me.

### READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Surely there is much to be heard from you in this text: (1) “All good actions can be misconstrued to evil.” (2) “There will be indeed a resurrection of both righteous and wicked.” (3) “Charges not proven will not always be dismissed”

### INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

*Recording Ministries* — Point for prayer: *Evangelism through tapes*. *Gospel Recordings (GRI)* pioneered the use of simple messages on phonograph records for evangelizing minority people groups and more inaccessible populations. These messages are now commonly produced on tapes as well. Often these records and tapes are the *only* means available to communicate the gospel to them. Recordings can be made far more speedily than sending in a missionary to learn the language or translate portions of God’s Word. This is a vital tool for evangelism among unreached peoples.

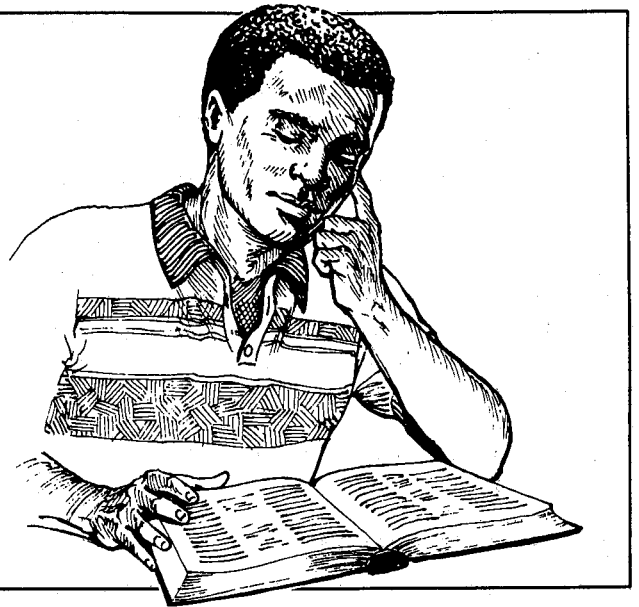
### SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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

# WEEK SIX

## —Friday—

*Strength, song, and salvation! You are all these to me. I want to renew these relationships.*



### PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“The Lord is *my strength, and song*, and is become *my salvation*” (Psa. 118:14). Because I have discussed strength and salvation, I should like to praise you for being the song of all men.

Men do not have a song to sing if you do not give it to them. Indeed men would not sing at all without you. I am thinking of songs of hope, joy and purpose. (1) Songs of hope. How totally hopeful is life with you! There is hope for every day — each of our days are ordered by you. We can say with the psalmist, “This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it” (Psa. 118:24). (2) Songs of joy — “Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go into them; I will praise the Lord” (Psa. 118:19). What a song of joy every man *could* sing if he would.

### PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

*The Lord is my song!* Amen! Out of my heart I am glad to acknowledge you as the only source of my *strength* — my *salvation* and my *song*. There are so many songs that will express my gratitude to you! John Kendrick Bangs, 1862-1922, said it so well — it is what I offer you today:

For summer rain, and winter’s sun,  
For autumn breezes crisp and sweet;  
For labors doing, to be done, and labors all complete;  
For April, May, and lovely June,  
For bud, and bird, and berried vine;  
For joys of morning, night and noon,  
My thanks, dear Lord, are Thine!

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

### CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, that I should not always be singing your praise is a sin. “Rejoice, in the Lord always” — is not only a truism, it is a glorious fact! I know that both my mental and physical health relate to my

praise or lack of it. But such being true, it is also true that cause for joy and happiness is always present! That I should even complain and gripe about anything seems totally out of character, i.e., not true or real or right. Forgive me. You are helping me in so many areas of my life. Thank you!

“*Judgment of others.*” This is impugning motives, i.e., deciding why men act or speak the way they do. Dear God, I have done this. Please forgive me. How absurd that I should do this. I *know* this is your job.

### SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Savior, more than life to me,  
I am clinging, clinging close to Thee;  
Let Thy precious blood applied,  
Keep me ever, ever near Thy side.  
Ev’ry day, ev’ry hour,  
Let me feel Thy cleansing pow’r;  
Let Thy precious blood applied,  
Keep me ever, ever near Thy side.

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

### HIS WORD

<sup>22</sup>Then Felix, who was well acquainted with the Way, adjourned the proceedings. “When Lysias the commander comes,” he said, “I will decide your case.”

<sup>23</sup>He ordered the centurion to keep Paul under guard but to give him some freedom and permit his friends to take care of his needs.

<sup>24</sup>Several days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess. He sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus. —Acts 24:22-24, NIV

### READ HIS WORD TO HIM

For how long is your servant Paul going to be confined to the four walls of imprisonment? Paul could not predict the response of Felix to the message of Paul, but you could! He was “well acquainted with the Way,” yet he did not want to walk in it. Why?

Our Lord answered this question (Dear Lord, help me as I think your thoughts): (1) "The deceitfulness of riches" — riches promise what they cannot fulfill — riches offer what they cannot give — riches give answers that are lies! (2) "The cares of this life" — how full of care and deceit was the life of Felix! Just to take up and be caught up in the duties of his office silenced your voice. (3) "The lust for other things" — the strong desires of sex, food, and status did it!

### READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I am not at all immune to temptations of Felix and Drusilla. There was something wonderfully fascinating about this new prisoner. Felix had not totally forgotten what he heard the first time, or what he had heard earlier. He wanted his Jewish wife to hear it. The scandal of his immoral life had spread over the whole countryside. How did he hear? Surely with some real interest. But how do *I* hear? Indulgence in sex — food or money dulls the hearing, paralyzes the senses, sears the conscience. I speak this not of Felix and Drusilla alone, but to my own heart. Faith does indeed come by hearing — of your word — clean out my inner ears that I might hear!

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

### READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

How good to do this! (1) Thank you for Felix's generous attitude toward Paul. (2) Thank you for all of Paul's friends who came to see him in the prison in Caesarea — was one of them Philip with his daughters? (3) Thank you for Paul's courage and transparent sincerity in speaking before these important people. (4) Thank you for the reasons for our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (5) Thank you for these evidences that demand a verdict from all who hear and understand. (6) Dear Lord, I want to hear Paul — again and again — thank you that I can do so. (7) Thank you for yourself who are the ultimate judge of us all.

### READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus." This would be so important — so full of purpose and meaning for both of these listeners. The evidences of our Lord's deity in his miracles. The obvious divine origin of his teaching. His wonderful death for our sins. His glorious resurrection. All such truths could be accepted by these two. Felix had for a long time known these facts. He now had someone to reinforce their meaning. How hard it is for a rich man (and woman) to allow God to rule their lives! Paul is yet speaking to me about faith in Christ Jesus my Lord! Will I allow him to rule in every area of my life? What about my personal relationship with him?

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

### READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What an opportunity Paul had to witness for you! In

his actions and attitudes petitions arise: (1) Dear Lord, forgive me for not praying more consistently for men in high places. (2) I do right now lift the governor of our state before your throne — guide his decisions. (3) For the chief of police in our city I pray — protect and use him today in his work. (4) Give me opportunity to emphasize the sacredness of marriage. (5) Thank you for the wonderful freedom we enjoy in America. (6) Dear Lord, give me the courage and wisdom Paul had as he spoke to Felix and Drusilla. (7) How I need grace to speak effectively this weekend about faith in Christ Jesus.

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

### READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

(1) "When the King of kings comes he will decide all cases of all men." (2) "There are those who are curious about faith in our Lord — use such an opportunity." (3) "Be as winsome and bold as Paul."

### INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

*Theological Education By Extension (TEE)* This is one of the exciting new tools in the hands of the Church for the training of church leaders. For years the churches of the West have used seminaries and Bible colleges for the training of full-time workers, but in the rest of the world this system has its weaknesses — too few of the right candidates; lack of funds; the poverty of the students; and those trained are often not the actual leaders in the churches. The rate of multiplication of churches in many parts of the world is so great that no residential training scheme could ever provide the workers needed. TEE is a system of training the actual leaders as they lead their congregations, by helping them to study in their homes using specially prepared teaching materials (programmed instruction) and frequent contacts with travelling lectures. TEE is cheap, practical, adaptable, and can be tailored to fit the individual student and his needs. TEE has spread to every continent. In 1980 there were at least 250 evangelical centers with over 27,000 students all over the world.

Points for prayer: (1) *Trained workers* to prepare teaching materials and maintain contact with the students. (2) *The students* — often studying under difficult conditions in simple homes, and in the midst of a very busy life. (3) *The enrichment of the churches* through a better teaching and pastoral ministry.

### SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine!  
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,  
Born of His spirit, washed in His blood.  
This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long;  
This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long.

## WEEK SIX

### —Saturday—

*In every battle of today I want to pause long enough to know "the Lord is on my side." Help me with humility as I worship you!*



#### PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

*"The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do unto me?"* (Psa. 118:6). Oh, that all men would be able to say this! If you are defending, protecting, providing for us how rich is our relationship! If you were not on man's side, then what? What a tragedy! There seems to me to be two ways you are for man, i.e., in his defense: (1) You are always on our side in provision — physically, morally, emotionally, in you we live and move and have our being or wholeness. The only one against us is Satan and ourselves. Bless your wonderful name! [Point 2 in next section.]

#### PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

*Personally* — (2) You are on our side because we are (gladly) on your side. In the face of old age — "I will not fear." In the presence of economical problems — "I will not fear." When problems loom up in domestic relationships — "I will not fear." If you are on our side what can man do to us? Man can do much to us, but nothing, not one thing he can do that defeats your purpose. The words of that blessed hymn express this thought so well:

He leadeth me, O blessed thought!  
O words with heav'nly comfort fraught!  
Whate'er I do, where'er I be,  
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.  
Lord, I would clasp thy hand in mine,  
Nor ever murmur nor repine,  
Content, whatever lot I see,  
Since 'tis my God that leadeth me.  
—Joseph H. Gilmore (1834-1918)

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

#### CONFESSION OF SIN

Shall I confess that you have always been with me, but I have not at all always been with you? What a

sad loss! Dear Father, I do want to practice your presence — to pause and bow my head and heart and wait for my mind to focus on you. Oh, that my mind should be so occupied with many things — so many things that I cannot — I will not — do not set it on you! Forgive me! How I wish my repentance were deeper — more wholly given to you! What does it mean to be a suppliant? To be pliable? I want to be clay in your hands. I do. Help me!

*"Seared conscience"* — as with a hot iron. Oh, Father, I do want a tender conscience. I do not want to expose my eyes, ears to the fire of sin. I will close my eyes, stop my ears.

#### SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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

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

#### HIS WORD

<sup>25</sup>As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, "That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you." <sup>26</sup>At the same time he was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him.

<sup>27</sup>When two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, but because Felix wanted to grant a favor to the Jews, he left Paul in prison. —Acts 24:25-27, NIV

#### READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear Lord, dear Lord, I want to hear the life-giving,

burning words from the lips of Paul. I know you can hear them now as then. Just what did he say about righteousness? Felix and Drusilla surely had no righteousness. Even by man's standards they were woefully short. But in the glaring light of your perfect righteousness all of us are dressed in filthy rags! We are dirty and guilty! But, oh, he told of the *gift* of righteousness — that we can be made the righteousness of yourself in him! Blessed be your grace! I have no real true, consistent control of myself! Except by your spirit as a fruit you give me self-control I shall have none! No man, no man is ready to be judged by the absolute standards of right and wrong found in your word! No wonder Felix was afraid!

### READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

*Just for me!* How lightly did Felix treat (ultimately) the message of Paul — and Paul as a person! He was once “terrified,” “trembled,” was “alarmed,” “took fright,” was “afraid.” But time has a way of putting out the fire. No it doesn't! It is not time; it is *choice*! Felix chose to desensitize his heart. Is that your choice — oh, my soul? No, no, I want to yield my heart — I want to immediately repent! I need not think about it — I already know what to do! What a calloused man was this governor! He often heard Paul and only hoped Paul would let down his guard and offer a bribe! Dear Lord, I relate to all of this — drive it deeply into my subconsciousness!

### READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Yes, yes. (1) Thank you for the total righteousness I find in you. My faith is counted for me as righteousness. In the good news of my Lord's death is your righteousness revealed and given! Thank you, oh, thank you! (2) Thank you for the fruit of the Spirit which is self-control. (3) Thank you that on judgment day I shall be just-as-if I had never sinned. (4) Thank you that I have found several, several convenient seasons to hear Paul (to hear you through him). (5) Thank you for the passing of time that always brings change — and it can be always for the better. (6) Thank you for the undaunted determination of Paul to be your prisoner — and not of Rome. (7) Thank you for Paul's example of hardships — I really haven't had any problems at all compared to him.

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

### READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“... he left Paul in prison.” I wonder if Paul prayed to be released? We can't imagine he didn't. Was he then disappointed that God did not answer his prayer? Did Paul ever think about the ingratitude of Felix? After all the days he had spoken to him — after all the good news Felix heard from Paul — after all the effort to put life in perspective, and most of all, after Felix learned the whole truth about Paul's unjust imprisonment — after all that “he left Paul in prison.” How did Paul relate this to the deliverance of Daniel from the lions' den? Or his own release from the prison in Philippi?

### READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Two years waiting in jail as an innocent man; there must have been many petitions — indeed there are today from this text: (1) Open my heart to a full appreciation of the righteousness we have in our Lord. (2) Keep us aware that there *is* a code of ethics which calls us to live a righteous life today. (3) Dear Lord, I need your motivation for self-control. (4) There *is* a judgment to come! Keep me ready if it should be today. (5) Dear Lord, there is a day when all men will be full of awe — keep me ready to welcome it not in fear but joy. (6) Guard me from the subtlety of bribing. (7) Paul and his Lord were of less importance for Felix than favor with the Jews.

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

### READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these few verses I hear you speak to me: (1) “Paul's example of speaking to the conscience is good for today.” (2) “Paul spoke frequently to Felix but did not convert him — he yet remained faithful.” (3) “Paul was unjustly imprisoned and unjustly kept there — we hear no complaint from him.”

### INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

*Urban Evangelization* is becoming one of the key challenges for the Church and for mission agencies. In 1985 there were 309 world class cities (those with a population of over a million), but it is expected that in 15 years' time there will be 433. Of these, 79 will have over four million people, and 24 will have over 10 million. The potential for ecological, economic and political catastrophes will greatly increase as the world becomes more urbanized. The cities are strategic for the gospel, but 57% of them have a non-Christian majority and are increasingly indifferent or hostile to the gospel. Pray for: (1) *Adequate strategies* for the evangelization of the major non-Christian cities of the world. The racial, ethnic, linguistic, social and religious complexities of modern cities make an all-out effort essential to reach each cultural unit of these cities. Los Angeles, for example, will soon have 300 distinct ethno-linguistic people groups, and be 60% Hispanic. (2) *Major international and regional conferences* which will increasingly focus on urban ministries over the coming decade. Pray that these may lead to effective cooperation among churches and agencies without which the task will be impossible to achieve.

### SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Come, Thou Almighty King,  
Help us Thy name to sing,  
Help us to praise,  
Father, all glorious,  
O'er all victorious,  
Come, and reign over us,  
Ancient of Days.