

Daily Devotionals-2

WHO IS LIKE YOU?

GOD ANSWERS....

You may know that there is no one like ([kemo](#)) Me in all the earth. - Exodus 9:14+

The Hebrew word for "like" is [kemo](#) and is used in multiple descriptions of Jehovah. Take a moment to meditate on the greatness of Jehovah, for indeed, **WHO IS LIKE HIM?**...

Exodus 15:11+ "Who is like ([kemo](#)) You among the gods, O LORD? Who is like ([kemo](#)) You, majestic in holiness, Awesome in praises, working wonders?"

2 Samuel 7:22 "For this reason You are great, O Lord GOD; for there is none like ([kemo](#)) You, and there is no God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears."

1 Kings 8:23 He said, "O LORD, the God of Israel, there is no God like ([kemo](#)) You in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing lovingkindness to Your servants who walk before You with all their heart,"

1 Chronicles 17:20 "O LORD, there is none like ([kemo](#)) You, nor is there any God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears."

2 Chronicles 6:14 He said, "O LORD, the God of Israel, there is no god like ([kemo](#)) You in heaven or on earth, keeping covenant and showing lovingkindness to Your servants who walk before You with all their heart;"

Psalm 35:10 All my bones will say, "LORD, who is like ([kemo](#)) You, Who delivers the afflicted from him who is too strong for him, And the afflicted and the needy from him who robs him?"

Psalm 71:19 For Your righteousness, O God, reaches to the heavens, You who have done great things; O God, who is like ([kemo](#)) You?

Psalm 86:8 There is no one like ([kemo](#)) You among the gods, O Lord, Nor are there any works like Yours.

Psalm 89:8 O LORD God of hosts, who is like ([kemo](#)) You, O mighty LORD? Your faithfulness also surrounds You.

Isaiah 44:7 'Who is like ([kemo](#)) Me? Let him proclaim and declare it; Yes, let him recount it to Me in order, From the time that I established the ancient nation. And let them declare to them the things that are coming And the events that are going to take place.

Isaiah 46:9 "Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like ([kemo](#)) Me,

Jeremiah 10:6-7 There is none like ([kemo](#)) You, O LORD; You are great, and great is Your Name in might. 7 Who would not fear You, O King of the nations? Indeed it is Your due! For among all the wise men of the nations And in all their kingdoms, There is none like ([kemo](#)) You.

Micah 7:18+ Who is a God like ([kemo](#)) You, who pardons iniquity And passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in unchanging love.

SUGGESTION - After [meditating on the preceding passages](#), now take a moment to Praise our great God, for **Who is like Him?** Play the song (link below) "**Who is Like You**" to help you praise...

**Our God majestic in holiness,
awesome in praises,
working wonders.**

In Jesus' mighty Name. Amen

- **Play and praise our Great and Mighty God** as you sing along to the words of [Who is Like You?](#)

IN NEED OF REVIVAL? Most of us frequently are if we are being honest. When somebody told Billy Sunday that revivals weren't necessary because they didn't last, the evangelist replied, "A bath doesn't last, but it's good to have one occasionally." So then, where do you think we could go to find the answer to the question of how we might experience revival? You might be surprised to discover that the best place is Psalm 119 which has more than 1/3 of all the uses of the word "revive" in the Bible.

- Ps 119:25 My soul cleaves to the dust; Revive me according to Your word.
- Ps 119:37 Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity, And revive me in Your ways.
- Ps 119:40 Behold, I long for Your precepts; Revive me through Your righteousness.
- Ps 119:50 This is my comfort in my affliction, That Your word has revived me.
- Ps 119:88 Revive me according to Your lovingkindness, So that I may keep the testimony of Your mouth.
- Ps 119:93 I will never forget Your precepts, For by them You have revived me.
- Ps 119:107 I am exceedingly afflicted; Revive me, O LORD, according to Your word.
- Ps 119:149 Hear my voice according to Your lovingkindness; Revive me, O LORD, according to Your ordinances.
- Ps 119:154 Plead my cause and redeem me; Revive me according to Your word.
- Ps 119:156 Great are Your mercies, O LORD; Revive me according to Your ordinances.
- Ps 119:159 Consider how I love Your precepts; Revive me, O LORD, according to Your lovingkindness.

As you observe those passages, do you think there is any association between personal revival and personal time in the pure milk of God's Word (1 Pe 2:2)? As you have surmised, that is a rhetorical question! Of course there is an association, and in fact they are intimately related - read especially Ps 119:25, Ps 119:50, Ps 119:93, Ps 119:107, Ps 119:149, Ps 119:154, Ps 119:156. C H Spurgeon said "If we want revival, we must revive our reverence for the Word of God."

If God seems distant and you feel dry in your spiritual life and are in need of the times of refreshing which come from the presence of the Lord (For ultimately His Presence is the essence of revival) then purpose in your heart (Da 1:8) over the next few days or weeks to meditate on (even memorize) the passages in Psalm 119 that link revival with intake of God's Word, beseeching God that from our "innermost being will flow rivers of living water." (Jn 7:38). I am speaking of a renewal of that exhilarating experience when we first fell in love with Jesus when His Spirit birthed us into the Kingdom of God (cf Rev 2:4-5).

"Therefore repent (Confess any known sin. Separate and "kill" any secret sin you have been trifling with) and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." (Acts 3:19)

"Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will show you great and mighty things, which you do not know." (Jer 33:3) And then "wait for the LORD and you will gain (literally exchange your weakness for His strength – 2 Cor 12:9) new strength and will mount up with wings like eagles, will run and not get tired, and will walk and not become weary," (Isa 40:31) "for thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, And also with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite. (Isa 57:15)

God's will for our life is revival, for when we are spiritually revived, the aroma of Christ is evident (2 Cor 2:14-16) and the Light of Jesus (Jn 8:12) is clear and bright and the Father is glorified as Jesus called for in Matthew 5:16 "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify (give a proper opinion of) your Father Who is in heaven."

And so we see that the "secret" to personal revival is simply to "re-Bible!" Let me suggest that instead of reading a larger portion of Scripture (as in most reading plans where too often it is in one ear and out the other), you take smaller "bites" of Scripture, giving yourself a chance to chew on the passages as you would a bite of select prime rib. And then you will be more likely to ponder that passage as you go throughout your day.

Send a revival, O Christ, my Lord,
Let it go over the land and sea;
Send it according to Thy dear Word,
And let it begin in me.
-McKinney

May God "revive His work in the midst of the years." (Hab 3:2) and may our prayer frequently be "Revive me according to Your Word." (Ps 119:25) In Jesus' Name. Amen

Related Resources:

- <https://preceptaustin.org/revival>
 - https://preceptaustin.org/john_738_commentary
 - https://preceptaustin.org/daniel_1_commentary#1:8
 - https://preceptaustin.org/1_peter_22_commentary
 - https://preceptaustin.org/isaiah_4031_commentary
 - https://preceptaustin.org/2corinthians_129_commentary
 - https://preceptaustin.org/matthew_514-16#5:16
 - https://preceptaustin.org/habakkuk_3_commentary#3:2
 - https://preceptaustin.org/a_primer_on_meditation
 - https://preceptaustin.org/Memorizing_His_Word
 - https://preceptaustin.org/topical_memory_verses
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OPENING THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN

Malachi 3:10+ "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.

While these words in Malachi were clearly addressed to Israel and thus apply directly to them, as with all Scripture, while there is one accurate interpretation, there can be many applications. Such is the case with this beautiful promise. Note that it is a conditional promise calling for one to bring the whole tithe to God, which in context refers to money and/or sacrificial animals. But the principle of offering up sacrifices to the Lord also applies to our prayers.

As someone wrote "Prayer is the **offering** of our sincere desires to God. It involves a sense of our unworthiness and necessities." And so are not our **prayers** an offering from our heart to God even as are our gifts of money, etc? Indeed, our prayers are a spiritual offering. If God calls us to honor Him by bringing the "tithe into the storehouse," it begs the question "What about the "tithe" so to speak of my prayers?" "Am I bringing my prayers into the storehouse (of the "storehouse" in Rev 8:3-4+ = "the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne.")? In Hebrews 13:15+ we see the exhortation "Through Him (Christ our Mediator) then, let us continually **offer** up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name." And Peter writes "you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to **offer up spiritual sacrifices** acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Pe 2:5) **James Rosscup** elaborates on the **spiritual sacrifices** believers are now to offer up to God...

To offer up is in the aorist tense, describing the entire process of the ongoing worship as comprising one composite unit, even with its many parts. The sacrifices are **spiritual**, in contrast to OT **material** sacrifices of bulls, goats, lambs, birds, and meal (Lev. 1–5). Even in the OT times God discerned when worship was with sacrifices coming **spiritually from the heart** (Ps. 51:17). Of this nature, the present aspects of worship are the many spiritual ministrations believers present to God, **many in prayers**...When these take the form of **prayers**, they are committed to the God Who delights in these as in the sweet incense and the morning sacrifice when these were pure in OT days (Ps 141:2). A part of them are what the writer to the Hebrews describes as "the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name" (Heb 13:15). (An Exposition on Prayer in the Bible)

And so surely **our prayers are an offering of spiritual sacrifices** to the Almighty God. What would be the efficacy of prayers ("large petitions") like Colossians 1:9-14+ if we offered them up to God as our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving? Would not our Almighty God Whose ways are great and marvelous (Rev 15:3+) be pleased to open up **"the windows of heaven and pour out for (us) a blessing until it overflows."**? And how can we be confident God will answer according to this promise in His Word? Because of His faithfulness to His own word which says "This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will (which is seen in His Word, like Col 1:9-14), He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him." (1 John 5:14-15+) Beloved, may God be pleased to open the windows of Heaven and pour out upon us the spiritual blessings including the blessing of personal, corporate and national revival in Jesus' Name. Amen

Worship Him today by singing this hymn from John Newton

[Come My Soul. Thy Suit Prepare](#)

Thou art coming to a King,
Large petitions with thee bring;
For His grace and power are such,
None can ever ask too much;
None can ever ask too much.

THE LITTLE FOXES

In Song of Solomon we read "Catch the foxes for us, The little foxes that are ruining the vineyards, While our vineyards are in blossom." (Song 2:15+).

One application equates the "little foxes" with "little" sins. This begs the question - are any sins really "little?" And "How does your garden grow?" (from nursery rhyme "[Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary](#)")

A man was walking down a hill in the woods when he stepped on a little twig. The twig rolled and he fell. As he got up and went on his way, he thought to himself "If that had been a big log, I would have seen it and climbed over. There would have been far less likelihood of my falling, for I would have been aware of the danger." The very fact that the twig was so small was what made it so dangerous.

In our daily spiritual walk, we are continually being tempted and continually in danger of being carried away and enticed by our own lusts and if we give in the result is sin (James 1:14-15+). The devil is a tempter and he cleverly places little temptations (like little twigs) that so easily entangle us (cf Hebrews 12:2+) and defeat us. His "little twigs" are generally more effective than "big logs" partly because they are so often unnoticed and partly because even if we do notice them, we consider them too small to really make a significant difference in our spiritual walk. In short we too often fail to heed Jesus' commands to "Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Mt 26:41+)

Application - Beware of the "little foxes," those temptations that seem so trivial and minimal as to easily escape our notice. Remember that it was only a "little thing," (one bite of a forbidden fruit) through which "sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned." (Ro 5:12+)

As Puritan **John Owen** wisely asked "Do you mortify? (read Colossians 3:5+) Do you make it your DAILY work? Be ALWAYS at it whilst you live; cease not a day from this work; be killing sin or it will be killing you." (See under point #1 - [Of the Mortification of Sin](#))

And the good news is that we are not left to ourselves to kill sin but as Paul instructed "By the Spirit (God's provision of supernatural power) put to death (Our responsibility) the deeds of the body and you will live." (Ro 8:13+). **Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones** once said this was the "most important statement in regard to sanctification" in the entire New Testament. (see link to sermon below).

Vice is a monster of so frightful [mien](#) (manner)

As to be hated needs but to be seen,
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We, first endure, then pity, then embrace.
-- Alexander Pope - Essay on Man

Sins are like circles in the water when a stone is thrown into it - one produces another. When anger was in Cain's heart (Ge 4:6-7), murder was not far off (Ge 4:8).

So let us "encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." (Hebrews 3:13+)

Here is a message by [Dr Steven Lawson \(One Passion Ministry\)](#) in which he encourages us to begin to pray a prayer that we may not have heretofore considered, but one which has the power to radically impact our life. Listen to Dr Lawson's hour long message [Show Me Your Glory](#). You will be blessed, edified, convicted and challenged!

Then Moses said,
"I pray You, show me Your glory!"

Before reading on, pause and make a list of the things you value most in life. Undoubtedly God, Jesus, family, etc are at the top of your list. But did you list "TIME?" Play the song entitled "[Redeem the Time](#)" - It is beautiful vocal by David Smallwood with well done, and very moving graphics. Father, may the words of this song cause us to soberly ponder the length of eternity and the brevity of our opportunity to live our life in the power of the Spirit for the glory of Christ. Amen

- After you have listened to **Redeem the Time**, Meditate on the following Scriptures that describe the length of our days on earth, paying special attention to the metaphors and similes the Spirit uses...
Job 7:6, 7 Job 9:25, 26 Job 14:1, 2 Ps 37:2 Ps 39:5, 6 Ps 90:4-6, 9-12, Ps 102:3, 11, Ps 103:15,16 Ps 144:4 Isa 38:12,13 Isa 40:6,7 Jas 1:10, 11, 4:14, 1Pe 1:24, 2 Ki 19:26 and finally Eph 5:16+
 - Now listen to Robin Mark's [When It's All Been Said and Done](#)
 - And if those Scriptures and songs do not convince you of the shortness and preciousness of time and our need to live each day in the power of the Spirit for the glory of God and the gospeling of His Son, then take a moment and watch this [classic illustration by Francis Chan](#) on the brevity of our lives on earth.
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YOUR PRAYERS ARE SAFELY STORED IN A BOWL -Revelation 5:8+ which describes "golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints." Now observe carefully that the next verse (Rev 5:9+) describes "men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation." Can you not see the relationship between **supplications** in verse 8 and **saved souls** in verse 9? Clearly and mysteriously, our prayers for hidden people groups (see [Ralph Winter in 1980](#) when there were 16000 hidden people groups) today will be effective in bringing souls to eternal salvation. Would you not consider storing up for yourself treasure in heaven daily for the rest of your life (Mt 6:20+)? Can I encourage you to take a step of faith and believe that God will hear your prayers for hidden people groups and that one day in eternity you will meet those for whom you have been praying day after day, year after year? And here is an easy way to pray for the hidden people groups daily - bookmark [Joshua Project](#) or download the APP from Joshua Project and select **daily notifications** and you will receive a daily text reminder with the name of the hidden people group for that day. (see also [Global Prayer Digest](#)) Now even if I forget to read the full entry for the people group of the day, the APP allows me to never miss a day praying for lost souls who have never heard the Name of Jesus (Acts 4:12+) and His saving Gospel (Ro 1:16+). This is your "[once in a lifetime opportunity!](#)" Praying for souls is something we can only do now on earth and is an exciting, rewarding way to redeem the time on earth for heaven! Indeed, if you (energized by the Spirit) pray now, your time in time eternal will be marvelously impacted by the presence of those you took time to pray for in time temporal! Don't procrastinate! Don't delay! [Bookmark the site](#) and/or download the Joshua Project APP today. If Paul were speaking to us today he might say something like this "So then, **while we have opportunity**, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith." (Gal 6:10+) Today is your "opportunity of a lifetime!" May our Father in Heaven grant you amazing grace by His Spirit to be energized and motivated to intercede for peoples you have never seen but will one day see in the presence of the Lamb Who Alone is Worthy (1 Th 2:19-20+). Amen.

Faith asks no signal from the skies,
To show that prayers accepted rise,
Our Priest is in his holy place,
And answers from the throne of grace.

"Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

(Daniel 12:3+)

See the full article - Praying for People from Every Tribe, Tongue, People and Nation

HOW SHOULD WE THEN LIVE?

Answer: Governed by the wisdom of God, not the foolishness of the flesh!

Paul elaborates in Galatians 3:3+ "Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" The New Living paraphrases it "How foolish can you be? After starting your Christian lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort?" The NET Bible asks "Are you so foolish? Although you began with the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by human effort?"

This is a question that we need to ask ourselves every day of our Christian life because "the flesh continually sets its strong (anti-God) desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are continually in opposition to one another, so that you may

not do the things that you please." (Gal 5:17+) Again the New Living paraphrases it "The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions."

There is only one "antidote" for overcoming the strong desires of our fallen flesh and that is by continual reliance on the omnipotent Spirit. And so Paul commands us to daily "walk by the Spirit, conducting your life submitting to the control and supernatural power of the Holy Spirit, and you will not carry out the unholy desires of the fallen flesh." (Gal 5:16+). Puritan John Owen said "We have no power from God unless we live in the persuasion that we have none of our own." In short, we need supernatural power to live a supernatural life.

How are you doing? Have you "short-circuited" the power supplied by failing to confess sin? (1 Jn 1:9+) Are you trying to live the Christian ("Christ" life) by relying on your own natural grit and determination? If so, quit trying and begin dying daily to self, [walking the way that Jesus walked](#), in dependence on the power of the Holy Spirit. There's an old chorus that says it about as simply as can be stated...

[Jesus Be Jesus In Me](#) (Play)

Jesus be Jesus in me, no longer me but Thee.
Resurrection power fill me this hour.
Jesus be Jesus in me.

The Holy Spirit and supernatural **power** are frequently associated = Luke 4:14+; Acts 1:8+; Acts 10:38; Ro 15:13+; Ro 15:19+, 1 Cor. 2:4; Eph. 3:16+; 1 Th. 1:5+; 2 Ti 1:7+). The power that compels us comes from the Spirit who indwells us. The upshot is that the Holy Spirit imparts power for daily living and for fruitful ministry (Jn 15:5). Does this describe your life and ministry? Is it "your" ministry or the Spirit of Jesus' ministry THROUGH you? The former is fueled by natural power, the latter by supernatural power. The former is fruitless, the latter is fruitful. The former gives you glory, the latter gives Jesus glory. Which describes your ministry? Remember that...

Bethlehem was God *with* us.

Calvary was God *for* us.

Pentecost is God *in* us.

D. L. Moody is reported to have said, "You might as well try to see without eyes, hear without ears, or breathe without lungs, as to try to live the Christian life without the Holy Spirit."

Bill Crowder gives us a pithy illustration of **Need for Power** - The first winter that my wife Marlene and I were married was marked by severe blizzards. I can vividly remember one Sunday when we awoke to find that the electricity had been knocked out by an ice storm. Huddled around a battery-powered radio for news on that frigid Sunday, we heard a most unusual announcement. The announcer, before giving the list of church services canceled due to the ice storm, said, "**The following churches will be closed due to lack of power.**" What an interesting comment! I knew what he meant, but I was struck by what he said. The idea of churches closing due to lack of power conjures up some spiritual parallels that directly tie into Jesus' promise of the Spirit. Just prior to His ascension, Jesus told His men in Acts 1:8, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." He directly attached the coming of the Spirit to the empowering of believers. ([Bill Crowder - RBC Ministry - Promise of the Spirit](#)) What a provocative illustration! What would the announcer say about many American churches today? They probably wouldn't be closed for lack of *activity*, but lack of *power* is another matter!

David Platt in his book [Radical](#) has a chapter entitled "Beginning at the End of Ourselves -- The Importance of Relying on God's Power (Subsection entitled - "Dependent on Ourselves or Desperate for His Spirit") – This is where I am most convicted as a pastor...I am part of a system that has created a whole host of means and methods, plans and strategies for doing church that require little if any power from God....I am frightened by the reality that the church I lead can carry on most of our activities....never realizing that the Holy Spirit of God is virtually absent from the picture." ([Radical- Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream](#))

Francis Chan – God put His Spirit in us so we could be known for our power. Sadly, most believers and churches are known for **talent** and **intellect** rather than **supernatural power**. What's worse is that we're okay with it.... I'm willing to bet there are millions of churchgoers across America who cannot confidently say they have experienced His (the Spirit's) presence or action in their lives over the past year. And many of them do not believe they can!" ([Forgotten God - Reversing Our Tragic Neglect of the Holy Spirit](#))

A W Tozer - If God were to take the Holy Spirit out of this world, much of what we're doing in our churches would go right on and nobody would know the difference!...I do not believe in a **repetition** of Pentecost, but I do believe in a **perpetuation** of Pentecost—and there is a vast difference between the two!

Lehman Strauss - The believer who is empowered for service must lose confidence in self (PETER PRE-PENTECOST) and depend wholly upon the Lord (PETER POST-PENTECOST).(Pentecost and the Holy Spirit)

Vance Havner - We are seeing much today of service without the Spirit. There is an appalling ignorance of the Person and work of the Holy Spirit in our great church bodies. It is not what is done **for** God that counts, but rather what is done **by** Him, the work of His Spirit through our yielded wills. Programs, propaganda, pep, personnel, these are not enough. There must be **power**. God's work must be done by God's people God's way. The Quakers got their name from the fact that they trembled under the power of the Spirit. At least their faith shook them! Too many of us today are shaky about what we believe but not shaken by what we believe! Too many people assemble at God's house who don't really believe in the power of God. Having begun in the Spirit, we live in the flesh (Gal 3:3+)... Never has the church had more wire stretched with less power in it. All is vain unless the Spirit of the Holy One comes down (cp Zech 4:6). Sad to say, we seem not even to know that we have not the Spirit in power. If He ceased His work many church members would never know the difference. Like Samson, we don't realize that He has departed (Jdg 16:19, 20, 21), but we keep "shaking ourselves" in the prescribed calisthenics.

A C Dixon - When we rely on organization, we get what organization can do. When we rely upon education, we get what education can do. When we rely on eloquence, we get what eloquence can do. But when we rely on the Holy Spirit, we get what God can do.

Kent Hughes - God's persistent work in our lives liberates us from the idea that we can live the Christian life on our own. Each time we acknowledge our inadequacy, he fills us with more of his Spirit so we can carry on his work. He will not fill our sails with the wind of the Holy Spirit unless we admit that the sails are empty. This requires humility and confession. The apostles were living in empty dependency until the filling came. The key to the Spirit-filled Christian life is found in a paradox: cultivating an attitude of perpetual emptiness brings with it a perpetual fullness. Jesus said it like this: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." (Preaching the Word)

Finally, consider letting God search your heart (Ps 139:23, 24) as you consider three application questions...

- Is my daily life consciously dependent on the Holy Spirit?
- Would I have missed Him if He had withdrawn from me this past week?
- Do I lean on Him for purity of life and power to obey God?

IS YOUR OUTLOOK AN "UPLOOK?"

Good morning. I received an email from someone in England about an error on my notes in Titus 2:11-14+ and as I was answering thought I would shoot this verse to you today -- it is surely one of the great verses in the entire Bible...

For (term of explanation - see what Paul is explaining in Titus 2:10+) the grace of God has appeared (THE FIRST COMING OF CHRIST), bringing salvation to all men (PAST TENSE SALVATION), **1 2** instructing (DISCIPLINING) us (FIRST THE NEGATIVE) to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and (NOW THE POSITIVE - BOTH [+] and [-] ONLY POSSIBLE AS WE RELY ON THE HOLY SPIRIT - Ro 8:13+) to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present ("evil" - Gal 1:4+) age (PRESENT TENSE SALVATION), **13** (present tense = continually) looking for (FUTURE TENSE SALVATION) the Blessed Hope (Phillips = "the glorious dénouement") and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus (THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST), **14** Who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession (WE ARE NOT OUR OWN! cf 1 Cor 6:19-20+), zealous for good (GOD = Jn 15:5) deeds.

You can see why this verse is so powerful -- It has both the **First and Second Coming of Christ** and all **Three "Tenses" of Salvation** -

1. **PAST TENSE (JUSTIFICATION)** = I have been saved by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9+).
2. **PRESENT TENSE (SANCTIFICATION)** - I am being saved daily by grace through faith and dependence on the Holy Spirit (cf Gal 3:3+)
3. **FUTURE TENSE (GLORIFICATION)** = I will be saved by grace (1 Pe 1:13+) for when we see Him we will be like Him (1 Jn 3:2+, 1 Jn 3:3+)

Note the powerful principle Paul gives us which should motivate and enable daily Spirit energized living (cf Php 2:12+, Php 2:13NLT+) - Titus 2:13 = Speaks about our **LOOKING** while Titus 2:12 = Speaks about our **LIVING**. Do you see the principle? Here it is...

WHAT (WHO) we are LOOKING for, will (should) impact WHAT (WHO) we are LIVING for. **Expectant looking** is another name for "[Vertical Vision](#)" whereas living for this passing world is "**Horizontal Vision.**"

There was a movie by Buster Keaton in 1924 called "The Navigator" which has a picture that wonderfully illustrates what our daily attitude toward Christ's Second Coming should "look like"...

Buster Keaton looking expectantly
["The Navigator"](#) 1924

Stated another way,

EXPECTANT Looking Is the "Antidote" for APATHETIC Living

It is simple, but powerful and Biblical! If you are *looking* for Jesus to return, you are far more likely to be denying ungodliness and worldly desires, and instead *living* sensibly, righteously and godly in this present evil age! If we are looking for Him, we will be living for Him. This **future** hope (absolute assurance God will do good to us in the future) empowers **present** behavior. Have you allowed the world to weigh you down and cause you to take your eyes off of His return? Are you living more for your passing pleasure than for His glorious appearing? Don't be downcast. Confess it. Repent. And begin to live as if His return could be today (because it COULD BE TODAY!).

You will be amazed at what a difference "a DAY" will make in your personal perspective, prerogatives and practices!

[Dr M R De Haan](#) founder of [Our Daily Bread ministry](#) kept a [motto](#) on his desk which read

PERHAPS TODAY!

And all God's people say "Yes! Amen! Maranatha!"

William Barclay who is [not always totally orthodox](#) did have a great comment on this "**present age**" in Titus 2:12:

Chrysostom said that worldly things are things which do not pass over with us into heaven but are dissolved together with this present world. A man is very short-sighted if he sets all his heart and expends all his labour on things which he must leave behind when he quits this world. But an even simpler interpretation of worldly desires is that they are for things we could not show to God.

PRAYER: Father in Heaven, by Your Spirit, please embed the manifold truths of Titus 2:11-14 deeply into our hearts, [emblazoning](#) them on our "mind's eye," even giving us a desire to memorize them, but even more a passion to live them out in the enabling power of Your Spirit and for the glory of Your Son, the Lamb of God, Christ Jesus, Who takes away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29). Amen

INSIGHT: ONE IN EVERY 30 NT VERSES REFER TO THE SECOND COMING! Both the Old and New Testaments are filled with promises of the Second Coming of Christ. More than a fourth of the Bible is predictive prophecy and about one third is not yet fulfilled. Many of these unfulfilled predictions refer to the Second Coming. Both the Old and New Testaments are full of promises about the return of Jesus Christ. There are 1,845 references to it in the Old Testament, and 17 Old Testament books speak of the Second Coming. Of the 260 chapters in the New Testament, there are 318 references to the Second Coming – one out of every 30 verses! Twenty-three of the twenty-seven New Testament books refer to this great event. Three of the four other books are single-chapter letters written to individuals concerning a particular subject, and the fourth is Galatians, which does imply Christ's coming again. **For every prophecy on the first coming of Christ, there are EIGHT on Christ's second coming.**

Alexander MacLaren rightly said "The apostolic church thought more about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ than about death and heaven. The early Christians were looking, not for a **cleft** in the ground called a **grave** but for a **cleavage** in the sky called **Glor**y."

**HOW IS YOUR VISION?
IS IT VERTICAL OR HORIZONTAL?**

WATCHING AND WAITING - The following are a "string of pearls" taken from God's breathed Word (2 Ti 3:16+). May God our Father Himself, by His Holy Spirit, speak truth to your innermost being regarding the mind renewing, heart reviving power of His Word of "**Vertical Vision**", in the Name of Jesus, the Living Word. Amen

This thought would give me hope, and through my struggle I would eagerly wait until my change comes. I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God. And so my soul waits for the Lord more than the watchmen for the morning; indeed, more than the watchmen for the morning, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. So I will wait for the LORD Who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob. I will even look eagerly for Him. I will watch expectantly for the LORD. I will wait for the God of my salvation, waiting expectantly for God's Son from heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, Who delivers us from the wrath to come. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ Who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. We shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting eagerly for the hope of righteousness, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ (Who promised) "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done." Maranatha. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen. (Job 14:14, 19:26, 27, Ps 130:6, Titus 2:13-14, Isaiah 8:17, Micah 7:7, 1 Th 1:10, Phil 3:19-20, 1 Cor 15:51-52, 1 John 3:2, Gal 5:5, 1 Cor 1:7, Rev 22:12, 1 Cor 16:22-24)

MARANATHA!

OUR LORD, COME QUICKLY!

The psalmist speaks of vertical vision as the antidote for horizontal vision...

O my God, my soul is in despair within me; (HORIZONTAL)
Therefore I remember Thee from the land of the Jordan, (VERTICAL)
And the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar
- Psalm 42:6

Here is the English of the Greek Septuagint -

O my God, my soul **has been troubled** (tarasso - shaken or stirred up, troubled, agitated, distressed, acute mental/spiritual agitation) within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the little hill.

My God - Not "O God," but "My God!" Although in despair, he has not jettisoned his relationship with the Almighty. God is still his high "Prize" and he acknowledges this truth, but clearly his faith is "under assault." As **Spurgeon** said "You cannot praise another man's God. Possession is not only nine points of the law, but it is all the points of the Gospel."

Despair ([07817](#)) (shachach/sahah) means literally to be brought low and figuratively to be humbled, to have one's arrogance brought down (Is 2:9, 11, 17, 5:15), to be in despair (Ps 42:5, 6, 11, 43:5) In some contexts it means to bow down in the sense of doing obeisance before someone (Isa 60:14 Pr 14:19). It can mean to bow in sense of to walk in a stooped posture, for example describing one who is dejected as in a period of mourning (Ps 35:14 Ps 38:6 or to crouch - Job 38:40). Physically (literally) bringing a wall down (Isa 25:12, crumbling a mountain Hab 3:6).

Note that the Greek word used to translate **despair** (**shachach**) is **tarasso** which is a strong word, meaning "to deeply upset," "to deeply disturb," "to perplex," or "to create fear." Most of the NT uses of **tarasso** describe the state of one's mind as stirred up, agitated or experiencing inward commotion. The passive voice is always used in the NT with a negative meaning, conveying the sense of emotional disturbance or inner turmoil, so that one is unsettled, thrown into confusion, or disturbed by various emotions, including excitement, perplexity, fear or trepidation. John records that even Jesus experienced this emotion - "When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was **troubled**." (John 11:33) And again "Now My soul has become **troubled**; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour '? But for this purpose I came to this hour." (John 12:27) And again "When Jesus had said this, He became **troubled** in spirit, and testified and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me."" (John 13:21). The OT antidote for **despair** is to preach a sermon of hope to your soul. In John 14:1 Jesus gave His disciples instructions on how to fight **despair** declaring "**Do not let** your heart be **troubled** (present

imperative with a negative); believe (present tense or present imperative) in God, believe (present tense or present imperative) also in Me." and again "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. **Do not let** your heart be **troubled** (present imperative with a negative), nor **let** it be **fearful** (present imperative with a negative)." (John 14:27) Notice the repetition of the present imperatives (positive and negative) which are commands calling for this attitude to be one's habitual practice or lifestyle. How is this possible? While it is **impossible**, it is "**Him possible!**" In other words, the only way to obey Jesus' commands is by continually (daily) surrendering to the enabling power of the Holy Spirit Who indwells us and gives us both the desire and the power to obey! (See Php 2:13NLT+, cf Eph 5:18+, Gal 5:16+) Notice that in John 14:1 Jesus' "antidote" for a troubled mind is to continually believe in God and in Him, again, something we must choose to do (100% our responsibility), but can only accomplish with the Spirit's enabling power (100% God's sovereign provision). In John 14:27 Jesus' "antidote" for a troubled mind is His gift of supernatural, inner peace, peace independent of one's circumstances. It follows that when our mind is troubled we need to do what Jeremiah did (see notes below on Lamentations) when he was feeling hopeless - "This I recall to my mind." (Lam 3:21). What is "**this**"? The truth about God (e.g., Lam 3:22,23) and in the present context the truth that Jesus has given us His peace! This is not "mind over matter," but it is choosing (enabled by the Spirit) to set one's mind on the truth about God.

The etymology of the English word "**despair**" is enlightening - **Despair** - early 14 century, from stem of Old French *desperer* "be dismayed, lose hope, despair," from Latin *desperare* "to despair, to lose all hope," from de- "without" (see *de-*) + *sperare* "to hope," from spes "hope" (see *sperate*). Notice that the literally (etymological) rendering of "**despair**" is "no hope!" It is a state of depressed mood and hopelessness. The Cambridge Dictionary says **despair** is "the feeling that there is no hope and that you can do nothing to improve a difficult or worrying situation."

When our lives are heavy laden,
Cold and bleak as winter long,
Stir the embers in our hearts, Lord;
Make Your flame burn bright and strong.
—Kieda

Spurgeon writes - O my God, my soul is cast down within me. Perhaps the spasm of despondency returned. With God the song begins the second time more nearly than the first. The singer was also a little more tranquil. Outward expression of desire was gone; there was no visible panting; the sorrow was now all restrained within doors. Within or upon himself he was cast down; it may well be so while our thoughts look more within than upward. If self were to furnish comfort, we should have but poor provender. There is no solid foundation for comfort in such fickle frames as our heart is subject to. It is well to tell the Lord how we feel, and the more plain the confession the better. Therefore will I remember thee. Blessed downcasting which drives us to so sure a rock of refuge as thee, O Lord! From the hill Mizar. He recalls his seasons of choice communion by the river and among the hills, and especially that dearest hour upon the little hill where love spoke her sweetest language and revealed her nearest fellowship. It is great wisdom to store up in memory our choice occasions of converse with heaven; we may want them another day, when the Lord is slow in bringing back his banished ones, and our soul is aching with fear. Or does David mean that even where he was he would think of his God; does he declare that, forgetful of time and place, he would count Hermon as holy as Zion, and even Mizar, that insignificant rising ground, as glorious as the mountains which are round about Jerusalem!"

CHOOSE "VERTICAL VISION" INSTEAD OF "HORIZONTAL VISION"

Therefore - Always be alert to this **term of conclusion** asking what it is it "*there for?*" Some uses will be very obvious as in the present passage, but other uses will not be so obvious and will force you to re-read the preceding context to determine what the writer is concluding. In this case, the psalmist concludes that his inner feeling of hopelessness calls for immediate action. His "antidote" for those "horizontal" thoughts ("**horizontal vision**") that drag him down is to inject "vertical" thoughts ("**vertical vision**"). In other words, instead of focusing on the problem, focus on the Problem Solver. Instead of looking horizontally (in a sense looking at what one sees on the earthly plane), make the choice to set the eyes of your heart vertically, looking at heavenly things. The first is temporal and passing, while the second is eternal and forever.

**When you come to that place in your life
where you discover that Jesus is all that you have,
you then discover that Jesus is all that you need!**

I remember Thee - This is an act of faith, for faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). The psalmist cannot literally "see" God, but in choosing to "remember Thee" he is choosing by faith to "see" God. As Paul said now in these mortal, temporal bodies, "we walk by faith, not by sight." Indeed, earlier Paul had written "Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen ("**horizontal**

vision"), but at the things which are not seen ("**vertical vision**"); for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:16-18+)

I remember Thee - This is one key to battling recurring despair, despondency or depression. What does the psalmist remember about God? He does not specifically say in this verse but read the following lines (especially Psalm 42:8). The *what* is not as important as the *Who*! When we set our minds on the things above ("**Vertical Vision**" - Col 3:2+ cp Col 3:1+), the things of this world (including despair) "will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace." ([Pause and sing "Turn Your Eyes on Jesus"](#)) Peter says it this way "Therefore, gird (prepare) your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, **fix your hope** (aorist imperative - obey by relying on the Spirit to give you the desire and power - Php 2:13NLT+) completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ ("**Vertical Vision**"). (1 Peter 1:13+) So say to your soul, "Soul, remember God. Remember Jesus, the Lover of my soul. Remember His attributes. Remember His power. Remember His imminent return! Remember that your Jesus Who holds the entire universe together by the Word of His power (Hebrews 1:3+, cf Col 1:17+) is able to hold you in the midst of the raging storm! Jesus came to turn our darkness into light and to transform our despair into hope. Indeed, the One Who holds the universe intact will never lose His grip on you!

Recommended Resource for Restoring Your "Vertical Vision" - [Fix Your Eyes on Jesus by Anne Ortlund](#)

We see this same spiritual dynamic at work in the life of the "weeping prophet" Jeremiah who recorded...

So I say, "My strength has perished, And so has my hope from the LORD."

19 Remember my affliction and my wandering, the wormwood and bitterness.

20 Surely my soul remembers And is bowed down within me.

21 This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope.

22 The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail.

23 They are new every morning; Great is Thy faithfulness.

24 "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I have hope in Him."

25 The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, To the person who seeks Him.(Lam 3:18-25)

Notice how Jeremiah recalled to his mind truths about God, specifically His ceaseless lovingkindnesses (plural - cp the psalmist's remembrance of Jehovah's lovingkindness in Ps 42:8) and His never failing compassions (plural!) And so in this short passage we see the prophet traverse from the slough of despond ("my hope" perished ~ "**horizontal vision**") to the fountain of hope ("therefore I have hope" ~ "**vertical vision**") because he chose to remember God. He chose to recall that the anchor of God's faithfulness holds firm in the strongest storms! (Hebrews 6:19+) When you are in despair the last place you want to go is to the Word of God (and the God of the Word), but it is then that we must cry out for His help in time of need (just in the nick of time, cp Heb 4:16NLT+ = "*appropriate help and well-timed help, coming just when we need it*" - Amplified), knowing that even the power to cry out is provided by His all powerful Spirit Who will not allow us to be tested beyond what we are able to endure (read 1 Corinthians 10:13+).

So next time **despair** "knocks" at the door of your heart and mind, enabled by the Holy Spirit, send Philippians 4:8-9 to *answer the door*.....

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, **let your mind dwell** (present imperative - only possible to obey as we surrender to and depend on the indwelling Spirit) on these things ("**Vertical Vision**"). The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, **practice** (present imperative - again depend on Spirit, not self) these things; and the God of peace shall be with you. (Philippians 4:8-9-note)

C. S. Lewis and his older brother, Warren (Warnie), endured several terms at Wynyard, an English boarding school for boys. The headmaster was a cruel man who made life unbearable for everyone there. Decades later, Warnie wrote in his understated dry wit, "*I am now sixty-four and a bit, and have never yet been in a situation in which I have not had the consolation of reflecting that at any rate I was better off than I was at Wynyard.*" Most of us can recall a similar dark and difficult time in our lives and be grateful that we're better off now than we were then (**Ed**: cp "Therefore I remember Thee"). ([The Low Point](#))

Phil Newton - Charles H. Spurgeon, the best-known preacher of the 19th century, faced times of melancholy despair. On one such occasion he was taking a holiday and slipped into a Methodist Church for Sunday worship. He said, "I felt at that time very weary, and very sad, and very heavy at heart; and I began to doubt in my own mind whether I really enjoyed the things which I preached to others. It seemed to be a dreadful thing for me to be only a waiter, and not a guest, at the gospel feast." The man conducting the service was an engineer, and rather than developing his own sermon, he had borrowed one of Spurgeon's. He did not know that the London pastor was in his service. As he preached, Spurgeon commented, "The tears flowed freely from my eyes; I was moved to the deepest emotion by every sentence of the sermon, and I felt all my difficulty removed, for the gospel, I saw, was very dear to me,

and had a wonderful effect upon my own heart." He later introduced himself to the shocked speaker, and told him that it was just the sermon that he needed to hear [C. H. Spurgeon Autobiography: The Full Years, vol 2, 365-366]. If someone like Spurgeon occasionally struggled with doubts due to his bent of personality, do not be surprised if that happens to you. Like Spurgeon, find your assurance once again in the gospel. (Sermon on Matthew)

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WATCHING AND WAITING (The following are a "string of pearls" from Scriptures that speak of **Vertical Vision**) -

This thought would give me hope, and through my struggle I would eagerly wait until my change comes. I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God. And so my soul waits for the Lord more than the watchmen for the morning; indeed, more than the watchmen for the morning, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. So I will wait for the LORD Who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob. I will even look eagerly for Him. I will watch expectantly for the LORD. I will wait for the God of my salvation, waiting expectantly for God's Son from heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, Who delivers us from the wrath to come. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait (in great anticipation and patience) for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ Who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. We shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. For we through (the enabling power of) the Spirit, by faith, are waiting eagerly for the hope (absolute certainty) of righteousness, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ (Who promised) "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done." Maranatha. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen. (Job 14:14, 19:26, 27, Ps 130:6, Titus 2:13-14, Isaiah 8:17, Micah 7:7, 1 Th 1:10, Phil 3:19-20, 1 Cor 15:51-52, 1 John 3:2, Gal 5:5, 1 Cor 1:7, Rev 22:12, 1 Cor 16:22-24)

MARANATHA!
OUR LORD,
COME QUICKLY!

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Vertical versus Horizontal Vision - Years ago, a minister waited in line to have his car filled with gas just before a long holiday weekend. The attendant worked quickly, but there were many cars ahead of him in front of the service station. Finally, the attendant motioned him toward a vacant pump. "Reverend," said the young man, "sorry about the delay. It seems as if everyone waits until the last minute to get ready for a long trip." The minister chuckled, "I know what you mean. It's the same in my business." If ours is an eternal perspective, we will be gripped by the biblical truth that our brief earthly sojourn is designed to prepare us for an eternal heavenly citizenship. The more we align ourselves with this perspective, the more it will have an impact on our short-term and long-term priorities. (Kenneth Boa)

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Abram's Bad Example of Horizontal Vision - Genesis 12:10-20-note gives us an example from Abram's life of choosing "Horizontal Vision" over "Vertical Vision." As Warren Wiersbe says Abram "moved from confidence to fear. When you are in the place of God's choosing, you don't ever need to be afraid; for faith and fear cannot dwell in the same heart (Isa. 12:2; Mark 4:40). The fear of God is the fear that conquers every fear (Ps. 112; Isa. 8:13); but "the fear of man brings a snare" (Prov. 29:25, NKJV). God had repeatedly said "I will" to Abraham, but now Abraham was saying "They will" (Gen. 12:12, italics added). He took his eyes off the Lord and started looking at people." Abram reasoned within himself, rather than praying outside himself. He feared for his life and forgot his right fear of God. He reasoned that Pharaoh would see Sarai's beauty, covet her and kill him to fulfill his lusts. He forgot that God had given him a promise to bless the world through a seed (descendant) from his and Sarai's line, something that could not have occurred if he were killed! In short, he looked at the (possible) problem instead of looking at his Protector!

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Charles Swindoll - Our past is like an art gallery. Walking down those corridors of our memory is like walking through an art gallery. On the walls are all of yesterday's pictures: our home, our childhood, our parents, our rearing, the heartaches, the difficulties, the joys and triumphs as well as the abuses and the inequities of our life. Since Jesus Christ our Lord is the same yesterday and today and forever, then we can take the Christ of today and walk with Him into our yesterday and ask Him to remove the pictures that bring

bad or defeating memories. In other words, the Christian can let Jesus invade yesterday and deal with those years of affliction—those years which the locusts have eaten (Joel 2:25–26)—and remove those scenes from the corridors of our lives. I have them. You have them. We need to let Him leave the murals that bring pleasure and victory and take down from the walls those things that bring **despair** and defeat. (David: A Man of Passion and Destiny)

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Here is a devotional from [Dennis Fisher](#) that emphasizes the value of "**Vertical Vision**" over "**Horizontal Vision**" - [Perspective From The Clouds](#) (Read: Job 3:3-5; 42:5-6) "I have heard of You . . . but now my eye sees You." (Job 42:5) In 1927 the silent film Wings, a World War I film about two American aviators, won the first Academy Award for Best Picture. When it was being filmed, production stopped for several days. Frustrated producers asked the director why. He responded: "All we have is blue sky. The conflict in the air will not be as visible without clouds. Clouds bring perspective." He was right. Only by seeing aerial combat with clouds as a backdrop could the viewer see what was really going on. We often wish for blue skies instead of storm clouds. But cloudy skies may reveal God's faithfulness. We gain perspective on how God has been faithful in our trials as we look back on the clouds. At the beginning of his terrible suffering, Job lamented: "May the day perish on which I was born May a cloud settle on it" (Job 3:3-5). His experience of despair continued for a long time until God spoke. Then Job exclaimed, "I have heard of You . . . but now my eye sees You" (42:5). Job had encountered the sovereign Creator, and that changed his perspective on God's purposes. Do clouds of trouble fill your skies today? Sooner than you think, God may use these clouds to help you gain perspective on His faithfulness. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God, give us wings to rise above
The clouds of trial that block the sun,
To soar above gray skies and see
The love and goodness of Your Son.
—Sper

Often the clouds of sorrow reveal the sunshine of His face.
—Jasper

INSIGHT: In Job 3:3-5, we have what many Bible scholars call Job's soliloquy. After a time of quiet agony, the great Old Testament saint breaks his silence and lets out his anguish. He calls for darkness and then destruction to overwhelm him. Instead of seeing God's light-filled and good creation, Job feels he is living in a world of darkness. But in Job 42:5-6, we see the resolution to Job's conflict. Out of the whirlwind, God challenges Job and points to creation as a witness to His reality. Although he is never told that his sufferings are the result of spiritual warfare from the devil, Job submits to the sovereignty of God and experiences restoration.

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Dave Branon's devotional "[Out Of The Darkness](#)" is based on Psalm 77:1-15 where Asaph writes "I cried out to God Who is so great a God as our God?" (Psalm 77:1,13). Branon writes "I don't know what desperate situation gripped Asaph, the writer of Psalm 77, but I've heard, and made, similar laments. Over the past dozen years since I lost my daughter, many others who have experienced the loss of a loved one have shared with me heartbreaking sentiments like these: Crying out to God (Ps 77:1). Stretching empty arms heavenward (Ps 77:2). Experiencing troubling thoughts about God because of horrible circumstances (Ps 77:3). Enduring unspeakable trouble (Ps 77:4). Cowering under the feeling of being cast aside (Ps 77:7). Fearing failed promises (Ps 77:8). Fearing a lack of mercy (Ps 77:8). **But a turnaround occurs for Asaph** in Ps 77:10 through a **recollection of God's great works**. Thoughts turn to God's love. To memories of what He has done. To His marvelous deeds of old. To the comfort of God's faithfulness and mercy. To reminders of God's wonders and greatness. To His strength and redemption. **Despair** is real in this life, and answers do not come easily. Yet in the darkness—as we remember God's glory, majesty, power, and love—our despair can slowly subside. Like Asaph, we can rehearse God's acts, especially the salvation He brought through Jesus, and we can return to where we once were—resting gratefully in His mighty love. Lord, we cannot fathom the depth of Your character or the wisdom of Your actions when trouble visits us. Help us to inch our way back into Your arms through a rehearsal of Your goodness and a recollection of Your glorious love.

Branon then writes "Remembering the past can bring hope to the present." I would add the qualifier that we must remember the past times when God has moved in our lives, when the hand of the Almighty took hold of our stumbling hand, when in our weakness, we experienced the very real truth that His grace is sufficient (2 Cor 12:9), etc. In other words like the psalmist say "**Therefore I remember Thee!**" ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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A Gift Of Hope - He shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. —Judges 13:5 - When a powerful typhoon swept

through the city of Tacloban, Philippines, in 2013, an estimated 10,000 people died, and many who survived found themselves homeless and jobless. Necessities became scarce. Three months later, while the town was still struggling to dig itself out from the destruction, a baby was born on a roadside near Tacloban amid torrents of rain and strong wind. Although the weather brought back painful memories, residents worked together to find a midwife and transport the mother and newborn to a clinic. The baby survived, thrived, and became a symbol of hope during a time of despair. Forty years of Philistine oppression marked a grim period in Israel's national history. During this time, an angel informed an Israelite woman that she would give birth to a special son (Judg. 13:3). According to the angel, the baby would be a Nazirite—a man set apart to God—and would “begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines” (v.5). The infant, Samson, was a gift of hope born in a troubled time. **Trouble is unavoidable, yet Jesus has the power to rescue us from despair.** Christ was born “to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace” (Luke 1:76-79). Lord, help me to see beyond my circumstances and put my hope in You. All authority and power are Yours. Remind me of Your goodness, and let me rest in Your love. Jesus is the hope that calms life's storms. ([Jennifer Benson Schuldt](#)) ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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[Dennis Fisher](#) has written a devotional entitled [God's Enduring Word](#) - Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. Matthew 24:35 At the beginning of World War II, aerial bombings flattened much of Warsaw, Poland. Cement blocks, ruptured plumbing, and shards of glass lay strewn across the great city. In the downtown area, however, most of one damaged building still stubbornly stood. It was the Polish headquarters for the British and Foreign Bible Society. Still legible on a surviving wall were these words: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away” (Matt. 24:35). Jesus made that statement to encourage His disciples when they asked Him about the “end of the age” (v. 3). But His words also give us courage in the midst of our embattled situation today. Standing in the rubble of our shattered dreams, we can still find confidence in God's indestructible character, sovereignty, and promises. His enduring Word assures us of His unfailing love. The psalmist wrote: “Your word, Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens” (Ps. 119:89). But it is more than the word of the Lord; it is His very character. That is why the psalmist could also say, “Your faithfulness continues through all generations” (Ps 119:90). As we face devastating experiences, we can define them either in terms of despair or of hope. Because God will not abandon us to our circumstances, we can confidently choose hope. His enduring Word assures us of His unfailing love. Thank You, Lord, for the gift of Your Word. Thank You for its truth, its timelessness, and the guidance You give us by that Word. Help us believe and trust everything You say. We can trust God's unchanging Word. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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All Safe! All Well! - Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. Hebrews 11:1 - In January 1915, the ship Endurance was trapped and crushed in the ice off the coast of Antarctica. The group of polar explorers, led by Ernest Shackleton, survived and managed to reach Elephant Island in three small lifeboats. Trapped on this uninhabited island, far from normal shipping lanes, they had one hope. On April 24, 1916, 22 men watched as Shackleton and five comrades set out in a tiny lifeboat for South Georgia, an island 800 miles away. The odds seemed impossible, and if they failed, they would all certainly die. What joy, then, when more than four months later a boat appeared on the horizon with Shackleton on its bow shouting, “Are you all well?” And the call came back, “All safe! All well!” What held those men together and kept them alive over those months? Faith and hope placed in one man. They believed that Shackleton would find a way to save them. This human example of faith and hope echoes the faith of the heroes listed in Hebrews 11. Their faith in the “substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” kept them going through great difficulties and trials (Heb. 11:1 nkjv). **As we look out upon the horizon of our own problems (Ed: I call this "horizontal" thinking or "horizontal vision"), may we not despair. May we have hope through the certainty of our faith in the One Man—Jesus, our God and Savior (Ed: I call this "vertical" thinking or "vertical vision").** Thank You, Father, for the promise of forgiveness made possible by Jesus. May that promise lighten the darkest of our days. The hope of Jesus shines brightly even on our darkest day. We can take courage and hope from those who have preceded us in the life of faith. The author of Hebrews lists many examples of people who acted in faith despite their circumstances and despite the fact that they had not yet received what “had been promised” (Heb 11:39). This is why Hebrews 11 begins by saying that “faith is the confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” (J.R. Hudberg) - [By Randy Kilgore](#)

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Spurgeon on I remember Thee - Oh, what a mercy it is to be able to look back upon our past experiences of God's mercy! How delightful it is to remember what the Lord was, to us in days gone by, for he is the same God still. When you are like in the great storm, when neither sun, nor moon, nor stars for many days appeared, it is very pleasant to remember that the sun, moon, and stars did shine in the past, and that they will shine forth again. From the little hill I will think of all thy former love, — all the sacred spots where thou hast met with me, all the lonely places where thou hast been my comfort, and all the joyful regions where thou hast been my glory. I will think of these, and take comfort from them, for thou art an unchanging God.; and what thou didst for me aforetime, thou wilt do for me again and yet again. Is it not a blessed thing that, even when he is down, he says, “ Oh, my God”? He

gets hold of his God. He has loat his company, but he has not lost his God. See-" my soul"- " my God." His God is as much his as his soul is his. He puts them together-" my God "- " my soul." Therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonite, from the hill Mizar. Were these places where he was then wandering? He would remember God wherever he was. He would remember happier days-seasons long past when he did walk in fellowship with God. So let us remember how he kept his tryst with us in former days of sorrow,-how he manifested himself unto us as he does not to the world. He will do the same now. Let us be of good courage.

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[Life's Darkest Moments](#) - An angel touched [Elijah], and said to him, "Arise and eat." —1 Kings 19:5 - Charles Whittlesey was a hero's hero. Leader of the so-called "Lost Battalion" in World War I, he was awarded the Medal of Honor for his bravery when his unit was trapped behind enemy lines. When the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was dedicated, Charles was chosen to serve as pallbearer for the first soldier laid to rest there. Two weeks later, it is presumed that he ended his own life by stepping off a cruise ship in the middle of the ocean. Like Elijah (1 Kings 19:1-7), Charles was publicly strong, but in the quiet, post-public moments, his feelings of despair set in. People today frequently face situations bigger than they can handle. Sometimes it's temporary despair brought on by fatigue, as in Elijah's case. He had been part of a great victory over the prophets of Baal (1 Ki 18:20-40), but then he feared for his life and ran into the wilderness (1 Ki 19:1-3). But often, it's more than despair and it's more than temporary. That's why it is imperative that we talk about depression openly and compassionately. God offers His presence to us in life's darkest moments, which enables us, in turn, to be His presence to the hurting. Crying out for help—from others and from God—may be the strongest moment of our lives. Father, grant us the candor to admit to each other that sometimes life overwhelms us. And grant us the courage to help others find help—and to seek it when we need it. Hope comes with help from God and others. ([Randy Kilgore](#))

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[Remembering Our Father's Words](#) - I will never forget Your precepts, for by them You have given me life. —Psalm 119:93 - Jim Davidson was climbing down Mount Rainier when he fell through a snow bridge and into a crevasse (a pitch-black, ice-walled crack in a glacier). As Jim stood bloodied and bruised in that dark ice cave, he reflected on his childhood and recalled how his father had repeatedly reminded him that he could accomplish great things if he pressed through adversity. Those words helped to sustain Jim as he spent the next 5 hours climbing out of that dark ice cave to safety with very little gear and under extremely difficult circumstances. The psalmist seemed to climb out of his own crevasse of affliction and pain by recalling his heavenly Father's words. He admitted that if God and His Word had not sustained him with joy, he would have died in his misery (Ps. 119:92). He expressed full confidence in the Lord's eternal Word (Ps 119:89) and in the faithfulness of His character (Ps 119:90). As a result of God's faithfulness, the psalmist made a commitment never to forget God's words to him because they had a central part in rescuing his life and bringing him strength. In our darkest caves and moments of affliction, our souls can be revived by our Father in heaven when we recall and fill our minds with His encouraging words. Thinking It Over - What crevasse of discouragement are you currently in? How can you use this time as an occasion to revive your soul by filling your mind and heart with God's Word? Remembering God's words revives our soul. ([Marvin Williams](#))

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[I Am Not Forgotten](#) - Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield. —Psalm 33:20 - Waiting is hard at any time; but when days, weeks, or even months pass and our prayers seem to go unanswered, it's easy to feel God has forgotten us. Perhaps we can struggle through the day with its distractions, but at night it's doubly difficult to deal with our anxious thoughts. Worries loom large, and the dark hours seem endless. Utter weariness makes it look impossible to face the new day. The psalmist grew weary as he waited (Ps. 13:1). He felt abandoned—as if his enemies were gaining the upper hand (v.2). When we're waiting for God to resolve a difficult situation or to answer often-repeated prayers, it's easy to get discouraged. Satan whispers that God has forgotten us, and that things will never change. We may be tempted to give in to despair. Why bother to read the Bible or to pray? Why make the effort to worship with fellow believers in Christ? But we need our spiritual lifelines most when we're waiting. They help to hold us steady in the flow of God's love and to become sensitive to His Spirit. The psalmist had a remedy. He focused on all that he knew of God's love, reminding himself of past blessings and deliberately praising God, who would not forget him. So can we. Lover of my soul, who draws close in the darkest and longest night, please keep me trusting You, talking to You, and leaning on Your promises. God is worth waiting for; His time is always best. All believers go through times of frustration due to unanswered prayer. Yet the Scriptures provide hope for this apparent dilemma. Psalm 13 illustrates the release that grows out of praying through a problem. David asks God four times "how long" he must wait to get an answer to prayer (Ps. 13:1-2). Eventually he understands that his perspective has not been a divine one. He then asks God to "give light to my eyes" so that he can have the strength to endure opposition (Ps. 13:3-4). David redirects his heart to trust in God's unfailing mercy. The Hebrew word for "mercy" here is hesed, which connotes enduring, unfailing, and gracious care. With a new perspective, David now sings of God's goodness with petitions of praise (Ps. 13:5-6). ([Marion Stroud](#))

I See Jesus

by Annie Johnson Flint

I don't look back: God knows the fruitless efforts,
The wasted hours the sinning, the regrets;
I leave them all with Him Who blots the record,
And mercifully forgives, and then forgets

I don't look forward, God sees all the future,
The road that, short or long, will lead me home,
And He will face with me its every trial,
And bear for me the burdens that may come.

I don't look round me: then would fears assail me,
So wild the tumult of earth's restless seas;
So dark the world, so filled with woe and evil,
So vain the hope of comfort or of ease.

I don't look in; for then am I most wretched;
Myself has naught on which to stay my trust;
Nothing I see save failures and short-comings,
And weak endeavors crumbling into dust.

But I look up -- into the face of Jesus,
For there my heart can rest, my fears are stilled.
And there is joy, and love, and light for darkness,
And perfect peace, and every hope fulfilled.

PREVIOUS DEVOTIONAL: [Tetelestai - It is Finished! Paid in Full!](#)

LIVE WISELY IN 2018: REDEEM THE TIME!

ARE YOU REDEEMING THE TIME, "THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE"?

Before reading on, pause and make a list of the things you value most in life. Undoubtedly God, Jesus, family, etc are at the top of your list. But did you list "TIME?"

Ephesians 5:15-16-note has been called the Bible's key to **TIME MANAGEMENT**. In these passages Paul commands all believers

Therefore (because we have been awakened from spiritual stupor and spiritual death and have the light of Christ - Eph 5:14-note) **BE CAREFUL** how you walk, not as unwise men ("fools"), but as wise, **REDEEMING** (making the most of) **THE TIME**, because (explains why we must redeem the time) the days are evil (Corollary: The evil of our day should motivate us to redeem the time)." (Eph 5:16-note)

Paul uses three Greek words or phrases that are very instructive, the first being the command to **'be careful** (present imperative = command to make this vigilant attitude our lifestyle) how you walk." The idea is we as believers are commanded to continually take heed, be alert, be vigilant, to discern with Spirit enabled vision. This command which calls for us to continually live our life wisely and continually dependent on and filled with or controlled by the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18).

C H Spurgeon paraphrases it "See then that ye walk circumspectly (being careful to consider all circumstances and all possible consequences), not carelessly, not thinking that it is of no importance how you live; but looking all round you, "walk circumspectly," watching lest even in seeking one good thing you spoil another." In other words, if we walk wisely, we will be careful not to let the good steal God's best!

Charles Hummel wrote that our "greatest danger is letting the urgent (secular) things crowd out the important (divine things)." Our problem is that too often we live by life's demands, instead of by God's priorities. Remember that life is too short for us to do everything we want to do, but it is long enough for us to do everything God wants us to do.

The second word is **REDEEM** (Eph 5:16-note) is the Greek word **exagorazo** which literally means to "buy out of the market place." The picture is of a merchant who diligently seeks to buy up the best bargains in the market place, taking care not to miss the fleeting opportunities! REDEEM is in the present tense which calls for us to make it our lifestyle, our daily, moment by moment practice, to buy up for ourselves (to our eternal advantage) the strategic opportunities which God providentially places in our path. If we are walking wisely (Eph 5:15-note), filled with God's Spirit (Eph 5:18-note), we will be spiritually alert to those divine opportunities in the "marketplace", and will begin to view people and circumstances not just as encounters (or irritations) in time but as opportunities to impact eternity (read 2Cor 4:18-note).

Each new day brings us 24 hours, 1440 minutes, 86,000 seconds, each moment a precious gift from God (Jas 1:17-note), each calling for us to be good stewards, mindful that one day we must give an account for how we spent the time God loaned us, how effectively we "bought up" the opportunities He provided. If someone gave us \$1440 each day and said spend it or lose it, how diligent would we be to comply? Yesterday is but a cancelled check. Tomorrow is a promissory note. Today is all of the cash that you have. Spend it wisely. As someone has well said

I have only just a minute, only 60 seconds in it;
forced upon me; can't refuse it;
didn't seek it, didn't chose it.
But it's up to me just how I use it.
I must suffer if I lose it, give account if I abuse it.
Just a tiny little minute, but eternity is in it.

A survey asked "What do you have to live for?" to which 94% answered they were just enduring today and living for tomorrow. That is living unwisely (Eph 5:15). Too many people miss today because they are worrying about tomorrow (Read Jesus' advice Mt 6:34-note). Worry does not make us ready but unready to redeem the time. As **Adrian Rogers** said "We face the future out of breath, because we have been fighting tomorrow's battles today!"

Wisdom is taking every opportunity today and fully using the time granted us. We have each been given the same amount of time but the difference is how we redeem this divine gift. Instead of killing time, redeem it. Instead of counting the days, make your days count. Indeed, "ETERNITY will be appreciated only in the measure that we have rightly handled TIME!" Redemption of time is preparation for eternity. The present should be viewed as preparation for the future. As Spurgeon rightly observed "'**NOW**' is the watchword of the wise." LATER may be too late! Right NOW counts for ever. How goes your preparation for the future dear saint? It's now or never. "Time is the seed of eternity." To make our life count for eternity, we must be wise in how we spend our time today. What will your eternal harvest be? **H A Ironside** agrees that "Time is given us to use in view of eternity."

Psalm 107:2-note says "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." Paul would say let the redeemed of the Lord DO so (redeem the time in the power of the Spirit for the glory of God!). We should redeem the time because we are redeemed!

In a letter to his wife John Wesley wrote "Redeem the time. Catch the golden moments as they fly." May the Spirit (Eph 5:18) enable us to live wisely (Eph 5:15) and catch the golden moments as they fly by (Eph 5:16)! Amen.

The word **TIME** (Gk = **kairos**) is better translated **OPPORTUNITY** and refers to a fixed and definite period of time during which something can be accomplished that cannot be accomplished after the time has passed. The idea of kairos is not "clock time" (Gk - chronos) but what one writer refers to as "kingdom opportunities." Wuest adds that Paul's "idea is not to make best use of time as such, which is what we should do in the sense of not wasting it, but of taking advantage of the OPPORTUNITIES that present themselves." The time/opportunity for bringing forth fruit is the spring SEASON (kairos) in which the tree bears fruit, in contrast to late autumn, when there is no fruit. And so kairos is the time which God allots to each believer to bring forth for themselves "spiritual fruit." This truth calls for us to "Seize the Day" (Carpe diem) because "Time flies" (Tempus fugit). As Horace Mann put it "Lost yesterday, somewhere between sunrise and sunset, two golden hours, each set with sixty diamond minutes. No reward is offered, for they are gone forever." Kairos represents the best time to do something, the moment when circumstances are most suitable. Kairos can be a moment or a season, but always refers to specific times in which opportunity is "ripe", so that when the time passes, so does the opportunity - "Opportunity only knocks once."

The word **OPPORTUNITY** is derived from the Latin "ob portu." In ancient times before modern harbors, ships had to wait for the timing of the tide before they could make it safely to port. Thus "OB PORTU," described the ship waiting "FOR PORT," ready to seize the crucial moment when it could ride the tide into safe harbor. The captain knew that if he missed the passing tide, the ship would have to wait for another tide to come in. God gives each of us many "ob portu's", but we must be spiritually wise and Spirit filled in order to see and seize them. As Charles Swindoll said "We are all faced with a series of great opportunities (ob portu's) brilliantly disguised as impossible situations." Shakespeare's famous line from Julius Caesar conveys the same thought: "There is a tide in the affairs of men (an "ob portu"), Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; Omitted, all the voyage of their life Is bound

in shallows and in miseries. On such a full sea are we now afloat; And we must take the current when it serves, Or lose our ventures." In short, KAIROS conveys the sense of an "opportune time," a "window of opportunity".

John Broadus said "Opportunity is like a fleet horse that pauses for a moment at one's side. If you fail to mount him in that moment, you can hear the clatter of his hoofs down the corridors of time. That opportunity is gone forever."

Jonathan Edwards America's greatest theologian understood Paul's charge to REDEEM THE TIME and as a young man wrote "Resolved: Never to lose one moment of time, but to improve it in the most profitable way I possibly can. Resolved: to live with all my might while I do live." "Time that is past you can never recall, Of time to come, you are not sure at all; Only the present is now in your power, Therefore, redeem and improve every hour."

John Piper reiterates that the "OPPORTUNITY will never come again. The days are evil; opposition is great; be wise as serpents (Mt 10:16). Understand what the will of the Lord is (Eph 5:17)... These words ring with a sense of urgency. They are like the words of a platoon leader addressing his unit just before they enter combat. The air is tense and your heart is beating fast and, even if you love battle, your hands are sweaty. "Watch your step; be smart; don't miss your opportunity; keep yourself lean for the battle!"... In other words, the Christian life is a vigilant life, defensively guarding itself from the subtleties of the evil days and offensively redeeming the time to strike for love and righteousness again and again. We are a vigilant people at war with unbelief and evil. O to be a faithful steward of the breath God has given me... Surely God means for our minutes on earth to count for something significant. Paul said, "In the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain" (Php 2:16). In the same way, I have good hope from the Lord that my "labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1Co 15:58). And I commend this promise to you. No minute need be lived in vain. Eternity will render it significant if lived in faith for the glory of God. In the end we rest in this: "My times are in Your hand" (Psalm 31:15).

Time is a strange commodity-we can't save it, retrieve it, relive it, stretch it, borrow it, loan it, stop it or store it, but can only use it or lose it. We can't call time out in the game of life. Indeed, there is no such thing as a literal "instant replay." That appears only on film. "When as a child I laughed and wept, time crept. When as a youth I dreamed and talked, time walked. When I became a full grown man, time ran. When older still I daily grew, time flew. Soon I shall find in traveling on, time gone." The pioneer missionary, Robert Moffatt, said, "We shall have all eternity in which to celebrate our victories, but only one short hour before the sunset in which to win them." Jesus said "I must work the works of Him Who sent me, while it is day: the night comes, when no man can work." (Jn 9:4) It's not how long we live that counts, but how we live, so "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might" (Ec 9:10a).

"We cannot afford to be idle; neither do we desire it. The call is, REDEEM THE TIME. Be always doing something that will last; be always stretching forward to the prize (Php 3:13-14). It will soon be ours, for the Lord is at hand. It is a prize worth all our labour and sorrow here. The very thought of it is enough to put to flight all murmuring, or selfishness, or sloth. To labour here is as blessed as it is to rest hereafter. Work on, work on, till the day of recompense arrives." "The time is short! If thou wouldst work for God, it must be now; If thou wouldst win the garland for thy brow, Redeem the time. With His reward He comes; He tarries not; His day is near; When men least look for Him will He be here; Prepare for Him!" (H. Bonar)

Paul exhorts believers "while we have OPPORTUNITY (kairos), let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith." (Gal 6:10) If one misses the "seasonable opportunity", he will miss the eternal harvest associated with that spiritual opportunity. Yesterday is past and cannot be changed, and tomorrow may not come, so make the most of the opportunities God gives you today. May God's Spirit enable us to seize the day, while we may! And so again Paul commands us "Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of (redeeming, buying up) the OPPORTUNITY (kairos). Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person." (Col 4:5-6)

Harry Ironside exhorts us "to be as alert for witnessing to the lost as bargain hunters are to purchase goods to advantage. Yet how often we neglect to use the circumstances which are put in our way, where we may say a word for our Lord and endeavor to point the lost to Him. Our intentions are good, but we become so occupied with other matters, many of them trifling in the extreme, and before we realize it the person to whom we should have spoken is beyond our reach." "We are to be alive to every opportunity to witness in the chance encounter, the unexpected turn in conversation, the opening that comes in the expression of a need or the asking of a question, the signal given by what may appear casual but reflects something deeper, the unplanned incident that brings the "outsider" into our life in a way that mind and heart can meet. We are to seize the critical moment when it comes... There are intersections upon which we sometimes come abruptly. We have to choose, and destiny is in the choice. There are flashes of insight that break in upon us, guidance, intuition, discernment, which, if we do not receive, record, and act upon, we lose." Our few days here on earth are so short and precious, in relation to eternity, that we ought never to waste time on selfish trivia, but to use it only on that "which is good, to the use of edifying" (Eph 4:29). (Dunnam)

Adoniram Judson a famous missionary to Burma wrote that "A life once spent is irrevocable. It will remain to be contemplated through eternity... the same may be said of each day. When it is once past, it is gone forever. All the marks which we put upon it, it will exhibit forever... each day will not only be a witness of our conduct, but will affect our everlasting destiny... How shall we then

wish to see each day marked with usefulness! It is too late to mend the days that are past. The future is in our power. Let us, then, each morning, (enabled by God's Spirit) resolve to send the day into eternity in such a garb as we shall wish it to wear forever. And at night let us reflect that one more day is irrevocably gone, indelibly (forever) marked."

David Brainerd whose candle burned so brightly that God brought him home at the relatively young age of 29 wrote in his diary "Oh, how precious is time; and how guilty it makes me feel when I think I have trifled away and misemployed it or neglected to fill up each part of it with duty to the utmost of my ability and capacity. Oh, that I might not loiter on my heavenly journey!" It's too late to redeem the time that is past, but not the time that is passing!

Some novel ways to redeem the time - Ask your waiter if there is anything you can pray for him (her) when you pray over your meal. You will be surprised at the variety of responses, some of which open a door for the Gospel! When you get one of those irritating calls asking for money, turn it into an opportunity to ask your caller if they know Jesus as Savior. As an aside it is interesting how the number of calls decreases! Pray daily for an unreached people group (see globalprayerdigest.org) Let us not just "mark time," but use time to make our mark! Yes, time flies, but remember that you are the "navigator!"

Adrian Rogers offers some other practical thoughts on redeeming the time:

(1) Learn to live in the eternal now. Today is the only day you have. Redeem the time. (2) Stop saying, "If I had time." You do have time. (3) Stop worrying about tomorrow, and stop waiting for tomorrow. Give God today, and He will take care of tomorrow. (4) Cut yourself loose from the past. Bury your failure in the grave of God's forgetfulness (read Mic 7:18-19, Isaiah 43:25, 44:22), and let Him give you a brand new day. (5) If you have not accepted Christ, now is the time "for He says, "AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME (kairos = the opportune time!) I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU"; behold, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME (kairos)," behold, now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION" (2Cor 6:2)

Let us pray like the old Puritan

Turn my heart from vanity, from dissatisfactions, from uncertainties of the present state, to an eternal interest in Christ. Let me remember that life is short and unforeseen, and is only an opportunity for usefulness; **GIVE ME A HOLY AVARICE TO REDEEM THE TIME**, to awake at every call to charity (love) and piety (godliness), so that I may feed the hungry, clothe the naked, instruct the ignorant, reclaim the vicious, forgive the offender, diffuse the Gospel, show neighborly love to all. Let me live a life of self-distrust, dependence on Thyself (Thy Spirit), mortification, crucifixion, prayer." (From Valley of Vision)

Dear reader, may God by His Spirit cause each of us to so order our steps that when that great day comes we might hear those glorious words

"Well done, good and faithful servant, you were faithful in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your Master." (Mt 25:21)

"So teach us to number our days, that we may present to Thee a heart of wisdom." (Ps 90:12)

Now is a new year, 2018, and it behooves us all to ponder the moments of your life which remain. May the poignant words of Robin Mark's song stir your heart to live each day of this new year in the power of the Spirit, for the glory of God and anticipation of soon seeing our Savior and Lord, Christ Jesus. Amen

When It's All Been Said and Done
There is just one thing that matters.
Did I do my best to live for Truth?
Did I live my life for You?
When It's All Been Said and Done
All my treasures will mean nothing.
Only what I've done for love's reward,
Will stand the test of time.

[Play and ponder the words of
"When It's All Been Said and Done"](#)

Related Resources:

- Redeem the Time for the Days are Evil
- Making the Most of Your Time
- Maximizing your Spiritual Opportunities God Gives You

YOU ARE GOD'S POIEMA HIS WORKMANSHIP HIS MASTERPIECE!

Beloved, if you are [IN CHRIST](#) by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9⁺), do you know what God says about you in [+](#)? You are God's "**WORKMANSHIP**, created IN CHRIST JESUS for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." The Greek word for "**WORKMANSHIP**" is [POIEMA](#) which gives us our English words POEM and POETRY. [Poema](#) means "something made" and in context is something made by God Himself. As a new creation skillfully and artfully created IN CHRIST JESUS ([+](#)), have you ever thought of your new (supernatural) life as a work of "divine poetry?" Beloved, as believers "each of our lives is the papyrus on which the Master is producing a work of art that will fill the everlasting ages with His praise." (S Gordon) **You** are God's masterpiece. **You** are His poem. **You** are His work of art. When we look at ourselves this way, we begin to understand our incredible value in Christ. Indeed, as C S Lewis said "We are a divine work of art." "If Rembrandt's artistic masterpieces have great, undisputed value, would not God's one-of-a-kind human masterpieces convey even greater value?" (D Robertson)

Timothy Keller asks "Do you know what it means that you are **God's workmanship**? What is art? Art is beautiful, art is valuable, and art is an expression of the inner being of the maker, of the artist. Imagine what that means. You're beautiful, you're valuable, and you're an expression of the very inner being of the Artist, the divine Artist, God Himself. You see, when Jesus gave Himself on the Cross, He didn't say, "I'm going to die just so you know I love you." He said, "I'm going to die, I'm going to bleed, for your splendor. I'm going to re-create you into something beautiful. I will turn you into something splendid, magnificent. I'm the Artist; you're the art. I'm the Painter; you're the canvas. I'm the Sculptor; you're the marble. You don't look like much there in the quarry, but I can see. Oh, I can see!" Jesus is an Artist!" And you beloved are His crowning achievement, His masterpiece!

The idea of [poiema](#) is that our new life in Christ is like a poem which expresses "form and pattern along with beauty. Like the underside of grandmother's cross-stitch, the everyday of our lives may look to be knotted and hopelessly tangled. But when we turn the fabric over, we see design and beauty that was there all along but that we never foresaw." (Gage) Perhaps you don't feel much like a work of divine poetry, but regardless of how you feel, the truth about you as God's workmanship, is that you are His "**MASTERPIECE**" (NLT), His "**HANDIWORK**" (NAB), His "**WORK OF ART**" (NJB), in fact, a work of art that is one of a kind! You are "custom designed", "tailor-made," by the Master's hand. "Each of our lives is the canvas on which the Master is producing a work of art that will fill the everlasting ages with His praise." (John Phillips)

J C Philpot – Consider what is here declared of those who are saved by grace through faith—that they are God's "**workmanship**"—the fruit and product of His creative hand. All, then, that we are and all that we have that is spiritual, and as such acceptable to God, we owe to the special operation of His power. There is not a thought of our heart, word of our lips, or work of our hands, which is truly holy and heavenly, simple and sincere, glorifying to God or profitable to man, of which He is not by His Spirit and grace the divine and immediate Author!

C H Spurgeon says it this way – "You have seen a painter with his palette on his finger and he has ugly little daubs of paint on the palette. What can he do with those spots? Go in and see the picture. What splendid painting! In an even wiser way does Jesus act toward us. He takes us, poor smudges of paint, and He makes the blessed pictures of His grace out of us. It is neither the brush nor the paint He uses, but it is the skill of His own hand which does it all." (Praise the Lord!)

Indeed, the redeemed should sing out like David "I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are Thy works, and my soul knows it very well." (Ps 139:14⁺)

As **Spurgeon** says "If we are marvelously wrought upon even before we are born, what shall we say of the Lord's dealings with us after we quit His secret workshop, and He directs our pathway through the pilgrimage of life? What shall we not say of that new birth which is even more mysterious than the first, and exhibits even more the love and wisdom of the Lord."

O to be like Thee! O to be like Thee,
Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art!
Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness;
stamp Thine own image deep on my heart.
-Thomas Chisholm

The only other NT use of the Greek word **poiema** is in Romans 1:20⁺ where Paul writes “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through **WHAT HAS BEEN MADE** (All one Greek Word – POIEMA) so that they are without excuse.”

As creationist **Henry Morris** says “God has written two poetic masterpieces, as it were, one in the physical creation, one in the lives of men and women redeemed and saved by His grace (Eph 2:8). Both give eloquent testimony to the eternal power and Godhead of the Creator-Redeemer.” Two great “divine poems” – the **created** world and **re-created, redeemed** men and women in that world. Even as the “heavens are telling of the glory of God and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands” (Ps 19:1⁺), we too as God’s **MASTER CREATIONS** should never be ashamed to let others see His **WORKMANSHIP** in us by our Spirit enabled obedience to Jesus’ command to “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they see your GOOD WORKS, and glorify (give a proper opinion of) your Father Who is in heaven.” (Mt 5:16⁺) As new creatures in Christ, we need to remember that we were created for God’s glory, and created for good deeds, because it is by our good deeds that our Father gets all the glory (cf Ps 115:1⁺). Indeed, the chief end of each of our lives is “**To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.**” ([Westminster Shorter Catechism](#)) In summary, Eph 2:8-10 teaches that we are saved not **BY** good works but **FOR** good (supernatural) works and in the mystery of His amazing grace He even rewards us for those Spirit enabled works (cf 2Cor 5:10⁺, Rev 22:12⁺)!

[Dr W H Houghton](#), pastored the Calvary Baptist Church in NYC and later served as president of Moody Bible Institute. When Dr. Houghton became pastor of the Baptist Tabernacle in Atlanta, a man in that city hired a private detective to follow Dr. Houghton and report on his conduct. After a few weeks, the detective was able to report to the man that Dr. Houghton’s life matched his preaching. As a result of Houghton’s faithful life as God’s “**POIEMA**“, that man became a Christian.

In Ps 143:5⁺ David prays “I remember the days of old. I meditate on all Your doings. I muse (meditate) on the WORK (**LXX = POIEMA**) of Your hands.” Have you meditated on the truth that now IN CHRIST, you are “the WORK (poiema) of” His hands? It is good to [meditate](#) on what God has made and rest in the confidence that “[He Who began a good work in you](#) will complete it in the day of Christ Jesus.” (Php 1:6⁺).

Regarding the works we as God’s workmanship are to work out, **E W Moore** writes that “The works are ready, waiting for us, all we have to do is to be willing to be led into them. How many disappointments we should have been spared in life if we had always acted on this conviction. God knows what we are fitted for far better than we know ourselves. He who made us knows whereof we are made. He won’t put “square pegs into round holes. If we would be useful in Christ’s service our wisdom is “to have no plan except to enter into His plan for us and imitate Paul who said “Lord, what do you want me to do? (to which Jesus replied) “Arise and go to Damascus and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do.” (Acts 9:6NKJV, Acts 22:10) **Lowell** adds that “No man is born into the world whose work is not born with him; there is always work, and tools to work withal, for those who will.”

Great Master, teach us with Your skillful hand;
Let not the music that is in us die!
Great Sculptor, hew and polish us; nor let
Hidden and lost, Your form within us lie!
—Horatius Bonar

ILLUSTRATION – Kent Hughes – “In Christ we are of untold worth. This great truth may be hard to actually take hold of as we exist in frail human bodies carried along in the rush of modern-day busyness. Some of us have had things happen which make us doubt our worth. But we are His “workmanship” — His work of art. Moreover, we are in process (Php 1:6⁺). Michelangelo was once asked what he was doing as he chipped away at a shapeless rock. He replied, “I’m liberating an angel from this stone.” That’s what God is doing with us. We are in the hands of the Great Maker, the ultimate Sculptor Who created the universe out of nothing, and He has never yet thrown away a rock on which He has begun a masterwork. His tools are Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, His Word, and the preaching of the Word.” And often God’s Spirit uses difficult circumstances or difficult people to sculpt our character into His “masterpieces” conformed to the image of His Son (Ro 8:29⁺). “In Christ” we are of untold worth. This great truth may be hard to actually take hold of as we exist in frail human bodies carried along in the rush of modern-day busyness. Some of us have had things happen which make us doubt our worth. But we are his “workmanship” — his work of art. Moreover, we are in process.

Joni Eareckson Tada who became quadriplegic after a tragic accident, describes herself as God’s “**poiema**” in her book **A Place of Healing** writing “(God) has a plan and purpose for my time on earth. He is the Master Artist or Sculptor, and He is the One Who chooses the tools He will use to perfect His **workmanship**. What of suffering, then? What of illness? What of disability? Am I to tell Him which tools He can use and which tools He can’t use in the lifelong task of perfecting me and molding me into the beautiful image of Jesus? Do I really know better than Him, so that I can state without equivocation that it’s always His will to heal me of every physical affliction? If I am His **poem**, do I have the right to say, “No, Lord. You need to trim line number two and brighten up lines three and five. They’re just a little bit dark.” Do I, the **poem**, the thing being written, know more than the poet?”

THE CRAFTSMAN'S TOUCH – Dennis Fisher writes “I recently saw a documentary about the making of a Steinway piano. It traced the meticulous care that goes into crafting this fine instrument. From the cutting of trees until the piano appears on a showroom floor, it goes through countless delicate adjustments by skilled craftsmen. When the year-long process is complete, accomplished musicians play the piano and often comment on how the same rich sounds could never be produced by a computerized assembly line. The secret to the final product is the craftsman’s touch. When the tabernacle was built, we see that God also valued the craftsman’s touch. He chose the craftsman Bezalel and said of him: “I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood” (Ex. 31:3-5). Today God’s Spirit dwells in the hearts of believers (who are His temple – 1Cor 6:19+). Yet the call to craftsmanship has not ended. Now each individual believer is God’s “workmanship” (Ephesians 2:10-note). The Master Craftsman is the Holy Spirit, who chips away at flaws in our character to make each of us like Jesus (Ro 8:28, 29+). And as we yield to His workmanship, we will find that the secret to the final product is the Craftsman’s touch.” ([The Craftsman’s Touch – Our Daily Bread](#))

The Spirit is the Craftsman
Who makes us like the Son;
He’ll mold and shape our being
Until His work is done. —Sper

The Father gave us the Spirit
to make us like His Son

Jon Courson reminds us that “God is saying, ‘You are My **poetry**. You’re special to Me. I’m not giving up on you.’ He is making you something not only useful but beautiful, something that is poetic.” Indeed, every believer is God’s poem in a world of prose, God’s beauty in a world of gloom, God’s fine art in a world of moral degradation. And God’s most marvelous creation is making spiritually dead men alive in Christ! Created in God’s image (Ge 2:7), yet born in sin, we are redeemed and re-created in the image of His Son. Dear saint, don’t ever forget that you are the subject of Christ the Creator’s (Jn 1:3) two creations, and as the result of His second creation, you are His ultimate workmanship, His most lyrical poem, His crowning achievement, His greatest masterpiece and you will be “on display” to show the universe the full extent of His creative genius throughout eternity! [Hallelujah!](#)

[PLAY MICHAEL CARD’S “POEM OF YOUR LIFE” with lyrics below](#)

Life is a song we must sing with our days
A poem with meaning more than words can say
A painting with colors no rainbow can tell
A lyric that rhymes either heaven or hell!
We are living letters that doubt desecrates
We’re the notes of the song of the chorus of faith
God shapes every second of our little lives
And minds every minute as the universe waits by

CHORUS:

The pain and the longing
The joy and the moments of light
Are the rhythm and rhyme
The free verse of the poem of life

So look in the mirror and pray for the grace
To tear off the mask, see the art of your face
Open your ear lids to hear the sweet song
Of each moment that passes and pray to prolong
Your time in the ball of the dance of your days
Your canvas of colors of moments ablaze
With all that is holy
With the joy and the strife
With the rhythm and rhyme of the poem of your life
With the rhythm and rhyme of the poem of your life