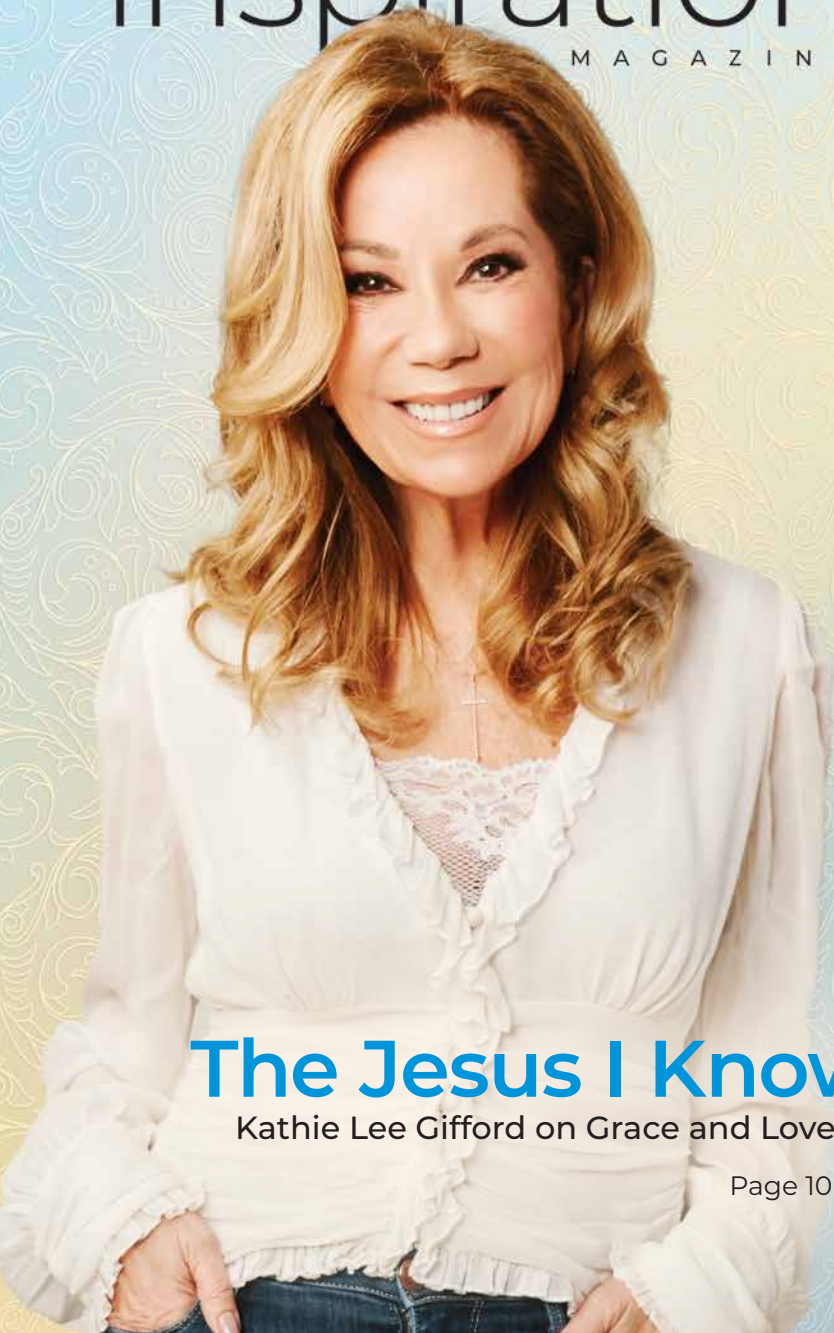


MAY 2022

inspiration

MAGAZINE



The Jesus I Know

Kathie Lee Gifford on Grace and Love

Page 10



Attitude of Gratitude



God loves pouring out blessings on His children. Do you make a habit of thinking about His goodness to you? On page 5, David shows you the incredible blessings available to those who focus on God's goodness and generosity. Don't miss out on God's favor!



PAGE 16



Sunday, May 8

EDITOR'S CORNER



Only a heart filled with gratitude and appreciation can fully enjoy the goodness of God! In our feature article on page 10, Kathie Lee Gifford shares how recognizing the image of God in everyone is the key to sharing Christ's goodness and love.

As God's precious child, your thankfulness, praise, and worship usher you into the Father's presence – the place of divine power and blessing. God promises to work all things for good in the lives of those who love Him. My prayer for you today is that God will give you a word of hope from this month's issue and that you will use that word to grow closer to your living Savior!

10 COVER STORY: The Jesus I Know

Kathie Lee Gifford sits down with Inspiration Ministries to discuss faith in her amazing new book *The Jesus I Know*. Join us as she shares her insights on building common ground and demonstrating God's love to the world!

16 The God Who Calls

By Ben Cerullo

The love of God pursues you every day, and God is asking questions to engage with you. Are you answering His call?

18 Exploring the Names of God – The Holy One

The holiness of God defines His greatness and sets the parameters of your potential. Get to know the Holy One, and you'll be awed by His unparalleled glory.

19 Your May Devotions

Time with God every day makes life sweeter!

53 Faith Delivered a Dream Home!

When Glen, a real estate agent, solicited some divine help for his clients, God miraculously intervened.

55 Merry Heart

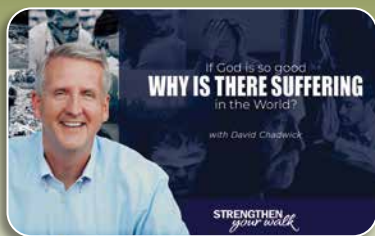
Our Cuyler Black cartoon and funny quips will put a smile on your face.



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May 9 – May 20

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A man in a black t-shirt and pants is kneeling on a grassy bank, looking up with his hands raised in prayer. The background shows a body of water and trees.

ATTITUDE of GRATITUDE

Grab hold of God's promises
through a daily habit
of gratefulness and praise!



STRENGTHEN
your walk
with David Cerullo

How would you define a grateful heart?

Ask ten different people, and you might get ten different answers. But if we analyze it according to God's Word, it means being focused on the very goodness of our Heavenly Father.

Having a grateful heart is a principle that runs throughout all of Scripture and taps into God's power like nothing else. And when we get it down deep in our souls, when we release it in our hearts...it can literally renew our minds. It can encourage us greatly...and activate His blessings in every part of our lives...hallelujah!

The apostle Paul wrote: *“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you”* (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

Paul also linked thankfulness to establishing peace in your life, which gives you relief from anxiety and stress:

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and

the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7).

I want you to take a minute or two and come up with some things that are praiseworthy in your own life. What true blessings are you grateful for that you know are gifts from God?

Remember, the thing about true gratitude is that it's not *only* about thanking the Lord for what He's done for us; it can also heal and restore us as we lift His name in praise.

This is exactly what King David did in Psalm 103:1-5 when he wrote:

*Bless the LORD, O my soul
And all that is within me,
 bless His holy name!
Bless the LORD, O my soul,
And forget not all His benefits:
Who forgives all your iniquities,
Who heals all your diseases,
Who redeems your life from
 destruction,
Who crowns you with lovingkindness
 and tender mercies,
Who satisfies your mouth with
 good things,
So that your youth is renewed
 like the eagle's.*

Do you recall the story of the 10 lepers in Luke 17:11-19? All of these men were begging Jesus, “*Master, have mercy on us*” (v. 13)! But only one of them responded with gratitude once Jesus miraculously healed them.

He told the man, “*Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well*” (v. 19). Even though Jesus had cured all the men, the one who returned to give God glory gained an additional blessing that



the others did not. He was completely restored through physical healing, but he also received spiritual and emotional healing.

That's the power of gratitude. The Bible instructs us to give thanks *"IN everything,"* not just AFTER everything (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Paul was very conscious of the incredible trials he had faced, yet he wrote, *"We KNOW that ALL things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose"* (Romans 8:28) DURING his immense struggles (2 Corinthians 11:22-29). He didn't wait until AFTER he was released from prison to declare God's goodness.

Remember, we'll never receive God's best if we choose to dwell on our problems instead of His answers. So give Him thanks at all times and in every circumstance. Whether you realize it or not, He is always working to bring about His purposes in your life.

As you constantly thank God for the wonderful work He's doing, you'll find yourself declaring like David, *"I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth"* (Psalm 34:1).

Our gratitude brings His joy into our hearts, and our praise brings His miracle power into every area of our lives.

TURN ON THE FAVOR FAUCET

Setting your eyes on Jesus will bring transformation if you truly seek Him. But when you do fix your focus on your Savior, take one more step: No matter how you feel, agree with God that He loves you. Remember that you are wonderfully made and have His favor written on your heart.

Be thankful for the amazing gift of life. Begin to speak words of faith and thanksgiving as you go about His plans and purposes. And never forget the blessings He's given you.

*"I will bless
the LORD at
all times; His
praise shall
continually be
in my mouth"
(Psalm 34:1).*

Remember, God is not some cosmic being far out in the universe, disengaged from the cares and concerns of your life. He loves you. He cares about you. And He is as close to you as the breath you breathe.

God wants to bless you and answer your prayers today. Jesus promised us, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7). But then He went on to say that our confidence in petitioning God with our prayer requests is dependent on seeing Him and praising Him as our loving Heavenly Father.

What man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him (Matthew 7:9-11)!

Let those words sink in for a moment. You have a Father in Heaven who wants to give you “good things” when you ask Him! As much as your earthly father may love you, your Heavenly Father loves you more...so much more. He longs to show you His

kindness and approval...to bless you...and to give you good gifts.

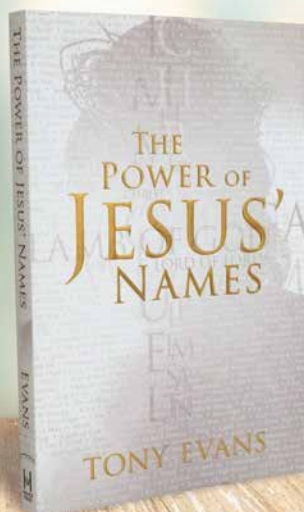
You see, when you begin to look through the eyes of gratitude, when you begin to praise Him and realize who He truly is...*everything else* in your life is affected.

Not only will your worship-filled attitude reenergize your spiritual life, but there will be a transformation of your health, finances, emotions, and relationships as well. You can experience His supernatural favor – not just for a moment, but also for a lifetime, and then for all eternity!

God Bless You!

David

P.S. Turn to **page 28** to see the life-changing **THANK YOU GIFT** I want to send you this month.



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The Jesus I Know

Kathie Lee Gifford opens up about her faith and passion for sharing the love of her Savior.

You may remember her as a morning talk show host on *Live! With Regis and Kathie Lee*, or perhaps you've heard her sing, read one of her books, or watched a movie she acted in or wrote.

Kathie Lee Gifford's illustrious career in entertainment spans decades and earned her a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. But it's her deep and abiding faith that continues to guide and sustain her today.

In her new book, *The Jesus I Know: Honest Conversations and Diverse Opinions about Who He Is*, Gifford shares candid conversations she's had with believers and nonbelievers about personal faith. Gifford deeply believes in the transforming power of Jesus and wants to share it personally with those who need it most.

Kathie Lee recently spoke to Inspiration Ministries' John Farrell about her new book as well as the importance of listening to those who may not share the same beliefs. She said that writing her book has helped her understand God's grace and why it's so necessary if we're to love like Jesus loves.

"Jesus didn't cancel anybody. If he's our role model, and He is the one that we say we love, we say we're following, we say we serve, then why aren't we living our lives like He lived? Why aren't we trusting Him enough that He will empower us to be His hands and feet and heart in this world? Why are we not believing that the Holy Spirit He left to us is enough?

"We take everything into our own hands and think we can deal with it. We can't. We're not equipped. Yes, we are more than conquerors, but God wants His people to be humble and loving and tender toward those who don't understand and aren't in the Kingdom yet and have fears based on all kinds of things that



With Regis Philbin



With Jimmie Allen



With Brian Welch

have happened in their lives. We cannot know a human heart. Only God can, but we can love a human being in the process.”

Gifford realized from an early age that she was called to be a different sort of missionary to the world.

“I was never going to be a missionary to Africa or China or all those places that were basically deemed acceptable. No, God was going to take me to Hollywood. God was going to take me to Broadway. God was going to take me to Motown. God was going to take me to NBC, ABC, CBS. Everything. That’s where God was taking me. That was my mission field.

“And as a result, millions of people have heard the Word of God because God put me in a position of favor where TVs were going, and movie cameras were running, and albums were being recorded. That’s how you take the Word to the ends of the earth – through the airwaves that God created, not Satan.”

RECLAIMING GOD’S POSSESSIONS

Though many Christians criticized Gifford’s decision to pursue this *different mission field*, she remained undaunted in her purpose. Gifford felt God clarify His call on her life one day while watching the 1965 Billy Graham movie *The Restless Ones*. It was then that Gifford learned to

embrace her calling by observing Graham’s response to criticism.

“Billy Graham, of all people, was criticized extensively for not understanding. Could you imagine telling Billy Graham, ‘You don’t understand. Satan lives in the movie theaters.’ Billy’s attitude was *I do my crusades on television and millions of people come to know Christ. Are you saying that Satan owns TV waves too? God owns everything.* If we give up and leave the airwaves to his kingdom, then yes. They said, ‘I’m taking whatever Satan has stolen because he comes to steal, kill, and destroy. We’re taking it back in the name of Jesus.’”

IN HIS IMAGE

But it’s Gifford’s love for people from all walks of life that has become her personal passion. Appreciating the diversity as God’s handiwork, she values each person as made in the image of God. In her book *The Jesus I Know*, Gifford focuses on authentic, living testimonies of God’s love and His constant pursuit of people who are different yet the same.

“God just works in mysterious ways...Some of the things that the world says are unlovely. God says, ‘Oh really? Guess what. I’m going to put them in the line of the Messiah. I’m going to put Rahab there. I’m going to put Tamar there.’

“I do not separate the secular

and the spiritual in my life at all. I never have. I don't think to myself, 'Oh, I'm going into the pit of hell right now.' I go, 'No, the pit of hell is the world we live in.' The pit of hell is in many churches that pretend that they love God. Jesus said the Kingdom of Heaven is right here around you. Look around.

"Jesus made us look at everything differently, but because we don't know the Scripture, we don't know the original Greek and Hebrew, we don't understand what the Word of God actually says, we get off course. We start saying things that aren't true and preaching things that are damaging and hurtful. And the next thing you know, we have a world that hates one another because we can't agree on anything. Why? Because we're basing our whole theology on lies."

LOVERS NOT JUDGES

Gifford said she now understands the significance of God's grace and how His love can speak

to each of us individually. She hopes her new book will touch hearts in a meaningful way and encourage people to deepen their love for God and others.

"We are not to judge any other human being, nor are we to judge their walk with the Lord or lack of it. We don't know their hearts. That's a key thing that Jesus taught – only God can see the heart of a human being. What He taught us to do is to love them in the process. Love them in the process, be there for them, then get out of the way, so the Holy Spirit can do His work renewing their hearts and minds.

"We're supposed to be there and support people and love them. We're not supposed to tell them how to think or what to do or how to worship. So many bad things happen when we usurp the role of the Holy Spirit. And we've decided that only we can save this person, only we can convince this person, only we can share the wisdom that's going to change their life. No. No, we're called to love them." ❖

Kathie Lee Gifford is a former morning show cohost, best-selling author, and award-winning actress. She was inducted into the Broadcasting & Cable Hall of Fame in 2015 and recently received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.



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The God Who Calls



by Ben Cerullo

God is asking questions to engage with you. Are you answering His call?

Aren't you grateful God didn't leave it up to you to find Him? I know God is everywhere all the time, but honestly, sometimes it's hard for me to see Him. But He never has a problem seeing me, and He's always reaching out to me with love – not because I deserve it, but because He is a God who seeks!

Before God spoke the first word of creation, He knew humanity would reject and crucify Him. Yet love compelled Him to prepare an entire universe for His crowning creation: man, made in His image. The entire universe came with just one restriction: don't eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

That one restriction was a path into paradise for the fallen angel Lucifer, who intentionally mesmerized humanity by instilling doubt about God and promising glory for man. With the first nibble of disobedience, innocent goodness evaporated. Fear, shame, and insecurity instantly shattered God's design for humanity. Immediately, Adam and Eve wanted to hide. They sought covering for their nakedness – and from the presence of God.

“Where are you?” called their Creator, and Adam replied, *“I was afraid because I was naked.”* To which God asked, **“Who have you been listening to and did you disobey me?”** (Genesis 3:9-11).

Those questions echo through time...with God asking those same questions of you and me today. His questions are always an invitation – never an accusation – because His desire never changes. He created you to be close to Him, completely covered by His love. God’s questions point us to our original design and destiny!

WHERE ARE YOU?

Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? (Jeremiah 23:24 ESV).

There are really only two paths in life: faith or fear. Let’s face it, fear has been ruling the world for the last few years in the form of COVID, economic issues, social unrest, and more. We are not designed to live in fear. Fear is a tool to help us in times of heightened danger, but as an ongoing emotion, it compromises our immune systems, creates illness, and robs us of mental clarity. Where are you – walking in faith or hiding in fear?

WHO HAVE YOU BEEN LISTENING TO?

Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints; but let them not turn back to folly (Psalm 85:8 ESV).

Adam said he hid because he was naked – and God instantly knew the enemy had been putting ideas into Adam’s mind. Thoughts are a real thing, and they always have a source. You can figure out the root of a thought by examining its fruit (i.e., emotions or actions). If your actions produce love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, or self-control, you are listening to your loving Designer. Otherwise, you can bet that your flesh or the devil is leading you astray.

DID YOU DISOBEY ME?

Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart (2 Timothy 2:22 NASB).

God’s final question goes directly to the heart of the matter – life itself. Because our Holy God is a consuming fire, you can’t be in His presence covered in sin without being destroyed. With this question, God encourages you to evaluate your actions and turn to life! The passionate love of God pursues you and guides you to abundant living. His arms are wide open – and He beckons you to run to Him without fear. He’s seeking you! ♦

The Holy One

Qadosh means God has no equal.

The *holiness of God* is so magnificent, encountering it always causes trembling. This name in Hebrew – **Qadosh** – conveys the reality that our God is completely set apart from all else. He is one of a kind, without equal.

God's loving humility enhances His holiness as we see Him gently, gradually invest thousands of years to reveal His holiness. Our first glimpse of holiness comes through Moses and the burning bush (Exodus 3). There we learn that even the ground where one approaches God demands reverence. Through the generations, God used the lives and circumstances of His people to make more of His holiness known.

Finally, when Israel faced a time of great fear and chaos, God granted a full vision of Himself as **The Holy One**. A young Israelite saw God seated on a throne surrounded by powerful angels singing, "*Holy, holy, holy is the*

LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!" That one single vision of God brought Isaiah to his knees with the cry, "*Woe is me*" and propelled him to proclaim the words of **The Holy One** to an unreceptive, rebellious people for the rest of his life (Isaiah 6:1-3).

Thankfully, God waits to reveal Himself to us until we are able to know Him in the fullness of His glory; otherwise, like Adam and Eve, we would run and hide from **The Holy One**. Seeing His holiness brings the stark realization of how far we have fallen from our original design, made in His Holy image and called to be like Him.

When His holiness exposes our unholiness, we experience the same piercing pain as Isaiah. Yet we do not despair. We must remember then, *for this we have Jesus!* Jesus opens the way for us to come boldly to the throne of **The Holy One** (Hebrews 4:16)! ❖

Alone

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PSALM 134

The psalmist knew at times we feel alone and have moments when no other person is with us, when we don't have the support of companions. Even when standing "*in the house of the LORD*," we can find ourselves isolated, particularly during the blackness of night.

In these moments, the silence can be deafening. Our minds tend to wander, providing an environment for endless speculation. We may ask ourselves an endless string of questions and feel a range of emotions.

The psalmist knew we need to *focus* on God during these times and realize that He is with us. We might be without human companionship and support, but the God who made Heaven and earth *always* is with us.

When we face situations like this, the psalmist urged us to pray and declare the promises we find in God's Word. We should not allow our minds to drift or think negative thoughts but worship and praise Him.

When we focus on God, our attitude changes. As we praise and worship Him, we aren't worried by unsettling thoughts. We aren't discouraged by circumstances or concerned by a lack of recognition. And we aren't terrified by the unknown but find meaning and encouragement by serving Him.

Today, fill your mind with God's Word. Seek Him. Praise Him. Worship Him. If you feel alone, focus on Him. Be confident that He is with you. Let His presence overwhelm you.

SUNDAY

May

1

Bless the LORD, all you servants of the LORD, who by night stand in the house of the LORD! Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, the LORD who made heaven and earth bless you from Zion!

Psalm 134:1-3

PRAYER:

Father, thank You that You are with me, even the darkest of nights. I trust in You. In Jesus' name, amen.

What do you do when faced with loneliness? Do you turn first to God?

MONDAY

May

2

*If you receive my words
and treasure up my
commandments [...] if you seek it like silver
and search for it as for
hidden treasures, then
you will understand the
fear of the LORD and
find the knowledge
of God.*

Proverbs 2:1, 4-5 ESV

PRAYER:

Father, I cry out for Your wisdom. Teach me. Change me. Reveal insights that otherwise would be hidden. In Jesus' name, amen.

Initiative

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 2

Born into a family of musicians, Johann Sebastian Bach was only 18 when he gained his first permanent position as organist of the New Church in Arnstadt, Germany. Bach had natural abilities but was not content with the *ordinary*. Showing *initiative*, on several occasions he traveled long distances to hear other musicians and learn from them.

When 19, Bach traveled to Lübeck to hear the famed organist Dieterich Buxtehude. Bach walked the entire journey (more than 250 miles). To Bach, this was worth the investment. There, Bach learned skills that helped make him one of the greatest musicians of all time.

Bach was not content with good enough. He *passionately* wanted more.

This principle also applies to our Christian faith. Proverbs describes the *passion* of a person who desires to *grow* in wisdom and understanding. This begins with a commitment to study and *treasure* God's Word. *Hunger* for wisdom and "*search for it as for hidden treasures*."

Bach did not know what awaited him in Lübeck, but the process changed his life. What riches does God have in store for *you*? His Word contains "*hidden treasures*" that can change your life. Seek Him diligently. Cry out for a deeper understanding.

Remember Jesus' words: "*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you*" (Matthew 7:7).

How can you develop the talents God has blessed you with?

Praise His Name

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PSALM 135

Many hymn writers have told their life stories through songs and hymns. They provide inspirational messages they hope will impact others. This was the experience of Fanny Crosby.

When just six weeks old, she was blinded by improper medical treatment. She easily could have become bitter. Instead, Jesus transformed her life. In response, she wrote more than 8,000 hymns!

Among these hymns, "Praise, Praise His Name" is one of her least known. Yet here she told the powerful account of what Jesus meant to her. She described how she had been "on the desert mountain straying far, far from home." Then she heard the "sweet voice" of Jesus asking, "Why wilt Thou roam?" She knew He had sought her and brought her "out of sin to grace" and taught her a "glad, new song."

She could not help but "praise, praise His name." (The repetition is not a mistake. It provides an emphasis that reinforced the depth of her devotion.)

As she knelt before Him, "sad and oppressed," she heard His voice "revealing hope, life and rest." She had often heard that voice repeating the message, "I am the Way." It was a call to respond and follow Him. She continually longed to spend time with Him.

Do you have this kind of relationship with Jesus? Crosby would urge you to long to be in His presence. Talk with Him. Worship Him. Praise Him.

TUESDAY

May

3

Praise the name of the LORD; praise Him, O you servants of the LORD... Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good; sing praises to His name.

Psalm 135:1, 3

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, thank You for all You have done for me. In Your name, amen.

How can you add more praise to your daily time with God?

WEDNESDAY

May

4

Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good... Give thanks to the God of gods... To Him who alone does great wonders... to Him who by wisdom made the heavens, for His mercy endures forever.

Psalms 136:1-5

PRAYER:

Father, I recognize that I owe everything to You. Thank You for Your mercy. Thank You for caring for me. In Jesus' name, amen.

A Cheerful Mind

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PSALM 136

When just 15 years old, the poet John Milton wrote the hymn, "Let Us with a Glad-some Mind." At the time he was just a pupil at St. Paul's School in London. This hymn was a paraphrase of Psalm 136 – written for his own pleasure, or perhaps written to please his father. In any case, this demonstrated how important God was to him.

He went on to write more complex works, peaking with *Paradise Lost*, one of the most influential epic poems ever written. But Milton also impacted lives with the simplicity of this hymn. Even at an early age, he was moved by the message of Psalm 136, with its repetition of the phrase "For His mercy endures forever." In his paraphrase, Milton ended each verse, "for His mercies shall endure, ever faithful, ever sure."

Like Psalm 136 itself, Milton's hymn detailed ways God shows mercy. He is kind and is above all gods. "He with all-commanding might filled the new-made world with light."

God feeds us and supplies all our needs, just as He provided for His people during their 40 years in the wilderness. He sees our condition and looks out for us. We should respond, as Milton suggested, by declaring His praises. "For His mercies shall endure, ever faithful, ever sure."

Today, remember that God is faithful. You can trust Him. He is worthy of praise.

Reflect on God's enduring mercy in your own life.

Revive Us Again

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PSALM 85

The psalmist realized his nation faced serious problems. Their only hope was to turn to God. Acknowledging their sins, he pleaded with God for mercy to *revive* and save them.

Like the psalmist, we can be confident that God desires to help and save us. But there is a condition: We must not “*turn again to folly*” (v. 8). We must turn from our sins. We must please Him. Seek Him.

Like the psalmist, we can know that when God blesses us, mercy, righteousness, and peace will reign in the land. Instead of deceit and falsehood, the truth will “*spring out of the earth.*” God will “*give what is good*” (vs. 11-12). God will give a blessing, and the land will yield an increase. But for this to take place, we need His forgiveness. We need His favor and blessing.

Today is the national day of prayer in the US. This is a reminder of the importance of prayer – a reminder to pray for your country, your leaders, and the needs of your people.

Today, spend time seeking God for your country. Pray for leaders and politicians, judges, and local officials. Pray for business and military leaders. Pray for pastors and churches. Pray that God would give all of us wisdom and reveal Himself to us in fresh ways. And pray that He would forgive our sins, be merciful to us, and revive us again.

LORD, You have been favorable to Your land... Restore us, O God of our salvation, and cause Your anger toward us to cease... Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You? Show us Your mercy, LORD, and grant us Your salvation.

Psalm 85:1, 4, 6-7

PRAYER:

Father, I pray for my nation. Please forgive our sins. Bless and guide our leaders. Bring revival. May your glory dwell in our land. In Jesus' name, amen.

Write out a prayer for revival in our country.

FRIDAY

May

6

Declaring God's Praise

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 43

The people whom I formed for Myself will declare My praise.

Isaiah 43:21 NASB

Why do we exist? How do we find fulfillment? What is our purpose? We can answer these questions in many ways. But this short verse in Isaiah provides practical answers that apply to all of us.

An important first step is realizing that God *formed* us. He made us. As our Creator, He understands *everything* about us – our purpose, what brings us fulfillment, how God designed us, how we are most efficient.

Second, as the psalmist declared, God formed us *for Himself*. This means that He is central to our existence. We cannot experience true fulfillment apart from Him. We need to seek Him, submit to Him, and base our lives around Him. He can answer our questions, help us make decisions, show us how to focus our energies.

Third, God created us to tell others about Him. As we think about all He has done for us we find joy and fulfillment as we share our testimony.

Do you want purpose, meaning, and fulfillment? Remember, God is your Creator. He knows you and everything about you. Fill your mind and heart with His Word. Spend quality time in prayer, developing an intimate relationship with Him. Seek first His Kingdom. Seek to please and obey Him.

Remember all He has done for you. Allow His presence to flood your life. Always be ready to tell others how He brought meaning to your life.

How can you glorify God in your everyday life?

Our Sovereign God

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 44

History tells us that Cyrus was a mighty conqueror. He was born around 580 BC in what is modern Iran. This was a warfare culture dominated by tribal rivalries. Around 550 BC, he gained power and melded the Medes and Persians into one kingdom. Then, in 539 BC, he led his forces in a swift conquest of Babylon, establishing the Persian empire. Nine years later, he was killed in battle.

We learn much about Cyrus from ancient records including a book written by the Greek historian Xenophon, who served as a mercenary in the Persian army. Human factors helped in his rise to power. But the Bible tells us that God Himself caused his success.

Through prophecy, He called Cyrus, announcing that he would accomplish His purposes, including rebuilding His temple. God promised to “*subdue nations before him... open doors before him...shatter the doors of bronze.*” He would do this even though he did not know God. But He acted, so the world would know that “*besides Me there is no God*” (Isaiah 45:1-2, 5).

Looking at today's world, our thoughts can be dominated by political powers, business and economic forces, media empires, armies and weapons. It can be easy to feel concerned and anxious. But the story of Cyrus reminds us that God is sovereign and in control. He has a plan for the world and you. Trust your life to Him. With Him, *nothing* is impossible.

SATURDAY

May

7

I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by Myself and spreading out the earth alone... It is I who says of Cyrus, “He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.”

Isaiah 44:24, 28 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, I submit my life to You. Use me to impact lives for Your Kingdom. I worship and praise You. In Jesus' name, amen.

How have you seen God's sovereignty portrayed recently?

SUNDAY

May

8

My son, comply with the commandment of your father, and do not ignore the teaching of your mother... When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk to you.

Proverbs 6:20-22 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, I desire to walk in Your ways. Help me learn from my parents. Keep me from wandering from the right path. In Jesus' name, amen.

God's Path

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 6

We all have the quest for independence and the desire to go our own way and reject the advice of parents and other adults. In this pursuit, some consider the advice of previous generations to be irrelevant. Many simply think that a biblical worldview is old-fashioned. These are the inclinations of youth. But these habits can linger throughout our lives.

However, the Bible reminds us that *true fulfillment* comes from obeying God. His principles *always* are true. He specifically warns us not to be seduced by the temporary temptations and short-term escapes delivered by the world. Realize that these kinds of desires can lead to the wrong path.

The Bible teaches that God is the *real* source of blessing. *Listen* to the advice of those who have gone through these experiences themselves, specifically our fathers and mothers. Learn from their warnings and keep their reminders ever before us.

These principles remain true at every stage of life – when we are young and old. Learn from others. Listen. We need to be on guard, for Satan lurks around every corner, looking for ways to tempt and confuse us. Even the most mature believer is vulnerable.

Learn from the experiences of previous generations as well as parents and other believers. You are not immune from temptation. Heed God's warnings. Hide His Word in your heart. Make it your foundation. And stay sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

What lessons have you learned from previous generations?

How Big is God?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 45

When Nebuchadnezzar died, his vast Babylonian empire seemed completely secure. Yet just 22 years later in 539 BC, the Persians conquered his invincible kingdom under the leadership of Cyrus.

This was a monumental moment in human history. But the Bible tells us that God was the *real* cause of this victory. Cyrus did not know God, but He called him to accomplish His purposes. God was demonstrating that He was controlling world events. Not Cyrus.

God declared that He alone had made the earth and created people. He was acting “*that men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that there is no one besides Me*” (vs. 6).

One of Cyrus’ first acts after conquering Babylon was to authorize the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. Why? Because God “*stirred up the spirit of Cyrus*” to fulfill His word (Ezra 1:1).

God was demonstrating that He was *bigger* than any force on earth. Bigger than Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar. Bigger than Persia or Cyrus. Bigger than any god. Any army. Any problem.

The problems we face can seem huge! It can be easy to feel overwhelmed and hopeless. At times like these, we need to remember that we serve the God who changed the world through Cyrus who did what people thought was impossible.

Commit the problems you face to Him. Don’t limit God. With Him, *nothing* is impossible!

MONDAY

May

9

This is what the LORD says to Cyrus His anointed, whom I have taken by the right hand, to subdue nations...to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut...I have given you a title of honor though you have not known Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other.

Isaiah 45:1-5 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, I commit these needs to You: _____. Thank You for the answers! You are Lord over all things. In Jesus’ name, amen.

What seemingly huge, impossible task are you facing right now?

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TUESDAY

May

10

Predicting the Future

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 47

Persist now in your spells...Let now the astrologers...save you from what will come upon you. Behold, they have become like stubble, fire burns them; they cannot save themselves from the power of the flame.

Isaiah 47:12-14 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, open my eyes to understand the prophecies in Your Word. Thank You that You know the future. I trust my life to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

During the time of Isaiah, the Babylonians had every reason to feel confident and secure. A powerful army protected their vast empire. Babylon itself was the largest and most fortified city in the ancient world.

In her book about Babylon, Joan Oates describes how Babylonians believed that people were created to serve the gods. "Each Babylonian had his own personal god or goddess to whom he offered prayers and sacrifices." Priests regularly recited incantations and performed rituals to ward off evil powers, understand the future, and seek to change the course of events.

Men who practiced divination could become powerful. Babylonians believed that the gods "shaped the destinies of mankind," and through divination, they could "ascertain the will of the gods." And they looked for omens everywhere, from the actions of animals to celestial events as common as rain and thunder.

Many people today are like these ancient Babylonians, looking for comfort and direction through false religions and various occult practices. They think that they can have their personal gods and even predict the future. But, as Isaiah warned the Babylonians, there is only one God. He is sovereign. The Creator. We must serve Him and Him alone.

Make sure you place your hope completely in God. Do not hope in the prophets and gods of this world or be distracted by idols and false religions. God knows the future. Trust completely in Him and His Word.

Are you placing your full and complete trust in God alone?

Peace and Profit

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 48

God didn't promise insignificant blessings. Jesus Himself said He came to bring us life *"and have it abundantly"* (John 10:10).

Think about all God promised Israel. He promised to teach them *"to benefit,"* to direct them, and give them overwhelming *peace*. They would experience a wave of righteousness. Their families would be blessed. They would have an intimate *relationship* with Him.

But there was a condition: They had to pay attention to His commands, know and obey His Word, and follow Him. He reminded them that *"there is no peace for the wicked"* (v. 22). Ungodly people may seem to enjoy pleasures and rewards, but they *never* can have His peace.

God warned His people not to listen to or follow those who promised false rewards. They were to flee these influences. When they remembered all that God had done for them, they were to be filled with joy. They would realize the many ways He had provided for them, guided them, protected them. Even when everything seemed hopeless, He was with them.

God promises these same rewards for you – that same peace and joy. He will guide you *"in the way you should go,"* teach you how to *profit*. Do not follow the false gods and deceptive promises in the world. Instead, seek to know God. Obey Him. Follow Him. Trust Him. Seek first His Kingdom. Be confident that He will give you His peace.

I am the LORD your God, who teaches you to benefit, who leads you in the way you should go. If only you had paid attention to My commandments! Then your well-being would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea.

Isaiah 48:17-18 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, I dedicate my time, talents, and treasures to You. I declare that Your promises are true for me. In Jesus' name, amen.

How will you intentionally seek to follow the Lord's leading in your life?

THURSDAY

May

12

The LORD God will help Me; therefore I will not be disgraced; therefore I have set My face like a flint... Let us stand together. Who is My adversary? Let him come near Me. Surely the LORD God will help Me; who is he who will condemn Me?

Isaiah 50:7-9

PRAYER:

Father, You have a plan for my life. I set my face like a flint to serve and obey You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Set Like a Flint

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 50

Those who don't trust in God go through life without an anchor. They can be prone to feel uncertain and shaken by circumstances. They can be intimidated or paralyzed by fear and doubt. They can become timid and worried, distracted, and easily sidetracked.

However, when we completely trust in God, everything changes. We have the confidence to believe that He is standing by our side in every situation. As the Bible promises, He is with us to give us His peace and direct our steps, reassure us, calm our fears, and give us hope, peace, and security.

Even if we trust in God, we can be impacted by our human weaknesses, nagging doubts, and questions. These are reasons, as the Bible tells us, to "*set [our] face like a flint*" in every situation. This means concentrating on God, being guided by His Word, focusing our energies on what He has called us to do. It means not being distracted by the comments or opinions of others.

Ask God to give you this confidence and focus. "*Set [your] face like a flint*" to know Him and serve Him. Focus on the tasks to which you have been called. Be a good steward of the resources He has given you.

Do not drift off course or lose your focus. And don't let rumors or speculation distract you. Have faith that God will be your help right now!

What distractions do you have to eliminate to focus solely on God?

The Valley of Eden

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 51

One day in 1875, William Cushing received what he described as a vision. In this vision, he saw a river rolling beneath him “like a mighty tide” and “an enchanted land” with hills and valleys that “were sleeping in a heavenly calm. It was more beautiful than words can tell.”

He realized God was giving him a glimpse of what He had prepared for His people. Thus inspired, Cushing wrote a hymn called “Beautiful Valley of Eden.”

He saw how God had prepared a “place where everything was calm,” with a balm for “the weary.” It was a place with “rest, sweet rest” from life’s trials. This was “the home of my Savior.” Throngs of people whose sins had been forgiven lifted their voices with a “great new song.” And people were singing God’s praises.

Cushing realized that we may experience troubles in the world, but the Bible assures us that God knows what we are going through. He promises that all our efforts will be worth it all. As Cushing reminded us, God has prepared a wonderful reward for those who have been faithful. A place filled with perfect *peace*, perfect *forgiveness*, perfect *health*, joy and gladness, thanksgiving, and praise.

Today, let God take away your fears and worries and give you His peace. Rejoice! Regardless of what you are going through, you can trust Him!

FRIDAY

May

13

The LORD will comfort Zion; He will comfort all her ruins. And He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and sound of a melody.

Isaiah 51:3 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for preparing a place for me. I rest in You and trust in You. Fill me with joy and gladness. In Jesus' name, amen.

Compose a prayer giving your specific worries to God.

SATURDAY

May

14

*If I forget you,
Jerusalem, may my right
hand forget its skill. May
my tongue cling to the
roof of my mouth if I
do not remember you, if
I do not exalt Jerusalem
above my chief joy.*

Psalm 137:5-6 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, I love Your kingdom. Use me to bring the Gospel to the world. I commit my resources to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Loving God's Kingdom

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PSALM 137

Timothy Dwight became influential in early American history, uniquely demonstrating both intellectual aptitude and spiritual maturity. Born on this day in 1752, he graduated from Yale College when just seventeen. After serving as a chaplain in the American Revolutionary War, he became a minister, farmer, and state legislature.

After a time on the faculty at Yale, he later became its president. While raising academic standards, he also brought a spiritual emphasis that helped spark a revival at colleges throughout America.

Dwight demonstrated his priorities in a hymn he wrote called "I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord." He described how much he loved God's Kingdom and how the church was "saved with His own precious blood." To Dwight, God's Kingdom was his highest joy, and Jesus was a "Friend divine" who would deliver him from every foe and free him from every snare.

This hymn had a profound impact on the country's spiritual life, stirring millions to focus on God's Kingdom. Many people attend church and say that they are Christians, but do they really *love* God?

Many people have lives dominated by possession and by the pursuit of worldly pleasures. Rather than dedicating their resources to God, they spend on themselves.

Can you say that *you* love God's Kingdom? Do you love Him more than anything or anyone else in the world?

Reflect on the ways you show how you value God's Kingdom.

Good News

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 52

It is something wonderful! In a world filled with unwelcome news, here is *good* news. A message that brings *happiness*. A message that blesses all who hear but also those who *deliver* the message.

What is so special about these messengers? The Bible talks about feet that are “*beautiful upon the mountains*.” What makes those feet so beautiful? They bring *good news*. They proclaim peace and salvation. During times of worry and sadness, they can fill us with joy.

These truths are central to the Gospel, for this truly is “*good news*.” It is welcome because it soothes troubled hearts. It is a message of peace amid storms, a message of hope to all who feel hopeless, a message of salvation and victory, a promise of overwhelming blessings.

Do you know someone who needs good news? Who is discouraged? Facing problems? Struggling with health or financial issues? Needing direction? Burdened by sin? The Gospel provides the answer for people struggling with these and every other need.

Remember, Jesus came to bring this Good News to you and *every* person in *every* country – people of every age, every background. Remember this Good News in your life and also be ready to share your testimony and pray for those with needs as God leads you to be a messenger of the Gospel that others may hear the Good News.

SUNDAY

May

15

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”

Isaiah 52:7 ESV

PRAYER:

Father, help me to be a faithful messenger of the Gospel. Use me to impact lives for Your Kingdom and fulfill Your calling for me. In Jesus' name, amen.

With whom can you share the Good News of the Gospel this week?

MONDAY

May

16

*Everyone who thirsts,
come to the waters;
and you who have
no money, come, buy
and eat... Why do you
spend... your wages for
what does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to Me,
and eat what is good,
and let your soul delight
itself in abundance.*

Isaiah 55:1-2

PRAYER:

Dear Lord Jesus, I realize I cannot be satisfied apart from You. I thirst for You. I delight to do Your will. In Your name, amen.

Thirsting for God

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 55

Are there times it feels like you are in a spiritual desert? In a spiritually dry place? A place where you feel desperately thirsty? Unsatisfied?

When they are in such places, some people yield to the tempting options they hear in the world – ideas that promise satisfaction, actions that guarantee pleasure. The Bible warns us that much of this effort is like chasing the wind (Ecclesiastes 1:14). Instead of feeling fulfilled, efforts like these can leave us *frustrated* in spending our time and resources “*for what does not satisfy.*”

If you find yourself in situations like this, start focusing on God. Don't chase after things that can't deliver on their promises. *Seek* Him. *Thirst* after Him. The Bible promises that He offers *living water* that can *quench* your thirst and satisfy.

God doesn't want to bless us just a little. The Bible says that He wants our souls to *delight in abundance*. Jesus said that He came that we might have life and “*have it more abundantly*” (John 10:10). Jesus also promised that if we turn to Him, “*Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water*” (John 7:38). Our thirst will be quenched.

Do you feel spiritually thirsty? Turn to Jesus. Pray. Spend time with Him. Commit your needs to Him. Allow Him to refresh you and give you His peace, *satisfy* you in profound and lasting ways, and quench your thirst.

Do you long for God and His Word like you're in a desert?

A House of Prayer

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 56

Many Israelites assumed the only thing that mattered in their relationship with God was being descendants of Abraham. They may have been surprised by His comments to Isaiah. There, He declared that His temple was to be “*called a house of prayer for all nations*” – for everyone!

Jesus quoted this passage when He went into the temple and “*drove out all those who bought and sold.*” He stressed that *anyone* was welcome (Matthew 21:12-14 NKJV). God's house was not for commerce but a place of worship and prayer.

Anyone can approach His throne, even Gentiles. However, there are *conditions*. You must commit yourself to Him, serve Him, love His name, keep from defiling the Sabbath, and hold fast His covenant. And you have to be clean.

The Bible reminds us that God is holy (Isaiah 6:3). David asked Him who could worship in His sanctuary and enter His presence. God answered, “*Those who lead blameless lives and do what is right, speaking the truth from sincere hearts*” (Psalm 15:1-2).

As people entered His presence, God promised to “*make them joyful*” (v. 7 NKJV). This was the fruit of a life spent serving Him. He promises joy when our hearts are pure, and we please Him.

No matter what your background, God welcomes you into His presence. But first purify your heart and mind. Seek to be clean in His sight. Focus on Him. Praise and worship Him.

TUESDAY

May

17

I will also bless the foreigners who commit themselves to the LORD, who serve him and love his name...I will...fill them with joy in my house of prayer...my Temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations.

Isaiah 56:6-7 NLT

PRAYER:

Father, I desire to enter Your presence. Forgive my sins. I commit these needs to You: _____ . Thank you for answering my prayer. In Jesus' name, amen.

Journal about your experiences entering God's presence.

The wicked are like the tossing sea, for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up refuse and mud. "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."

Isaiah 57:20-21 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, take away my burdens and fears. Help me to be in harmony with You. Fill me with Your peace. In Jesus' name, amen.

Restlessness

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 57

A restless heart is a common condition now as in the past. St. Augustine, writing in 397 AD, declared his conviction that "our heart is restless until it rests in You." We become restless because we cannot find peace as we are separated from God and not in harmony with Him.

God told Isaiah that we may accumulate things and experiences. But none of these things can bring peace. These pursuits become like "*the tossing sea*." The Bible used a word usually translated as drive out, often with violence. The Bible is describing a violent sea, making us *uncomfortable*.

This *violent restlessness* is a curse for the ungodly. The real problem is the root condition of their lives. They may try to cover up these foundational issues but do not have peace in their hearts. They are like the water that casts up "*refuse and mud*," churning up sediment and muddying situations that had been clear.

Believers, too, can experience this restlessness. This may happen when we are not in harmony with God. Perhaps we are out of His will, or He is trying to speak to us.

Today, remember the words of Jesus: "*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give you*" (John 14:27). You cannot get this peace from anything or anyone else in the world. Serving and knowing Him are the ways to find real peace and freedom from restlessness.

Is your heart restless? Write a prayer asking God to fill you with His peace.

A Move of the Spirit

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 59

In 1905, a Pentecostal revival broke out in Southern California. In his first-hand account, Frank Bartleman wrote how God had spoken to him through the prophet Isaiah. Sin was in the land, and the church needed to be revived. God was calling His people to a time of *intercession*.

Sensing God's call, Bartleman joined others in concentrated prayer, seeking God with intensity. Bartleman wrote, "The Spirit is breathing prayer through us for a mighty, general outpouring." They prayed for churches and pastors, believing God would "visit those willing to yield to Him."

Soon a revival broke out in the region around Pasadena, California. But Bartleman felt compelled to pray for more. Knowing that needs were great, they prayed for an outpouring of the Spirit for all of Southern California. God powerfully answered these prayers, culminating in the great Azusa Street Revival.

A move like this could take place today. Do you have faith to believe God for this outpouring? Are you willing to be an intercessor? Are you willing to pray with passion and intensity and intercede for families and marriages, churches and schools, political leaders?

Ask God to give you a burden for souls. Ask God to fill you anew with His Spirit, to set you ablaze with spiritual fire. Commit yourself to pray for the lost. Pray for a sweeping move of God in our day.

Write a prayer for revival, beginning with your own heart and family.

THURSDAY

May

19

*Justice is turned back...
truth is fallen in the
street...the LORD saw
it, and it displeased
Him that there was no
justice. He saw that
there was no man, and
wondered that there
was no intercessor.*

Isaiah 59:14-16

PRAYER:

Father, pour out Your Spirit on me. Don't stop with me. Bring spiritual revival to my family, my church, and our nation. In Jesus' name, amen.

FRIDAY

May

20

Overwhelmed with Joy

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 61

Israel was in decline. Judah was vulnerable. Assyria provided a constant threat. Iniquity was in the land, and many of God's people were guilty of sin. Problems seemed to be everywhere.

Yet, during these circumstances, Isaiah was "overwhelmed with joy in the LORD my God!" No matter what was going on, he realized God was in control! Isaiah could trust Him and know He would work everything out.

We, too, can look around and see problems, threats, violence, turmoil, divisions, crime, and immorality. It can be easy to be troubled and feel hopeless. Yet God still can *overwhelm* us with His joy! This joy comes from the Spirit, not circumstances (Galatians 5:22).

How can we be joyful in the face of so many problems? These are times to remember God's promises and all the ways He has blessed us. He has saved us, forgiven our sins, and given us robes of righteousness. We can have confidence that He will right every wrong.

He will establish justice in the world. Just like gardens in the spring, plants will blossom, and there will be an explosion of growth. Plus, He has given us the guarantee of eternal life.

No matter what goes on around you or what problems you face, trust in God! Renew your faith in Him. He already has won the victory! Rest in Him. Let Him fill you with joy!

I am overwhelmed with joy in the LORD my God... I am like a bridegroom dressed for his wedding or a bride with her jewels... Everyone will praise him! His righteousness will be like a garden in early spring, with plants springing up everywhere.

Isaiah 61:10-11 NLT

PRAYER:

Father, thank You that victory is mine through Jesus. I believe You will make my life explode with spiritual fruit. Thank You for Your joy. In Jesus' name, amen.

Write a praise to God for all He has done for you.

Persistent in Prayer

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 62

We sometimes feel nothing can make a difference. Even prayer can seem like a pointless exercise. However, in His message to Isaiah, God indicated He has a different perspective.

Clearly prayer is important to Him. And it makes a *difference*! He instructs us to be *persistent* in prayer. When we call on Him, we are *commanded* to give ourselves no rest, be *determined*, and believe in prayer, confident God *will* hear and answer us.

When we pray, we aren't to be *halfhearted*. If something *matters*, we should be *persistent*, dedicated to prayer, focused on God. God commands us to approach Him with *boldness* and "give Him no rest." If we don't see immediate results, we must not give up. His directive is that we are to remain steadfast and call on Him *until* we see answers.

It is important to know His Word, so we are sure of His promises. Then, we are to *stand* on that Word and hold on to these promises. Don't let Him rest until He does what He has promised.

We are reminded of Jesus' parable about the widow who, through persistence, received the results she desired, even though the judge did not fear God (Luke 18:1-5). That is an important lesson for us!

Today, seek God with persistence and boldness about problems you face. Hold on to His promises until He delivers an answer. That is His *command*.

SATURDAY

May

21

On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen; all day and all night they will never keep silent...take no rest for yourselves; and give Him no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem an object of praise on the earth.

Isaiah 62:6-7 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, I commit these situations to You: _____ . Thank You for the answers. I stand on Your Word. I trust You. In Jesus' name, amen.

What long-standing needs are you tempted to give up praying about?

SUNDAY

May

22

*There is no one who
calls on Your name,
who stirs himself to
take hold of You;
for You have hidden
Your face from us and
have surrendered us
into the power of our
wrongdoings.*

Isaiah 64:7 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, give me a burden for souls. Open my eyes to see the needs of people all around me. Use me to bring revival. In Jesus' name, amen.

Burdened for Souls

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 64

Did people really care? Isaiah wondered. Even though there were countless problems, no one cared enough to call on God.

Frank Bartleman had a similar perspective. In December 1904, he and his family moved to Pasadena, California. They had no income and were forced to live by faith. But he believed God had called him there. Within two weeks, their youngest child, Esther, died. It was a devastating moment. But he continued to serve God faithfully.

He felt God was preparing him for a new ministry. Longing "to know Him in a more real way," he cried for God to do a mighty work. He prayed for revival. Although still filled with grief, he began to preach at a local mission.

Inspired by Isaiah 64, he felt that few believers were moved by the spiritual needs of the community or the presence of sin. But Bartleman was determined to intercede. "Greatly burdened for souls," he preached nearly every day. He also passed out tracts and witnessed.

Soon, revival broke out in Pasadena, sweeping through Southern California. God moved, in part, because Bartleman had a burden for souls.

Today, what is God saying to you? Ask that He might give you a burden for souls. People all around you are lost. Pray that He would send His Holy Spirit to bring salvation. And give of your time and resources that He might use you to spread the Good News.

How can you do your part to fulfill the Great Commission?

Our Choices

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 65

God told Isaiah He stood with outstretched arms, ready to receive and bless all who called on Him. He was available even “to a nation which did not call on My name,” saying, “Here am I” (v. 1).

Sadly, many of His people turned their backs on Him. They ignored Him. Defied Him. Instead of obeying Him they were “rebellious” and did things that were “not good.” They followed “their own thoughts” (v. 2) and continually provoked Him. Those who were proud, arrogant, and self-righteous offended Him.

But He recognized that some did not have this attitude. They were like the discovery of “new wine...found in the cluster.” He ordered, “Do not destroy it, for there is benefit in it” (v. 8). While promising protection and blessing for His servants, those who refused to listen could expect another fate.

In one of his last statements, Joshua charged Israel, “Choose for yourselves today whom you will serve...as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15). Every day, we must make choices just like the one Joshua offered to Israel. And as Isaiah prophesied, we will experience the fruit of our choices.

Today, what will you decide? Will you go your own way, or will you choose to serve God unconditionally? Make your choice clear in your actions. Choose to obey His Word. Choose to seek first His kingdom.

MONDAY

May

23

I called, but you did not answer; I spoke, but you did not listen. Instead you did evil in My sight... My servants will shout joyfully with a glad heart, but you will cry out with a painful heart.

Isaiah 65:12, 14 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, I humble myself before You. I seek Your face. Help me to be faithful to Your Word and serve You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Whom will you choose to serve today? How will your choice be evident?

TUESDAY

May

24

This is what the LORD SAYS: "Behold, I extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream."

Isaiah 66:12 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for giving me perfect peace. Thank You that Your promises are true for me. I trust in You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Like a River Glorious

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 66

Frances Havergal was often sick, and her body was frail. But strong in faith, she learned to trust God and even rejoice in His goodness.

In 1876, while vacationing in Wales, she caught a cold that developed into a severe inflammation. As her condition deteriorated, she was told that she might die. But she did not react with fear. She had such peace that her friends were amazed. She commented, "If I am really going, it is too good to be true."

Soon she recovered and decided to write a hymn that described the perfect peace God had given her called "Like a River Glorious." She knew He promised to provide "peace like a river," a "perfect peace" to those who kept their minds focused on Him and who trusted Him (Isaiah 26:3).

As she knew from her own life, God's perfect peace flows "like a river." It flows "fuller every day" and even grows "deeper all the way." Resting in Him, we can be free from every care.

No matter what we go through, we can trust God. As Havergal wrote, when we focus on Him, our hearts can find "perfect peace and rest."

God offers *you* perfect peace and rest – a glorious river of peace, an overwhelming flood. Start thinking about Him. Seek Him. Share your needs with Him. Confess His promises. Praise and worship Him. Thank Him for His presence. Receive His peace.

How can you be more focused as you meditate on God and His promises?

God's View of Your Life

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JEREMIAH 1

Jeremiah saw nothing but obstacles. Thinking about the assignments God was giving him, he felt inadequate, lacking the skills he needed. God appointed him to be a prophet, but Jeremiah said he did not “*know how to speak*” (v. 5). Conscious of his limitations and inexperience, he felt incapable of accomplishing God's assignments.

But God had a distinct perspective. He told Jeremiah He had a plan for his life and called him to accomplish *special* tasks. God knew his limits but was not concerned. Jeremiah just needed to be faithful, trust God, and be confident He would provide all he needed.

Jeremiah accepted the challenge and sought to obey God. Yet on occasion, uncertainty still plagued him. He had to be reminded about God's promise to provide everything he needed if Jeremiah remained willing and obedient, trusting Him and staying faithful. He needed faith that God would keep His promises.

These same principles are true for you. God has given you unique assignments. You may face obstacles, uncertainties, and difficult tasks. You may feel overwhelmed and unprepared. But these just are opportunities to trust God.

As you think about your life, commit your assignments to God. Seek Him for the wisdom and skills you need. By faith, move forward to accomplish His work, sensitive to His leading. Allow Him to use you and your time, talents, and treasures for His Kingdom.

*Before you were born
I consecrated you; I
have appointed you
as a prophet to the
nations... Do not say, “I
am a youth,” because
everywhere I send you,
you shall go, and all
that I command you,
you shall speak.*

Jeremiah 1:5-7 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for Your call. I seek You for the skills and abilities I need. With You all things are possible. In Jesus' name, amen.

What do you think God is calling you to do in this season of life?

THURSDAY

May

26

They went far from Me and walked after emptiness and became empty. [...] The prophets...walked after things that were of no benefit. [...] My people have changed their glory for that which is of no benefit.

Jeremiah 2:5, 8, 11 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, I surrender my life to You. Thank You for giving my life meaning. Give me discernment. In Jesus' name, amen.

Empty Things

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JEREMIAH 2

God sees everything clearly – our lives and the world. He sees everything from the perspective of eternity. He knows the outcome of every situation, the conclusion of every story. We constantly make decisions based on our limited understanding. But in truth, we often don't know what is best.

Meanwhile, God offers to help us make the right decisions, to be successful, to avoid problems. Yet, despite His promises, we might not seek Him or ask for His help. We can forget Him or ignore His Word. We might go our own way or follow ideas that seem popular.

While this goes on, God watches. He knows how often we might seek things that sound inviting but that do not profit. He wants our lives to be fruitful and to invest our time and resources in things that last. He also wants us to realize how easily we can lack perspective or make decisions that seem right at the time, but that lead us astray.

We can marvel that the people in Jeremiah's time could seem so foolish. But we can be just as foolish and make the same kinds of mistakes.

What is the answer? Be committed to serving God. Seek first His Kingdom. Know His Word, and apply it in every area of our lives. Humble yourself before Him, and seek His wisdom. Be people of prayer, surrendered to the lordship of Jesus.

How has God redeemed some poor decisions you've made?

Do Justice, Seek Truth

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JEREMIAH 5

God gave Jeremiah a challenge: to find just *one person* “*who does justice, who seeks honesty.*” If he could find even one person, He would pardon His people.

But God warned this search would be futile. If he traveled everywhere and talked with everyone, Jeremiah could not find one person who did the right thing and sought truth. Israel was filled with people who didn't seek God's standards but *compromised* and followed their own rules.

He warned Jeremiah that he would see people with a *superficial* spirituality who talked like they were religious but whose hearts were far from Him. Their religion was an act. When confronted, they would not change. Their faces were “*harder than rock*” and they “*refused to repent*” (v. 3). As a result, God had no choice but to send judgment to shake them up.

God still looks for “*just and honest*” men and women (v. 1 NLT). Are you one of these people? Are you completely honest in all your dealings? Do you seek first God's Kingdom? Are you living according to His standards? Are you guilty of compromising with the world? Have you surrendered your life to the lordship of Jesus Christ?

Today, renew your commitment to obey God. Be passionate about doing what is right and pleasing Him. As He told Jeremiah, just one person who does justice and seeks truth can make an enormous difference. Will you be one of those people?

How are you practically seeking God's Kingdom with your time and money?

FRIDAY

May

27

Roam about through the streets of Jerusalem... Seek in her public squares, if you can find a person, if there is one who does justice, who seeks truth, then I will forgive her.

Jeremiah 5:1-2 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, I genuinely want to please You. Help me stand for righteousness and speak the truth. Use me to impact lives for Christ. In Jesus' name, amen.

SATURDAY

May

28

*Let not the wise man
glory in his wisdom,
neither let the mighty
man glory in his might,
let not the rich man
glory in his riches: but
let him that glorieth
glory in this, that he
understandeth and
knoweth me...for in
these things I delight,
saith the LORD.*

Jeremiah 9:23-24 KJV

PRAYER:

Father, forgive me for
boasting about myself.
You are the most
important part of my
life. Help me know You
better. In Jesus' name,
amen.

Knowing God

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JEREMIAH 9

Miles Smith was passionate about God's Word. Because of this passion and his mastery of ancient languages, he was chosen to help edit the King James Bible. Smith was assigned to help translate the prophets.

Once the preliminary work was finished, a small number of scholars (including Smith) edited the entire Bible. Smith was asked to write the preface.

In "The Translators to the Readers" preface, Smith stated that the Bible was *divinely inspired*. The original was "from Heaven, not from earth; the author being God, not man." And the Holy Spirit inspired it.

Smith knew the blessings available to those who loved God's Word. In a passage Smith helped to translate, Jeremiah wrote that we should glory not in our accomplishments or resources but in understanding and knowing God.

Smith echoed this by writing, "Happy is the man that delighteth in the Scripture." Even more blessed are those who meditate on it constantly.

After pouring over the Scriptures in the original languages, he concluded, "What truth, what saving truth, without the word of God? What word of God, whereof we may be sure, without the Scripture?"

The Bible reminds us why God wants us to *delight* in His Word. Don't just read the Bible. *Meditate* on it. Study it. May these divinely inspired words guide you.

Are you passionate about the Word of God?

The Only Way

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JEREMIAH 10

To people around him, Jeremiah seemed confident. But his writings reveal that he was very human and often insecure. What was different? God called him, and he was willing to obey Him even when he did not understand the messages God asked him to deliver.

Jeremiah had learned that God had a plan for his life, established *before* he was born. His interests might have taken him in other directions, but he learned to follow God.

Jeremiah knew that many people did not have this level of trust. But God had shown him that He was the master Potter. He *alone* understands our nature and knows our potential and purpose. He *alone* knows the best way to shape our lives (Jeremiah 18:1-6).

Think about the opinions you hear, the feelings of family members and friends, opinions expressed through social media, biases that subtly shape TV programs and films, the promises of politicians, answers proposed by entertainers and experts. In the face of so many options, is it possible that there is only one truth? Is it possible to know the right way?

The Bible tells us that there is only one *right* way, one truth, one path to life – to follow Jesus and make Him our Lord (John 14:6). And there is only one way to find fulfillment and direction – to trust *completely* in God. Let Him direct *your* life!

Compose a prayer of surrender to God.

SUNDAY

May

29

LORD, I know that people's lives are not their own; it is not for them to direct their steps. Discipline me, LORD, but only in due measure – not in your anger, or you will reduce me to nothing.

Jeremiah 10:23-24 NIV

PRAYER:

Father, I surrender my life to You. Direct my path. Lead and guide me. Use me to impact lives for Your Kingdom. In Jesus' name, amen.

MONDAY

May

30

Since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let's rid ourselves of every obstacle and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let's run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking only at Jesus.

Hebrews 12:1-2 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for the people who have helped me in my spiritual life. Help me be an example to others. In Jesus' name, amen.

A Day to Remember

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: HEBREWS 12

On May 30, 1868, Commander in Chief John A. Logan of the Grand Army proclaimed that a day be set aside to honor those who died "in defense of their country" during the American Civil War. This memorial day was first known as Decoration Day, a time to remember those who had died in that conflict on both sides.

This national call for remembrance was preceded by the Southern states electing to honor their own dead from the Civil War. Gradually this celebration became accepted as a national day to remember all Americans who died in all wars. (We now celebrate Memorial Day on the last Monday in May following an act of Congress in 1971.)

We pause to remember on days like this because it is easy to take the blessings of life for granted and forget how much we owe to others. We also commemorate the many freedoms and conveniences we enjoy and often take for granted.

Hebrews reminds us about the great cloud of witnesses that surrounds us: martyrs who defended the faith, people who prayed, preached, sacrificed, and refused to compromise, including people who have shared their testimony. We need to be grateful for their lives.

Think about all the people who have been influential in your spiritual life. Be thankful for their impact. And remember to be an example, so others might come to know Jesus through your life.

Reflect on the lives of those who have been influential in your own life.

Praising Jesus

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: MATTHEW 21

An unknown German writer declared that we should praise Him *constantly*. He expressed this conviction in a hymn known in English as “When Morning Gilds the Sky.”

In the title, the translator used a word that means to overlay with a thin covering of gold. The picture is a colorful sunrise. It is a reminder that we should start each day praising Jesus.

We should praise Him morning and evening. We should praise Him at home or work. We can speak or sing His praises. With “the hosts of angels cry,” we can praise Him with instruments. We praise Him in fellowship with other believers or by ourselves. We praise Him when we are old and young.

If we are sad, we find solace in praising Him. As the anonymous writer knew, we praise Him when we face opposition, knowing that “the powers of darkness fear” when we praise Him. When we think about His blessings, we should *never* tire of praising Him.

The throngs praised Jesus when He approached Jerusalem for the last time on earth. But while we live, we have the opportunity to praise Him anytime. We never should stop. Every stanza of this hymn ends with the phrase, “May Jesus Christ be praised.”

As we praise Him, we are joining the heavenly choir, remembering that we will spend eternity praising Him. Today, spend time praising Jesus. He is worthy!

TUESDAY

May

31

The people all around him were shouting, “Praise God for the Son of David!” [...] Jesus replied, “Haven’t you ever read the Scriptures? For they say, ‘You have taught children and infants to give you praise.’”

Matthew 21:9, 16 NLT

PRAYER:

Dear Lord Jesus, I praise and worship You. Thank You for changing my life. Use me to impact others. In Your name, amen.

Write your own hymn of praise for the day's sunrise and sunset.

Choosing God's Economy



Obey His Word, and you will be blessed!

Did you know Jesus taught more about money than Heaven and hell combined? He talked more about money than LOVE! The Father is willing and able to bless you when you follow His ways.

Whether you need a harvest in your finances, health, emotions, or family, take a step of faith to sow a seed into God's Kingdom TODAY!

Seven Biblical Principles of Money

1. All that you have belongs to God – you are a steward of His resources (1 Chronicles 29:14).
2. God entrusts you with worldly wealth, so you can bless others (Deuteronomy 28:12).
3. Worldly wealth has great power – for good and evil (1 Timothy 6:17-19).
4. Earthly treasures don't last – build your heavenly account (Matthew 6:19-21).
5. Giving generously to share the Gospel and win souls is wise (Matthew 13:44-46).
6. Meet others' needs with sacrificial generosity and a warm heart (2 Corinthians 9:6-7).
7. Giving sets you free from the strangle-hold money puts on your life (Luke 14:13-14).

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Faith Delivered a Dream Home!

Despite a tough economy, Glen stepped out in faith. The results were nothing short of miraculous!

Sowing a seed of faith isn't about the money. God has all the money He needs and generously gives gifts to those who trust Him. Sowing seed is an act of faith in God's love and provision. He blesses steps of faith every time, and we love hearing and sharing those testimonies!

Recently, Glen, a real estate agent in Florida shared how a Campmeeting broadcast stirred his heart, but he resisted the idea of writing a large check in uncertain times. The call to trust God by giving stretched Glen beyond his comfort zone. "Money was kind of tight, and I didn't want to sow a seed."

Instead, Glen poured extra effort into his real estate business to build up his income, so he could give more easily. He really enjoyed helping buyers purchase their dream homes, but a hot seller's market made closing a deal challenging. When a client's full price offer was beat out by another

Realtor's client, Glen turned to God for some help.

"I started praying in the morning because I was getting a little discouraged. I had worked so hard for my buyers. That day another Campmeeting show came on, and the speaker's message convicted me: 'If it weren't for God, you wouldn't have anything in your life.' Right then, I decided it was time to sow my seed of faith and proclaim a supernatural breakthrough for my clients.

"By God's grace, things turned around hours later! My client's dream home came back on the market, and by evening, we had it under contract. Sowing my seed showed God I was willing to step out in faith and put everything in His hands, and I can't stop praising His goodness!"



What is YOUR testimony of God's faithfulness?

Share it with us and our Inspiration partners by visiting inspiration.org/praise TODAY!

God's Priorities are Clear. Are Yours?



Jesus had no doubt about why He came to earth “*The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost*” (Luke 19:10 NIV). Do you know why YOU are on earth?

Or as one old evangelist asked, “Are the things you’re living for worth Christ dying for?”

You see, life is all about PRIORITIES – living with God’s priorities brings blessings!

Your priorities are mostly shown by how you spend your time, talents, and treasures. Is your life lined up with God’s priorities?

Time (Psalm 90:12)

Talents (1 Peter 4:10)

Treasures (Proverbs 3:9)



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A Merry Heart...

does good, like medicine. – Proverbs 17:22

Church Bulletin Bloopers

- A cookbook is being compiled by the ladies of the church. Please submit your favorite recipe as well as a short antidote for it.
- The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment, and gracious hostility.
- A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.
- The Over 60s Choir will be disbanded for the summer with the thanks of the entire church.



www.CuylerBlack.com

Attending a wedding for the first time, a little girl asked her mother, "Why is the bride wearing a white dress?"

The mother replied, "Because white is the color of happiness, and today is the happiest day of her life."

The child thought about this for a moment then asked, "So why is the groom wearing black?"

Got some clean, Christian humor you'd like to share?

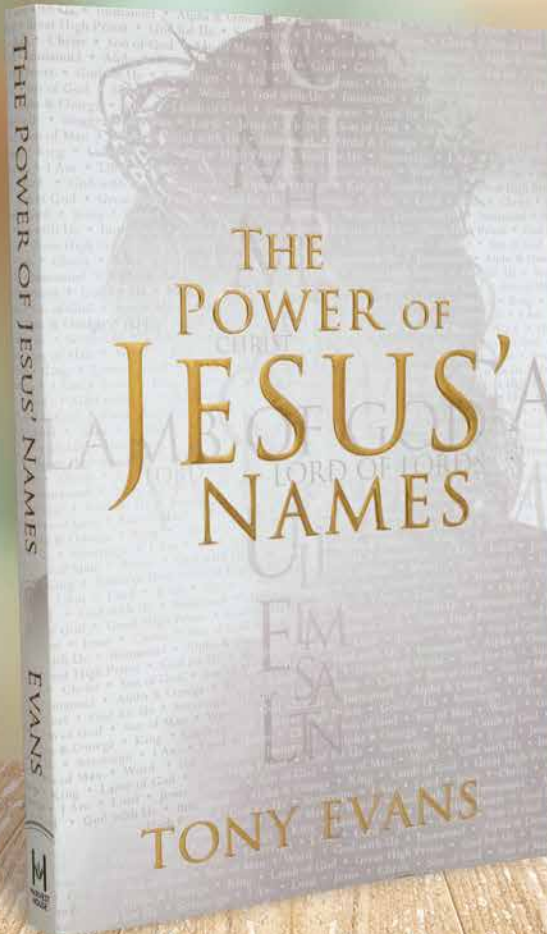
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Who Is Jesus to You?

The answer to that single question determines the quality of the life you live today, and it impacts your eternal destination of Heaven or hell.

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- ***Great High Priest***
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