

JUNE 2022

inspiration

M A G A Z I N E

PENTECOST

Your Season of Blessings!

Your Defining
Moment

True Miracle of
Pentecost

My Dad,
My Hero

Pentecost 2022: Your Season of Blessings!



God is not worried about anything – and He doesn't want you to be either! On **page 5**, David shows you how to live joyously every day and take advantage of God's special seasons of blessing. The appointed time of Pentecost is upon us – let's not miss out!



EDITOR'S CORNER



In this issue of *INSPIRATION*, we invite you to celebrate the Holy Spirit! From that very first Pentecost till today, His miraculous presence has been working in this world. The Christian life requires the power of the Spirit to guide and equip us for the great works God plans for us to do.

As we head into Pentecost, remember that nothing in this world compares to the goodness and greatness of our God. As His child, you can be secure in His power and love no matter what is happening, and you can count on the Holy Spirit to lead you to victory in Christ. I pray this month that you feel His presence in and around you!

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Ben shares his thankfulness for a dad who revealed the wisdom, mercy, and love of God in practical ways.



God Is Ready to Open **Heaven's Storehouse!**

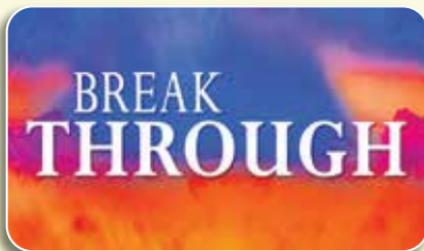


May 23 – June 10

Only through the power of the Holy Spirit can you live a life overflowing with peace and joy. Join David Cerullo as he gives you the keys to the treasure chest of life in the Spirit!

June 13 – July 8

David Cerullo maps out the prayer path to the Land of More than Enough. Learn the key to breakthrough prayers that unleash God's power and blessings in your life!



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PENTECOST 2022

YOUR SEASON OF BLESSINGS!



STRENGTHEN
your walk
with David Cerullo

How do you feel when you think of the future? Concerned? Fearful? Anxious? Or filled with excitement and hope?

It concerns me to see so many Christians worrying in fear over the economy...or wars... or pandemics. As we head into this season of Pentecost, I want you to realize...God has already given you the victory!

Instead of hanging your head in despair or waiting for help from the government, you can model the amazing testimony of the faith-filled woman described in Proverbs 31:10-31:

*Strength and dignity are her clothing,
And **she smiles at the future** (v. 25 NASB).*

Just as God did for this virtuous woman...

God wants to strengthen YOU, so you can SMILE at your future!

When you make the Lord your dwelling place amid life's storms and shakings, you can rest confidently in His provision, *smiling* instead of *fretting!* The Scriptures promise: "*A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you*" (Psalm 91:7).

This means looking to *God* as your hope and source – not to the resources or news headlines of the world.

WHY DID SHE SMILE?

This woman was confident in God's provision for her future, but that didn't mean she sat idly by, waiting for a supernatural harvest when she hadn't planted anything! We're told she buys a field and "*plants a vineyard*" (v. 16). And as the Lord blesses her, she determines to be a blessing to others: "*She extends her hand to the poor, and she stretches out her hands to the needy*" (v. 20 NASB).

Friend, when I look at these verses, I can't help but think of YOU! You have invested in the Good Ground of Inspiration Ministries, planting a "*vineyard*" with your financial seeds. You've extended your hand of blessing to lost and needy people around the world! As God has blessed you, you have been a blessing to others (Genesis 12:2).

In the same way, God blessed this woman in Proverbs 31, He promises to bless *you* abundantly because of your outreach to the least and the lost: "*He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, and He will pay back what he has given*" (Proverbs 19:17).

God will *pay you back* for every seed you've sown – abundantly and overflowing (Luke 6:38)!

PROSPERITY IN TROUBLED TIMES

"But David," you say, "Don't you understand how bad things look in the economy?"

Sure, I read the headlines and watch the news-casts too...but I also read GOD'S WORD! Look at what the Lord says about times like these:

In the days of famine they have abundance
(Psalm 37:19 ESV).

What a great promise! Even if we're living in

*As God has
blessed you,
you are to be
a blessing
to others.*

“days of famine,” God says He will give us His *abundance!*

This is exactly what happened to Isaac when he encountered “a *famine in the land*” (Genesis 26:1). Instead of becoming fearful and miserly, he determined to sow more seeds!

Now Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundred times as much. And the LORD blessed him, and the man became rich, and continued to grow richer until he became very wealthy; for he had possessions of flocks and herds and a great household, so that the Philistines envied him (vs. 12-14).

Friend, God has seen the financial seeds you have faithfully sown into the Good Ground of this ministry. And as He did for Isaac, He wants to bless *you* with a miraculous harvest to be the envy of those around you!

We can choose to live in fear of recession under the world's economic system, or we can choose to live in faith.

SPECIAL SEASONS TO SOW

You and I have a choice to make. We can choose to live in fear of recession under the world's economic system, or we can choose to live in faith...in a covenant relationship with God and under His supernatural umbrella of provision.

Although God is *always* blessed when we act in faith to sow financial seeds into His Kingdom, the Bible says there also are appointed times when He wants us to bring Him *special* offerings, so He can bless us with *extraordinary* miracles.

Along with the Feasts of Passover and Tabernacles, Exodus 23 designates the Feast of Pentecost as one of three holy convocations that are special to God.

Referring to the three special feasts – Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles – Deuteronomy 16:16 says, “None shall appear before the Lord

empty-handed.” At these special times each year, the Israelites were to present their sacrifices and offerings to the Lord *from the seeds they had sown and the harvest He had given them.*

These special offerings were in addition to their regular tithes and offerings. God PROMISED that if His people obeyed what He told them to do, His awesome covenant promises would be poured out on their lives!

Friend, this can be *YOUR* season of breakthroughs, too, just like it was for Isaac!

A NEW PENTECOST

It's fitting that Pentecost was described as the *“Feast of the Harvest”* in Exodus 23:16 because it led to a great harvest of souls in the nations of the earth. In Acts 2, the power of the Holy Spirit energized the Great Commission, and 3,000 people were saved on the first Pentecost when the Holy Spirit filled those present!

We need a *new* Pentecost – a fresh outpouring of God's Spirit today. We still are called to lift the name of Jesus and turn the world upside down for Him. God wants to use us to fill the whole earth with the knowledge of His glory (Habakkuk 2:14), reaping an end-time harvest from *“every tribe, language, people, and nation”* (Revelation 5:9 NASB)!

This is what Inspiration Ministries is all about – winning SOULS in the farthest corners of the world. Together, step-by-step we are working to proclaim the name and fame of Jesus Christ...

...on every continent

...in every major language

...through every form of technology

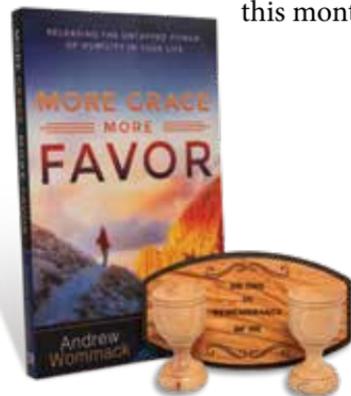
Thank you, Inspiration Partners. Together, I believe we *will* see the Great Commission fulfilled in our lifetime!

Wonderful things are ahead for you and for this ministry we share together. Since God is faithful, we can SMILE at the future – echoing the joyous celebration in Heaven because we're bringing lost people to Jesus (Luke 15:7)!

God Bless You!



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



Leaving a Legacy

PLANNED GIVING MATTERS

Did you know that most Americans die without preparing a Will and Estate Plan? After working a lifetime and accumulating material possessions, many lose a large percentage of their estates by failing to make their wishes known in a valid Will.

Don't let this be your story. It's relatively easy and inexpensive to create a Will, and there are many benefits:

- You gain peace of mind knowing your loved ones will be provided for when you're gone.
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- You make your wishes clear on important matters such as child custody, property distribution, and charitable bequests.



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Your Defining Moment

In this appointed season, let God's Spirit write a powerful story within YOU!

Are you facing an insurmountable obstacle today? A mountain so large you feel helpless in its face?

If so, please know you are not alone. Don't even let that lie enter your thoughts. Instead, let the overwhelming truth of God's goodness and presence wash over you. This mountain in front of you will be thrown into the sea.

Even if this chapter of your life sends out waves of fear, be encouraged, the battle is the Lord's! If you could see the end of this chapter, you would be amazed at what God is doing in your life. His power is breaking down strongholds, and He is destroying anything meant to take you and your family down.

God is laughing at the plans of the enemy even *while* the storm is raging. Just picture it. The devil thinks a bad report, pain, discomfort, or fear will disrupt your faith, but you are one of God's anointed,

covered in the blood of Jesus, and full of God's own Spirit. I tell you, the end of this present trial is so beautiful, so precious, so full of love that you will look back and say, "I wouldn't have had it any other way." The refining and restoration that come because of the conflict in this chapter of your life are supremely supernatural.

Friend, this is a defining moment for you. The goodness of our God, the redemption of our King, is about to be revealed fully in your life and family. The prayers you have been praying for your loved ones have stirred Heaven with your faith. Hold on to the last scene of this chapter and the beauty of the next chapters in your life with hope and expectation.

Let this be your personal *PENTECOST* – the appointed season of your transforming, miraculous breakthrough by the

Spirit of God. There's a reason the Holy Spirit seeks a perpetual home in your heart. He passionately wants to...

- Guard your salvation 2 Corinthians 1:22
- Testify to your adoption Romans 8:16
- Bring hope, peace, and joy Romans 15:13
- Strengthen you to endure Ephesians 3:16
- Convict you of sin John 16:8
- Teach and remind you of truth John 14:26
- Empower you for victory Galatians 5:16
- Lead you toward holiness 1 Peter 1:2
- Help you prayer in power Romans 8:26
- Give you wisdom Ephesians 1:17
- Reveal God's plans 1 Corinthians 2:12
- Provide direction Acts 16:6
- Draw you toward salvation Ephesians 4:4
- Overcome your fear 2 Timothy 1:7
- Give you spiritual gifts 1 Corinthians 12:7
- Set captives free 2 Corinthians 3:17
- Produce spiritual fruit Galatians 5:22-23
- Glorify and reveal Jesus John 16:14
- Pour love into your heart Romans 5:3-5
- Equip you for evangelism Acts 1:8

Can you feel the power of the Holy Spirit rising in you? His love is always present to flow through you in power, in forgiveness, in truth, and in glory because of who you are...His favored child! The author and perfecter of your faith is with you, and He's penning His plan right now in your life (Hebrews 12:2). You are His! ❖



Amanda Acree is an English professor at Oral Roberts University who loves encouraging others with the Word of God. She and her husband Roone live in Indian Land, SC and are proud parents of a Lego-loving, first-year college student.

The True Miracle of PENTECOST

I always think about Pentecost being the wonderful first bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples, but we can get so distracted by the wow factor of the sound like a mighty rushing wind, the divided tongues as of fire, and the apostles speaking in other tongues that we don't notice the major miracle of Pentecost.

This miracle shows up in the response of those who gathered on that day. They came together. They heard the mighty works of God. Then they responded. *This* is the great miracle of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit added three thousand souls to His church on that day. Pentecost is not so much about the Holy Spirit poured out on the apostles; it is about the Holy Spirit poured out on those three thousand souls.

Martin Luther wrote that the “Holy Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ.” Pentecost is an example of that:

1,500 years earlier, the Holy Spirit worked through His servant Moses to establish feasts that would prepare the way for this moment.

The Pentecost pilgrims who gathered together had been looking forward to the Messiah. They kept the ceremonial laws, customs, and sacrifices as a reminder that one day the Messiah would come and fulfill all the Law. As the people of the Old Testament gathered, they encountered people who told them who Jesus is and what He did for their salvation. These people did not speak in the lofty Hebrew of the temple, nor the street language of Aramaic, nor the commercial language of Greek, nor even the legal language of Latin, but each pilgrim heard the story of salvation in his own native language.

Amid all the amazing things that happened on that Pentecost, it is easy to confuse God's goal with the means that He used to accomplish that goal. After all, this is exciting stuff...a rushing wind...

flames of fire...the sudden ability to speak and understand a foreign language. It is easy to get distracted by all these things and forget the main goal...the goal of creating faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. This is the goal of the Holy Spirit on that Pentecost long ago, and it is still His goal today.

But even amid the signs and wonders of that special Pentecost, some resisted. This can be a great comfort to us as we share our faith to the people we meet in our lives. Sometimes, they will be interested and want to know more. Other times they will reject our confession. When that rejection comes, we can take comfort in knowing that even when there was the sound like a mighty rushing wind, the divided tongues as of fire, and the apostles speaking in other languages, that there were some people who resisted their message. We should expect that and continue to confess our faith in Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

On the day after that special Pentecost, there was no sound of a mighty wind. The tongues of fire had gone away. People spoke simply in their own language. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit was still at work through the Word of God. It has always been that way and always will be. The Holy Spirit points to Jesus who is the God-Man who saves us from our sin with His suffering and death on the cross and promises us life everlasting with His resurrection. The Holy Spirit works through God's Word when we receive it and share it with those who do not know Jesus. ❖

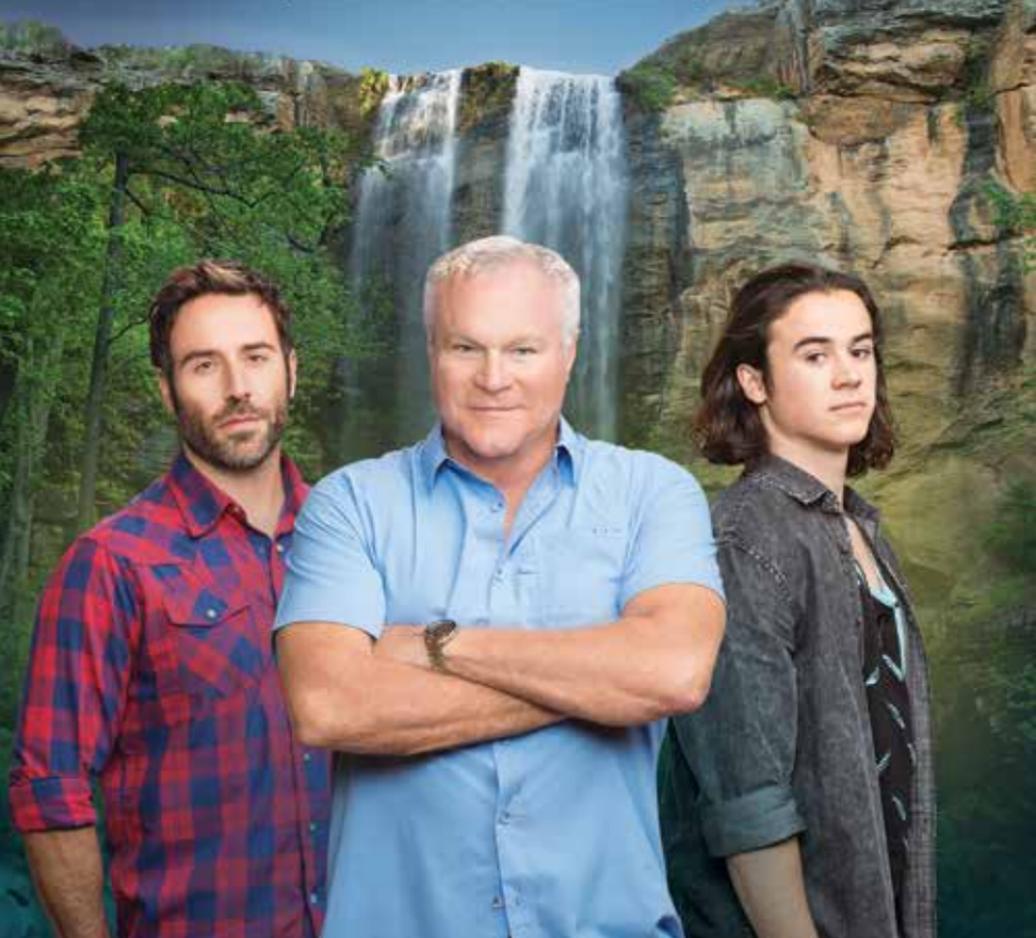
The Holy Spirit points to Jesus who is the God-Man who saves us from our sin with His suffering and death on the cross and promises us life everlasting with His resurrection.



REV. JAMES T. BATCHELOR is a second-career pastor currently serving at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Hoopeston, Illinois. He and wife, Lynn, have three children.

Adapted from a sermon published by Pastor James T. Batchelor.
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DAVID KEITH | COBY RYAN McLAUGHLIN | KEEAN JOHNSON



HERITAGE FALLS

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON?

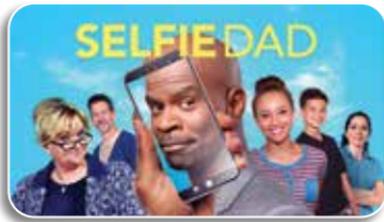


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Celebrating Fathers Around the World



Selfie Dad

Ben's mid-life crisis gives way to social media stardom, and he finds himself trying to juggle a microphone and a Bible. Laugh along as he stumbles toward the path to true happiness.



Heaven Is Waiting

Stuck in grief, Ned struggles to move on with life after his wife's death. Will his daughter's matchmaking help Ned learn to live with hope again?



Miles Between Us

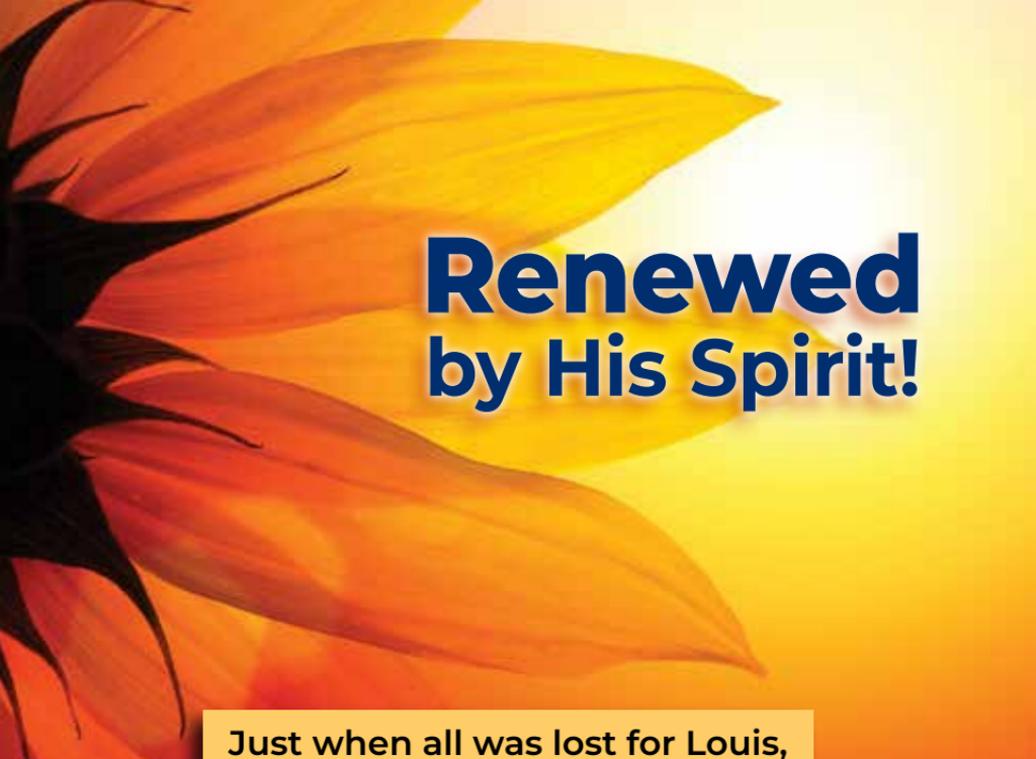
Estranged for twelve years, Luke and his daughter Gabby carry a lifetime of hurt and resentment. A forced road trip together becomes the highway for miracles of healing and hope.

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Renewed by His Spirit!

**Just when all was lost for Louis,
God stepped in with power**

Louis had never really read the Bible before, but after noticing a difference in his born-again boss and coworkers, he knew he had to give it a try. Picking up a Bible one day, he began reading the Gospels and believed every word. But when he got to the part about being saved...he couldn't believe it applied to him.

"I was sure I was saved only for hell. And though I accepted my doom, I decided I would rebel against Satan every day I lived by reading the Bible." As coworkers counseled and shared Scripture, the Spirit of Truth began to break through.

Still unsure about God's love, Louis wanted proof that God loved him – and would guide and provide for him. So, contrary to the advice of his co-workers (and Jesus' – Luke 4:12), he decided to put God to the test. He quit his job to live by faith, but when he got home and told his wife, she did not share his enthusiasm. She lashed out about the way "the Bible and God" had changed Louis and told him to "get out!"

Discouraged, Louis sat on the curb near his home and opened up the Bible. Soon a car pulled over, and a peaceful, serene gentleman got out and struck up a

conversation with him. The drama of the day spilled out of Louis, and God's miraculous guidance came into view. The driver of the car was a devout Christian businessman who offered Louis a job on the spot.

Louis began learning more about trusting God and experiencing the joy of intimate conversation with His Lord. Louis's wife could not accept the changes in his life, and their marriage ended. In time, Louis found a partner who seemed to share his hope in Christ. Unfortunately, his new wife quickly became both verbally and physically abusive. His health declined and a heart attack nearly ended his life. Louis's wife left when the doctors said he would require nursing care for the rest of his life.

It was during this time that Louis found Inspiration Ministries. "I couldn't move and often couldn't sleep, so late-night TV was my friend. I found the Campmeeting programs and love them! The joy and peace that comes from those broadcasts gives me hope." Inspired to believe God's great promises, Louis slowly regained enough function in his limbs to leave the

nursing home. Louis began rebuilding his life by finding a church and a home group fellowship.

God's goodness flooded into Louis's life through a group member who bought him a vehicle and paid for his insurance and gas. The generosity of others encouraged Louis to give as well. "I gave to God under compulsion...as if He wouldn't bless me otherwise. It didn't feel good to give. Then one night, I heard about sowing seed on Inspiration TV. That made sense to me, and I believed it would help me build my faith. So I sowed a seed with an assignment of paying off my debts." Not long after, a member of Louis's home group called to say God was leading them to pay off a \$900 debt he owed!

"God has been so good to me. I have experienced His generosity, healing, and deliverance! I am now off all medications and recently started my own window-cleaning business. I am thankful to God and Inspiration Ministries. God has been growing my faith for decades now, and I want everyone to know how great He is!" ❖

What is YOUR testimony of God's faithfulness or His miracles?

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



His Miracles Are Growing!

More than 2.1 Million Souls saved as of 5/31/22

“I really see Jesus in my life because I was in the world of darkness and doing a lot of evil. Thanks for Inspiration’s good work.”
– **William, Kenya**

“God has touched the lives of all my family members, friends, and myself tremendously. What a mighty God we serve. I am grateful He has restored us in all areas. Thank you, Jesus, for your miracles.” – **Natasha, NY**



2022 Salvation Goal
4,800,000



Each leaf represents **10,000 SOULS** brought into the Kingdom through the outreaches of Inspiration Ministries!

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Compassion

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: LUKE 10

Born in Switzerland in 1850, Eugène Burnand grew up in a Christian home. He knew the Bible but also became an accomplished artist. Combining these interests, he became dissatisfied with the way others illustrated biblical scenes.

He turned his attention to *The Parables*. In a project taking three years to complete, he finished 84 paintings associated with 72 parables of Jesus. Burnand exercised great care to bring each parable to life.

His approach is clear in a series of paintings illustrating the story of the Good Samaritan. In the first drawing, Burnand pictures the barren environment. In this story, a man was attacked and left for dead. We see how dangerous it must have been to walk down these paths and how easy it would have been for bandits to hide.

Many passersby had the opportunity to stop and aid the wounded man. But two men with religious backgrounds passed him by, doing nothing.

A second illustration shows a Samaritan lovingly giving the injured man a ride on his donkey. He was from a people known to be enemies of the Jews. Yet he was the one who showed compassion. A third illustration shows the Samaritan paying an innkeeper with directions to care for the injured man.

Think about the impact of these stories. Ask God to give you compassion for the people He brings into your life. Always be ready to show God's love.

A Jewish man... was attacked by bandits. They... left him half dead... A priest came along... he crossed to the other side of the road... Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him.

Luke 10:30-33 NLT

PRAYER:

Father, give me compassion for others. Open my eyes to see the needs of people around me. In Jesus' name, amen.

To whom can you show compassion today in a special way?

I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

Luke 11:9-10

PRAYER:

Father, I commit these needs to You: _____.
Thank You for the answer!
Thank You for hearing my prayer. In Jesus' name, amen.

Persistence

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: LUKE 11

Eugène Burnand believed that art could be a teaching tool, conveying insights that could not just illustrate biblical stories, but also bring them to life. In particular, he applied these ideas to the parables of Jesus.

We see his approach in his treatment of the parable of the man who knocked on a neighbor's door, hoping to get the bread he needed. The request came at midnight, an inconvenient time. At first, the neighbor just rejected the request. The door was shut. The neighbor said, "I cannot rise and give to you" (v. 7). But the man did not give up and kept knocking. Because of his *persistence*, he received *everything* he needed.

Burnand dedicated two paintings to this story, each in his familiar black-and-white style. These paintings don't dazzle us with technique but do draw us into the story.

In the first painting, Burnand showed a man garbed in plain clothing, knocking at a door. The second painting is of a woman, praying, her Bible opened. She represents a person who applied the principles of the parable.

These illustrations help us realize that Jesus was teaching truths that apply to *everyone* – people of every background, *anyone* with a need who has the faith to seek God for answers.

These principles apply to you. Don't give up if your prayers aren't answered at first. Pray and keep praying. Keep seeking God for the answers you need. Keep knocking.

Write a prayer for something you've been requesting from God for a long time.

Love for God's House

FRIDAY

June

3

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: LUKE 2

Born in London in 1827, William Hunt wanted to revitalize art. His paintings were notable for their attention to detail, color, and symbolism, particularly when applied to religious subjects. In a quest for historical accuracy, Hunt traveled to the Holy Land, where he built a house. He sought to learn about the land where Jesus lived and the people who lived there.

He applied these principles in his 1860 painting *The Finding of the Savior in the Temple*. Here, Hunt captured the moment Mary and Joseph found Jesus in dialogue with religious leaders. He had been separated from them. They found Him in the temple. Jesus explained, "Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" (v. 49). That was His priority.

In the painting, a group gathered around Jesus, listening to Him. Hunt depicted the contrasting ways people responded. As the Bible reports, "all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers" (v. 47).

This story and Hunt's painting remind us how much Jesus loved being in the temple and how precious His Father's house was to Him.

Hunt would want us to ponder this story, not just to observe, like the people in his painting. We should *listen* to Jesus' teachings, *fellowship* with Him, and ask Him questions.

Today, renew your love for God. Ask Him to give you a passion for His Word and fellowship with Him.

His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem...the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it.

Luke 2:41-43

PRAYER:

Father, give me a greater love for Your house and a hunger to learn more of Your Word. Teach me. In Jesus' name, amen.

What's one thing you wish you knew more about in the Bible?

SATURDAY

June

4

In Your book all the days [of my life] were written before ever they took shape.

Psalm 139:16 AMPC

PRAYER:

Father, thank You that every day of my life has been written in Your book. I trust in You and commit my life to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

God's Book

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PSALM 139

Holding the reader's attention can be a challenge for writers. According to one study, fewer than 20% of readers read past the headline of articles. The same principle is true for novels. Readers may pay attention for a time but most quickly lose interest.

How would we approach our lives if they were written like a book? Would we be intrigued by the situations we face? Would we wonder what will happen next? What will be the basis of our decisions? What will be the conclusion of the story? Will there be a happy ending?

The Bible tells us God has written a book about each of us. As David wrote here, "*all the days [of my life] were written before ever they took shape.*" David realized that God had no doubts about the outcome of world events or the resolution of each life. To Him, there are no mysteries about the obstacles or the problems. The only question is whether we will trust Him or cooperate with Him.

Today, remember that God has written all your days in His book *before* they took shape. He knows what will happen next. You do not need to worry or be afraid. Instead of letting these emotions fill your heart, turn your thoughts toward God. Seek Him in prayer. Fill your mind with His Word, and declare His promises to be true. You can trust Him.

How will you show that you're trusting God with your future?

Pentecost

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ACTS 20

For generations, Pentecost had been a special day for God's people. It was celebrated fifty days after Passover (Exodus 23:16). It then became a day with particular significance to the early church, for the Spirit fell on believers on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-39).

This wasn't just a historic observation. It was so important to Paul that he rearranged his schedule just to be in Jerusalem for Pentecost.

Pentecost provides a reminder of how the Holy Spirit changed everything for believers. Make it a celebration to remember all the Spirit brings and what He can do in our lives.

Today is Pentecost. As celebrated by the early church, this is a day to remember all the Spirit does: He anoints us and gives our words authority; He gives us supernatural wisdom and power. Remember why Pentecost was so important to Paul and other believers.

Make this a day when the Spirit falls anew on you when His presence renews you. Seek to be "filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). Remember, as Jesus taught, the Spirit is the "Helper" given to "teach you all things" (John 14:26). He has been sent to "guide you into all truth" (John 16:13) and give you supernatural power (Acts 1:8). He will change your life.

Celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit. Seek to be more sensitive to His presence. He is your best defense! Your teacher! Your friend!

Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so that he would not have to lose time in Asia; for he was hurrying, if it might be possible for him to be in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

Acts 20:16 NASB

PRAYER:

Holy Spirit, speak to me. Give me Your joy, peace, and power. Overflow my life with Your presence. In Jesus' name, amen.

Write a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to fill you with His power.

MONDAY

June

6

Search me, O God, and know my heart; put me to the test and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there is any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.

Psalm 139:23-24 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, search me. Reveal any sin in my life. Help me to be clean in Your sight. I commit my way to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

God's Searchlight

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PSALM 139

Autobiographies allow famous people to tell their stories, explain their actions, and give their perspectives. But as Karl Barth, the 20th-century Swiss theologian, observed, people often use autobiographies to *rationalize* and *justify* instead.

Barth realized how easily we develop distorted opinions about ourselves and are biased and blind to our weaknesses. Barth once wrote that “every autobiography is a dubious enterprise.” No person can “survey himself even in the present moment, any more than in the whole of his past.” None of us can be objective.

David reached a similar conclusion. He realized how little he knew about his *own* life. God *alone* really knew him. God knew what he would say before he spoke. God knew what David did in secret, for even the “*darkness is not dark to You*” (v. 12). God knew his future: “*In Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me*” (v. 16).

Many people reject this attitude, confident that they understand themselves and can chart their own course. But they fail to understand why we *need* God's searchlight. True contentment comes when we trust Him. We have peace when we humble ourselves before Him. We have perspective when we fill our hearts and minds with His Word. We have freedom when we are clean in His sight. We are fulfilled when we are open and vulnerable before Him.

Write a prayer asking God to reveal and forgive any hidden sins in your life.

Rejection and Criticism

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JEREMIAH 11

TUESDAY

June

7

Located a short distance from Jerusalem, Anathoth was a town assigned to the priests (Joshua 21:3, 18). As the birthplace of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:1), the town had a special meaning for him. *Anathoth* comes from a root word meaning answer. Perhaps this was a place where people had found answers when they searched for God.

Regardless of its history, its people had become spiritually closed minded. Upset about Jeremiah's message, they demanded he stop prophesying "in the name of the LORD" even threatening to kill him (v. 21).

This had to concern Jeremiah. He must have been bothered that people in his hometown would not receive his message. He must have felt pain because the judgment would be coming on *his* people.

Jesus had a similar experience, for He was rejected by the people in Nazareth. He observed, "A prophet is not dishonored except in his hometown" (Mark 6:4).

This can happen to anyone. For several reasons, we might find ourselves rejected by friends or family and criticized even if we are being faithful to God. We need to remember that God sees our hearts. He asks us to remain focused on His assignments, seeking first His Kingdom even if others reject us.

If you seek to please God, people may not understand or agree with you. You may be criticized. Remember, it's more important to please God than other people, no matter who they are.

This is what the LORD says concerning the people of Anathoth, who are seeking your life, saying, "Do not prophesy in the name of the LORD, so that you will not die at our hand...I will bring disaster on the people of Anathoth."

Jeremiah 11:21, 23 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, help me please You. Correct me when I am wrong. Guide and lead me. Help me stay strong in Your Spirit. In Jesus' name, amen.

Reflect on a time when you were criticized for being a Christian.

*They have sown wheat
but have reaped thorns,
they have strained
themselves to no profit.
So be ashamed of your
produce because of the
fierce anger of the LORD.*

Jeremiah 12:13 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, I commit my life to You. I will sow seeds into Your Kingdom. Thank You for preparing an abundant harvest for me. In Jesus' name, amen.

Effort Without Profit

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JEREMIAH 12

God's people had sown seeds but didn't reap the harvest they hoped for. Why had this happened?

God said their leaders had failed them, ruining His vineyard, and trampling down His field. His "pleasant field" had become "a desolate wilderness" (v. 10). In addition, His people had sinned and turned against Him. Consequently, God abandoned them.

God made it clear: He wanted to bless them. He wanted their efforts to be *profitable*. But for blessings to flow, they needed to live according to His principles, serve, and please Him.

Their experience reminds us of when Jesus' disciples fished all night but caught *nothing*. He told them, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." When they obeyed Him, they caught so many fish that "their nets began to tear" (Luke 5:4, 6). This is how God can make our lives *fruitful* and how we can see maximum returns from our efforts.

Do you ever find yourself like the disciples or ancient Israel? Working hard but seeing little profit? Sowing seeds with a minimal harvest? Examine your life. Is your heart clean before God? Are you investing your energies in the right places? Are you obeying His Word?

Renew your commitment to seek first God's Kingdom. Seek to be clean in His sight, doing things His way. Sow the seeds He gives you. Believe Him for an abundant harvest.

What do you need to keep doing even though there's been little profit?

Eternal and Immortal

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 1 TIMOTHY 1

As nations grappled with the devastation of World War I, Carl Nielsen wrote his *Symphony No. 4* in 1916. Nielsen, born in Denmark on this day in 1865, gained fame as a composer. He is best remembered for his six symphonies with their innovative melodies and harmonies.

Nielsen chose to call this *The Inextinguishable Symphony*, using fiery brass and riveting persecution to express this motif. He focused on this word because the world seemed obsessed with destruction.

His idea was to find one word that could impart “the basic will to live.” To Nielsen, “music is life and, like life, inextinguishable.” However, as Nielsen himself discovered, life on earth does have an end. Nothing is truly inextinguishable.

People still look for something *inextinguishable* that provides lasting security and meaning. But the Bible reminds us that nothing on earth lasts forever. “No matter how much we see, we are never satisfied. No matter how much we hear, we are not content.” All these pursuits are “*like chasing the wind*” (Ecclesiastes 1:14 NLT).

What is the answer? Trust in God. He is “*eternal, immortal, invisible*.” He never changes. He is God throughout all eternity, no matter what happens on earth. Everything else changes, but His Word “*stands forever*” (Isaiah 40:8).

The world is unstable. Be sure God is your rock, your fortress, your deliverer (Psalm 18:2).

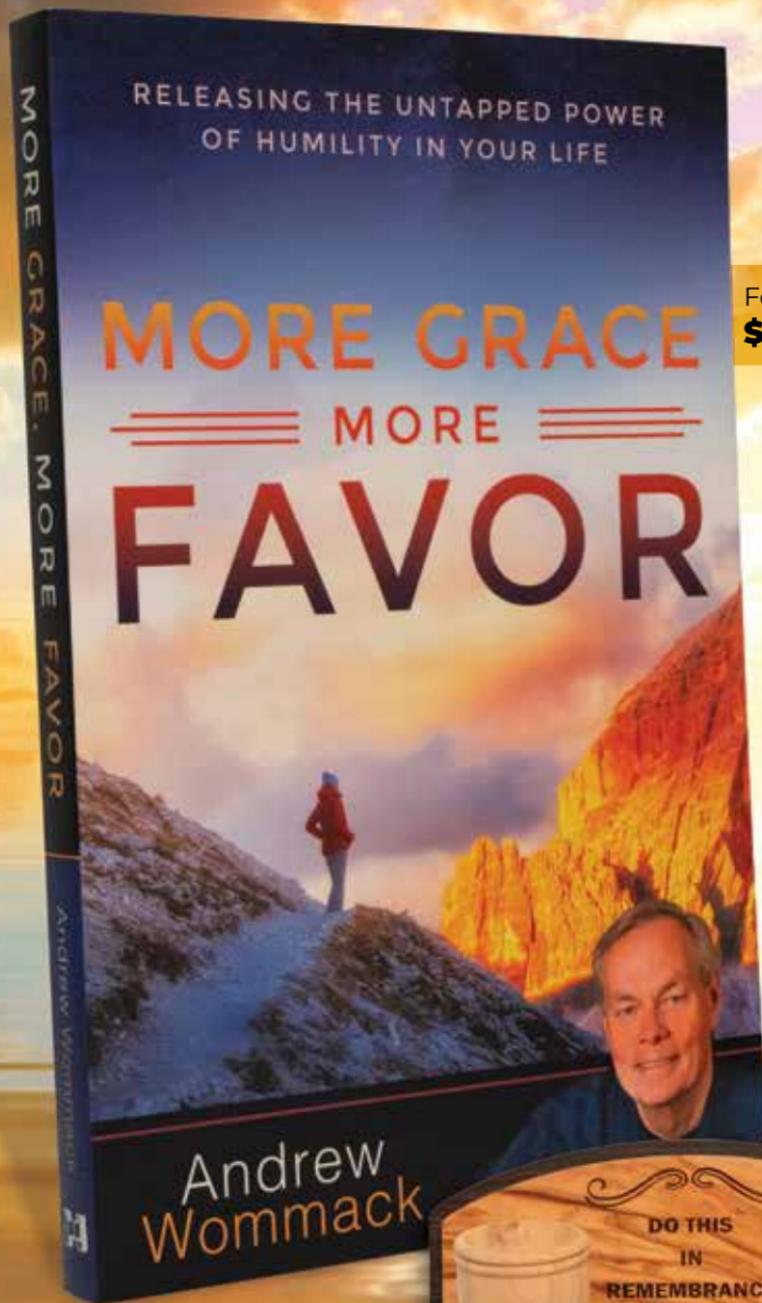
Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

1 Timothy 1:17 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, thank You that You are eternal and immortal. Others may disappoint me, but You are faithful. I commit my life to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Journal about the faithfulness of God throughout the changes in your life.



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FRIDAY

June

10

*Deliver me, O LORD,
from evil men...they
continually gather
together for war. They
sharpen their tongues
like a serpent; the
poison of asps is under
their lips...The proud
have hidden a snare
for me.*

Psalms 140:1-5 NKJV

PRAYER:

Father, I commit
this situation to You:
_____. Thank You
for the answers help I
need. I trust in You. In
Jesus' name, amen.

Deliverance

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PSALM 140

David faced many kinds of adversaries. They all were “evil men” but acted in different ways. Some gathered against him, planning violence and causing physical harm.

Some engaged in a different kind of conflict: a war of words, with wounds acting like a kind of poison, seeping deep into his heart and mind. Some of their words were seductive temptations, encouraging him to respond in ways that were wrong, counterproductive, and might tarnish his testimony.

Some looked for ways to make him stumble, encouraging him to make mistakes. Others hid snares for him, traps designed to confuse him, lead him astray, form the wrong kind of alliances, and encourage attraction to the wrong places.

What is amazing is that God could help David fight against all these people and situations. In himself, David felt weak and vulnerable. But he recognized that God could provide the strength he needed and protect him “in the day of battle” (v. 7). He could trust God to give him wisdom and discernment to recognize the kind of adversaries he faced and the best way to respond. And he could trust that God would vindicate him.

What kind of adversaries do you face? Learn from David. Call on God. Ask Him for discernment and the protection you need. Don't respond in your own strength, but call on God. Seek the discernment of the Holy Spirit. Be guided by the principles in His Word.

Reflect on a time when God delivered you from your adversaries.

Trust in God

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JEREMIAH 17

Born in Munich on this day in 1864, Richard Strauss influenced music and culture throughout Europe and the United States. Although a talented conductor, he gained the greatest fame as a dynamic composer. In strictly musical terms, his compositions often are inspiring. Yet his personal philosophy rejected God.

Strauss is best remembered as the composer of the fanfare opening of the movie *2001: A Space Odyssey* (taken from his tone poem *Thus Spake Zarathustra*). This was music based on the book by notorious atheist Frederick Nietzsche.

Other compositions also conducted atheistic themes. Strauss called his *Alpine Symphony* an anti-Christian work, celebrating the act of “moral purification by means of one’s own strength.” Ignoring God, the *Alpine Symphony* encouraged the “worship of glorious, eternal nature.”

Strauss held to his convictions. Just before his death in September 1949, he commented to his daughter-in-law, “Dying is just the way I composed it in *Death and Transfiguration*.” There was no evidence he ever recognized the reality of God.

Many people are like Strauss – confident in themselves, trusting in their abilities, not concerned that the Bible warns that those who trust in themselves are “*cursed*” (v. 5).

If you want God to bless you, remember that you cannot trust in your own resources, skills, or abilities. Commit your life to Him. Seek to serve Him. Trust Him.

How can you ensure you're trusting God in every facet of your life?

Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD... he will be like a tree planted by the water... its leaves will be green, and it will not be anxious in a year of drought nor cease to yield fruit.

Jeremiah 17:7-8 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, I humble myself before You. I trust my life to You. Thank You for Your faithfulness. In Jesus' name, amen.

SUNDAY

June

12

The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, to give to each person according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds.

Jeremiah 17:9-10 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, I place my hope and trust in You. I know You never will disappoint me. Thank You for being faithful. In Jesus' name, amen.

Our Hearts

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JEREMIAH 17

We may think we know ourselves and our *real* motives. But the Bible tells us that *none* of us knows the truth about ourselves or others. *Only* God knows the whole truth. We may have subjective opinions, but God has searched us and *knows* us, inside and out. And He knows how easily we can fool ourselves.

Because of this weakness, He warns that we are “*cursed*” if we trust others (v. 5). We are destined for disappointment.

We can easily feel frustrated and disillusioned by other people, even other Christians. But we need to remember that we all are imperfect with hearts that are “*deceitful*.” Instead, the Bible urges us to trust God. He promises *never* to disappoint us.

This trust helps us understand our own nature and the people around us. If we trust Him, we can have a deeper level of peace and confidence, for He is *trustworthy* and has a perfect perspective. He does not change and will be with us throughout our lives.

Today, renew your faith in God. Fellowship with Him. Talk to Him about your problems and frustrations. Read and study His Word. You might have been hurt or disappointed by people. Others may have failed you and fallen short. But God is trustworthy and faithful. He will answer your prayers, give you peace, and meet your needs if you trust Him.

How can you remember to trust only in God instead of others?

A Lifetime Call

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JEREMIAH 20

In the world, success often is measured by accomplishments and popularity. Believers can find themselves following the same patterns, striving for achievement and equating popularity with success – or the lack of popularity with failure.

In his own way, Jeremiah certainly wanted acceptance. Instead, he frequently was *criticized* and *rejected*. When faithfully obeying God, he was accused of acting on his own initiative, being manipulative, and speaking without authority. This was a continual pattern, occurring “*all day long*.”

We can imagine how much this *frustrated* him. He knew he was obeying God. Yet people consistently attacked *him*. Discouraged, Jeremiah tried to escape his God-given mission. He thought of trying to forget about God or stop speaking His words.

But he found it *impossible* to ignore his assignment. God's words felt “*like a burning fire shut up in [his] bones*.” He couldn't hold them in. He knew God had called him. He felt *compelled* to continue serving God regardless of how others reacted.

Jeremiah discovered that obeying God does not guarantee popularity. But it does guarantee that He will be pleased, and we will experience His blessings, both in this life and the life to come.

Commit your life to serving God. Be sure He is pleased with your choices. You can be confident He will bless you for your faithfulness.

For me the word of the LORD has resulted in taunting and derision all day long. But if I say, “I will not remember Him nor speak any more in His name,” then in my heart it becomes like a burning fire... I am tired of holding it in, and I cannot endure it.

Jeremiah 20:8-9 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, I commit my life to You. Help me to focus on Your assignment for me. Use me to impact others with the Gospel. In Jesus' name, amen.

Compose a prayer committing your life to God and His assignments.

TUESDAY

June

14

The LORD has a controversy with the nations; He will plead His case with all flesh... Behold, disaster shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the farthest parts of the earth.

Jeremiah 25:31-32 NKJV

PRAYER:

Father, speak to me. Let me recognize the messages that you send. Help me hear Your voice and fulfill Your call. In Jesus' name, amen.

Unexpected Messages

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JEREMIAH 25

Look for “a great whirlwind,” Jeremiah was told. This wind would come from “the farthest parts of the earth.” God cautioned that people needed to be ready because He would speak from unexpected places using unexpected messengers.

He was trying to communicate with the nations and get their attention. God often deals with *individuals* in similar ways. He speaks through His Word, the leading of His Spirit, pastors and teachers, family and friends.

But He may send us messages from the least likely places at unlikely times. He can speak in unexpected ways, teach in surprising ways, guide, and correct us. He even sends warnings and brings judgment.

He can use strangers – government or businesses, weather or the media – or anything or anyone else. He even can use world events to get our attention.

Are you sensitive to the work of God's Spirit in your life? Be open to how He might speak to you. Don't miss His messages. Be alert. Spend time alone with God. Let His Word penetrate deep within your heart and mind.

When God wants to speak to you, He may give you a sense of disquiet, a burden, an inspiration, an insight, a warning. Don't be surprised if He speaks to you in unlikely and unexpected ways. Seek His face. Get alone with Him, away from the world. Ask Him for discernment. Pray. Listen.

What has God been trying to tell you lately? Are you paying attention?

Facing Urgent Needs

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PSALM 141

David had problems so serious he needed *immediate* help. He couldn't solve them on his own. His only hope was calling to God. He prayed with *urgency*, crying, "Hurry to me!" As an act of surrender and worship, he lifted his hands.

Even though he prayed with fervor, he realized that God expected him to respond. He asked God to help him live in a way that would help him stay *pure* and be pleasing to Him. He knew evil forces might try to trap him into making wrong decisions. He would need to stay away from temptation and humble himself in the sight of God and others. And he had to watch his words carefully.

Having done his part, he turned to God, realizing that he had no hope but to trust completely in Him: "For my eyes are toward You, GOD, the LORD; in You I take refuge; do not leave me defenseless" (v. 8). He couldn't succeed on his own; he needed God!

David also realized that, even after all this, he still might be tempted and find himself in trouble. He might even think that the wicked were prospering and could get away with their evil deeds. But David trusted the results to God. He knew that He was faithful, that he could rely on Him.

Do you have problems? Do you need urgent help? Cry to God. Seek Him with your whole being. Worship Him. Trust Him.

LORD, I call upon You; hurry to me! Listen to my voice when I call to You! May my prayer be counted as incense before You; the raising up of my hands as the evening offering.

Psalm 141:1-2 NASB

PRAYER:

Lord, I commit these needs to You: _____ . Hasten to me! Give ear to my voice! I trust in You. In Jesus' name, amen.

What needs and results are you trusting God for today?

THURSDAY

June

16

I look for someone to come and help me, but no one gives me a passing thought! No one will help me... Then I pray to you, O LORD. I say, "You are my place of refuge."

Psalm 142:4-6 NLT

PRAYER:

Father, forgive me for being satisfied with the pleasures of this world. I worship You. All I want is You. In Jesus' name, amen.

All I Want Is You

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PSALM 142

David felt discouraged and overwhelmed. As he looked around, he faced serious problems. He might have counted on others to help but, in his hour of need, he felt forgotten. No one cared enough to come to his aid.

In this position of desperation, he realized he could count on God. No one else might care, but God promised that He cared. He would hear him and save him.

He realized God was "*all I really want in life*" (v. 5). Nothing else mattered but seeking, serving, pleasing, obeying, and trusting God. In dark times, when no one else cared, God was his refuge. When he felt alone and abandoned, he could turn to God.

When all the power, riches, and pleasures of this world passed away, the things of God still were sweet and satisfying. When he was backed into a corner and his persecutors seemed too strong for him, he could count on God to rescue him. As he made God the focal point of his life, his perspective changed. He suddenly had hope.

Remember that others may fail you or fall short. But the Bible urges you to remember that you can depend on God and trust Him. He never changes.

Today, seek Him with your whole heart. Dedicate your time, talents, and treasures to Him. Be honest and share your deepest needs with Him. Develop a passionate intimacy with Him!

Do you need to repent of seeking satisfaction in worldly things?

God Knows

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: REVELATION 1

Today, few have heard of Jan Ámos Komenský. In fact, he is practically unknown in our time.

Born in eastern Europe in 1592, he was one of the most important educational reformers in history. J. Hudson Taylor said he was “the single greatest innovator of missions” during the Reformation.

He left a remarkable legacy. A respected educator, he developed innovative plans for a Christian university program and helped shape educational systems throughout Europe.

He inspired other leaders, among other things serving as chaplain for the Swedish king. Komenský created a comprehensive Christian encyclopedia and authored numerous books. He launched missionary outreaches and helped translate the Bible into Turkish.

He accomplished all these things despite spending most of his life as an exile. Always the optimist, he continued to develop new projects and plans even in his later years. Yet eventually he was forgotten.

His example reminds us that others may not know what we have done, but God knows. We think of people like the apostle John, a central figure among Jesus’ disciples and the author of some of the New Testament. Yet he seems to have been forgotten after being exiled on the island of Patmos. But God knew where he was and still used him mightily.

Seek to serve God faithfully. Others may not know, but He knows.

How can you serve God faithfully behind the scenes?

FRIDAY

June

17

I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 1:9 NKJV

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for the resources You have given me. Help me to serve You faithfully and impact lives for Your kingdom. In Jesus’ name, amen.

SATURDAY

June

18

*In the latter days you
will understand this.*

Jeremiah 30:24 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, I seek understanding and wisdom. Open my eyes to Your truth. I trust my life to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

When the Time Comes

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JEREMIAH 30

God revealed many plans to Jeremiah but also recognized that he would not understand every part of these revelations. True understanding would come *"in days to come"* (NIV).

We can imagine Jeremiah had questions and wanted more clarity. But God hid some of the deeper meaning. He was asking Jeremiah to deliver His messages on faith, trusting God with anything he did not understand.

Daniel went through the same process. After receiving several prophecies he *"did not understand,"* he asked God, *"What will the outcome of all this be?"* (Daniel 12: 8). God told him to go his way, that the words were *"kept secret and sealed up until the time of the end"* (Daniel 12:9).

God wanted Daniel and Jeremiah to know He did not expect them to understand everything. Their responsibility was to be faithful with their assignments and trust Him with everything else.

His message to us is the same. He asks us to act in faith, particularly when we have questions, and to focus on obedience when we don't understand.

In every situation, remember that God's timing is perfect. *"He has made everything beautiful in its time"* (Ecclesiastes 3:11 NKJV). Focus on His call for *you*. Be faithful and obedient. Humble yourself before Him, and be a good steward of the resources He has given you. As you seek Him, trust He will give you understanding at just the right time.

How can you steward your resources while waiting for God's timing?

Your Father

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 63

Sadly each year, millions of fathers fail to fulfill their function in the family by abandoning their children, leaving their wives, or providing little or no support. The ripple effect spreads throughout society as generation after generation feels the impact. But *every* person can rejoice because we have a Heavenly Father who is *absolutely* faithful and dependable.

When Jesus taught us to pray, He said that we should address “*Our Father who is in heaven*” (Matthew 6:9). This angered many Jews who did not have this kind of relationship with Him. They were furious because Jesus called God His Father (John 5:16-18).

Jesus told them of His intimate relationship with His Father: “*I do nothing on My own, but I say these things as the Father instructed Me.*” He focused on always doing “*the things that are pleasing to Him*” (John 8:28-29).

Even Isaiah tells us we are to think of God as our Father. The cry of Israel tells us their leaders had fallen short. Ultimately, they realized that God alone was their help. They could approach Him like a Father.

If you are a father, seek to be faithful to your calling, to be a good example, to be God's witness. If your father is living, pray for him. Seek to encourage him. And in every situation, remember that God is with you. He is your Heavenly Father. On Him, you can depend absolutely.

You, O LORD, are our Father, our Redeemer from ancient times is Your name.

Isaiah 63:16 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, thank You that I am Your child. Thank You for Your love for me. I trust my life to You. I rest in You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Journal about your relationships with your earthly and Heavenly Fathers.

MONDAY

June

20

*Let the children come
to me. Don't stop them!
For the Kingdom of God
belongs to those who are
like these children.*

Mark 10:14 NLT

PRAYER:

Dear Lord Jesus, I
commit these needs to
You: _____. Thank
You for the answer. I
trust in You. Your Word
is true. In Your name,
amen.

Childlike Faith

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: MARK 10

Although she wrote many poems and hymns, Dorothy Thrupp rarely identified herself publicly as the author. She desired to focus on the message, to let her words speak for themselves. Born in London in 1779, she often used pseudonyms as a way to avoid drawing attention to herself.

She wrote several of her hymns specifically for children. We see that emphasis in the collection *Hymns for the Young*. Like so much of her work, she published all the music without credit. A central message was communicated in the title of the hymn “God Loves the Child that Humbly Prays.”

She also desired for her hymns and poems to help adults realize the importance of childlike faith. That desire emerges, for example, in “Come, Holy Spirit, Come. Oh, Hear an Infant’s Prayer,” and “God Loves the Little Child that Prays.” In her hymn “See, My Child, the Mighty Ocean,” she sought to help adults and children grasp the depths of God’s love.

During His ministry, Jesus demonstrated just how important children were to Him and the Kingdom of God. After teaching important truths, He thanked the Father “*for hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and clever, and for revealing them to the childlike*” (Matthew 11:25).

These still are important lessons. Remember the power of childlike faith. Simply believe God. Simply stand on His Word. Simply trust in Jesus. Pray with childlike confidence.

How can you cultivate a more childlike faith?

Abundance

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JEREMIAH 31

God's people had rejected Him. As a consequence, they reaped what they had sown. But this was not His desire. He described how He would *"build [them] and [they] will be rebuilt"* (v. 4). There would be celebration and fruitfulness. God even promised they *"will be satisfied with My goodness"* (v. 14). But this would only happen *after they repented and returned* to Him.

Here we see God's designs and purposes. He desires to bless us. As He demonstrated in the Garden of Eden, He created an environment filled with abundance. But Adam and Eve had to obey God and not eat from *"the tree of the knowledge of good and evil"* (Genesis 2:17). When they disobeyed, they experienced the fruit of their disobedience.

This pattern is repeated throughout the Bible. It still is true. God makes clear that He desires to bless us abundantly. But there are *conditions* and *consequences* for our actions. The choice is up to us, for we will reap what we sow.

Remember that God stands ready to bless you and fill your soul *"with abundance"* and satisfy you with His goodness.

If you have sinned, confess those sins and turn from them. Humble yourself before Him. Submit yourself completely to Him. Obey His Word. Be sure you are sowing seeds into His Kingdom from the resources He gives you.

As you are faithful, expect and believe that He will bless you abundantly.

Write a prayer asking God to bless you and your family abundantly.

TUESDAY

June

21

"I will refresh the soul of the priests with abundance, and My people will be satisfied with My goodness," declares the LORD.

Jeremiah 31:14 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, You desire to bless me abundantly. Help me trust and serve You. I dedicate my resources to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

WEDNESDAY

June

22

Now when I had delivered the purchase deed to Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed... "Ah, LORD God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You."

Jeremiah 32:16-17 NKJV

PRAYER:

Father, here are issues I don't understand: _____ . Thank You for Your clarity. I seek Your wisdom. I trust in You. In Jesus' name, amen.

We Don't Understand

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JEREMIAH 32

Jeremiah could not understand what God called him to do. He knew that nothing was too hard for God. He is *"great in counsel and mighty in work"* (v. 19). But God asked him to buy a field at a time when the city had been given to the Chaldeans (v. 24). This made no sense to Jeremiah. Why would God do this?

God's answer confirmed the theme of Jeremiah's prayer. Nothing is too hard for Him. He had not made a mistake but allowed events to unfold in a specific way. He had a plan that Jeremiah could not understand. By buying the land in Judah, he was given a sign of God's continuing love and long-range designs. God had not abandoned His people!

How often we can react just like Jeremiah. We're surprised by the way our lives unfold, going through situations that don't make sense, puzzled by God's directions, having doubts and questions.

At times like these, like Jeremiah, we can be honest with God. But in every circumstance, we need to remember that He is Almighty God. We can trust Him.

Commit *your* way to Him. Let Him direct *your* steps. If you are uncertain or have doubts, be honest and ask Him your questions. But remember the importance of obedience. He can do all things. Demonstrate your faith by trusting Him and obeying Him.

In which areas are you seeking clarity from God?

Unsearchable Things

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JEREMIAH 33

Obedying God, Jeremiah had delivered an unpopular message: He would be giving Jerusalem into the hands of Babylon. It was a message designed to help them know how to respond. But instead of heeding God's warnings, they sent His messenger, Jeremiah, to prison.

For Jeremiah, this could have seemed like a hopeless situation. But there in prison, God spoke to him and gave him a glorious promise. He wasn't to feel discouraged. God was right there with him. If Jeremiah sought Him, God would move in new ways and reveal "great and unsearchable things" he did not know.

These words could have sounded unbelievable to Jeremiah. Yet they were true. God was reminding him that He could speak from any location. And there was much more He wanted to teach him.

This word applied to His people. Israel, too, faced a situation that seemed impossible. Yet He also promised abundance. One day Jerusalem would hear the voice of joy and gladness. And God would "restore the fortunes of the land" (v. 11).

These words also are true for you! You may feel overwhelmed with problems that seem impossible to solve. You may feel imprisoned. But remember that you serve Almighty God. He is more powerful than any problem you face.

Accept His invitation – His command. Call to Him – frequently and often. He promises to answer you, "and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know."

This is what the LORD says, he who made the earth... "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know."

Jeremiah 33:2-3 NIV

PRAYER:

Father, I seek new revelation. Speak to me. Help me be sensitive to Your Spirit. Help me grow in faith. In Jesus' name, amen.

Compose a prayer asking God to work in your impossible situation(s).

FRIDAY

June

24

The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD after King Zedekiah had made a covenant... that each man was to set free his [servants]... Afterward they turned around and took back the...servants whom they had set free.

Jeremiah 34:8-11 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, forgive me when I have failed to keep my promises. I submit my life to You. Help me be a faithful servant. In Jesus' name, amen.

Keep Your Word

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JEREMIAH 34

God wanted His people to free their Hebrew slaves. Everyone seemed to comply, but some changed their minds and enslaved the same people all over again.

This is a pattern repeated frequently in our daily lives. We often make a promise or commit ourselves to a course of action only, for assorted reasons, to change our minds. We might find ourselves drifting back into old lifestyles or conforming to popular opinions.

To help us understand these patterns, Jesus told the Parable of the Sower (Luke 8:4-15). Unfortunately, many people say they will follow Jesus, but find the pleasures of the world too tempting. Some are like those who initially “receive the word with joy” but have no firm root. These people “believe for a while” but fall away when tempted (v. 13). Many make promises, but when circumstances change, go back to their old ways. But some are like the seeds that fall on good ground who hear the word, “hold it firmly, and produce fruit with perseverance” (v. 15).

The Bible reminds us that God looks for people who keep their word and won't compromise but remain faithful in every circumstance.

Think about the promises you have made. If you have failed to keep any promises, ask for His forgiveness. Submit your life to Him anew and ask Him to help you be serious about your promises. Be a faithful servant trusted by God, bearing good fruit.

Reflect on the promises you've made recently.

Honor God's Word

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JEREMIAH 36

King Jehoiakim sat by a fire, listening to words Jeremiah had recorded on a scroll. Jehoiakim wasn't pleased with these words, and defiantly cut up the scroll, section by section. As he cut and listened, some officials pleaded with him not to burn the scroll. But it didn't matter to Jehoiakim that God gave the words to Jeremiah. After all, Jehoiakim was the king. So, he threw the cut-up scroll into the fire where it was consumed.

But he had much to learn! Jeremiah simply dictated another scroll, even adding "many similar words" (v. 32). Jehoiakim might burn a scroll, but God's Word forever "stands in heaven" (Psalm 119:89).

Many people have the same attitude toward the Bible. For example, a recent study reported that less than a third of Americans believed the Bible is God's Word. The percentage is lower in other nations. Many believe some parts but reject others.

Without realizing it, they are following in Jehoiakim's footsteps. They're claiming the right to tear the Bible apart and decide what *they* think is true. Many do so without concern for the consequences, unafraid of God or what He might do!

Make sure you do not waver or compromise. Commit yourself to the Bible. It is God's Word. Read it! Know it! Study it! Believe it! Obey it! God will bless you for your commitment and faithful obedience.

When Jehudi had read three or four columns, the king cut it with a scribe's knife and threw it into the fire...until all of the scroll was consumed...Yet the king and all his servants who heard all these words did not tremble.

Jeremiah 36:23-24 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, Your Word is true. Open my eyes to understand more of Your truth. Help me apply Your Word in my life. In Jesus' name, amen.

Is there a Bible passage you're struggling to apply to your life?

SUNDAY

June

26

They took Jeremiah and cast him into the cistern...they let Jeremiah down with ropes. Now in the cistern there was no water but only mud, and Jeremiah sank into the mud.

Jeremiah 38:6 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for being with me. I trust You. Anoint my testimony. Help me bless others. In Jesus' name, amen.

Without Compromise

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JEREMIAH 38

As an elite artist, pianist Maria Yudina was under the spotlight. Millions in her home country of Russia had died or been imprisoned. Believers faced pressure to be silent about their beliefs. Yudina, a devout Christian, could have stayed silent like many others. But she refused to compromise.

The authorities watched her closely, but she would not back down. She always wore a cross when performing, not concerned that government officials might be offended.

Her example inspired many believers. The great Russian composer Dmitri Shostakovich said her concerts were her way to proclaim her faith: "She always played as though she were giving a sermon."

She even defied atheistic dictator Josef Stalin. After receiving money from Stalin for a recording, she donated it to a church and replied: "I will pray for you day and night and ask the Lord to forgive your great sins before the people and the country. The Lord is merciful, and he will forgive you."

The prophet Jeremiah, too, faced pressure to compromise. Refusing to yield, he was let down into a deep hole filled with mud. Officials wanted to silence him, but he remained faithful and obedient to God.

You may face pressure to compromise your faith. No matter the opposition, stay true to God. Trust in Him. Don't allow circumstances or the reactions of others to influence you. Stay faithful to Him.

How would you defend your faith in the face of tyranny?

Ready to Listen

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JEREMIAH 43

Their request sounded sincere. All the army officers and the people “*from the least to the greatest*” approached Jeremiah, asking him to pray for them. Jeremiah agreed but made no promises except to tell them *everything* he heard from God. “*I will hide nothing from you*” (Jeremiah 42:1-4).

Despite appearing to be spiritual, they weren't interested in what God wanted. They just wanted Him to endorse their personal desires. They hoped He would encourage them to go to Egypt. Instead, Jeremiah told them God wanted them to stay in Israel. This was not what they wanted to hear. Instead of accepting this as God's direction, they concluded Jeremiah was lying.

Many people react this way. They may make promises to God but only want Him to confirm their desires. The Bible declares that He wants to bless us and answer our prayers, but He also asks us to listen and do what He says, regardless of our plans or the opinions of other people.

Today, ask yourself if you *really* want to hear from God. Do you want Him to answer your prayers? The Bible reminds us that He wants to teach you and bring new levels of blessing, but this must be on His terms.

Start by submitting your life to Him anew. Seek to do His will. He promises to bless and guide you and bring you to new levels of victory.

MONDAY

June

27

When Jeremiah had finished giving this message from the LORD...all the other proud men said to Jeremiah, “You lie! The LORD our God hasn't forbidden us to go to Egypt!”

Jeremiah 43:1-2 NLT

PRAYER:

Father, I want to hear
Your words for me.
Speak to me clearly.
I am ready to obey. I
commit my life to You.
In Jesus' name, amen.

What is God saying to you through the pages of Scripture?

TUESDAY

June

28

Behold, one will fly swiftly like an eagle and spread out his wings against Moab... Moab will be destroyed from being a people because he has become arrogant toward the LORD.

Jeremiah 48:40, 42 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, I humble myself before You. Help me be prepared for enemy attacks. Thank You for giving me victory. I trust You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Prepare for Battle

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JEREMIAH 48

For centuries, the Romans ruled an empire stretching from Britain to the Caspian Sea. Gradually, they became *overconfident*. Discipline had slackened, and their resolve had been weakened by corruption.

Then in August 378 AD, Rome encountered an army of Visigoths at Adrianople (in modern Turkey). They expected an easy victory. But as military historian Bevin Alexander observed, the Romans did not realize that they were facing a “new type of warrior” with new weapons and new strategies. These Goths fought a different kind of war for which the Romans were not prepared.

Going into battle, the Romans felt invincible. But the Goths surprised them and crushed the Roman army.

The Bible described a similar situation when Moab became confident in themselves, trusting their abilities and strongholds. They were not humble, vigilant, or prepared to face their enemies, but had “*become arrogant toward the LORD.*” As a result, even their mighty men could not stand against the attacks.

Are you ready for challenges? Ask God to search your heart and mind to be sure you are not overconfident. Remember, you are in a spiritual war. Take seriously the battles going on all around you. Do not assume that you are immune from attack. Humble yourself and put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-17). Pray and trust Him. Go into battle prepared, ready for victory.

Personalize each part of Ephesians 6:11-18 as a prayer.

Humbled by God

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JEREMIAH 49

Today, Hazor is an archaeological curiosity – a dig in northern Israel, a place to study Israel's past. But at one time, it was a center of power. Located north of the Sea of Galilee, Hazor occupied a strategic position on the highway that brought armies and travelers to and from Egypt. Hazor provided the perfect vantage point to guard.

But Jeremiah prophesied that Hazor would be *humbled* as a victim of the Babylonian armies. God warned the inhabitants to “*run away, flee!*” (v. 30). They were “*a nation which is at ease, which lives securely,*” a nation with “*no gates or bars*” (v. 31). God Himself would “*bring their disaster from every side*” (v. 32). As a result, this once-powerful city would become a “*desolation forever*” (v. 33).

Throughout history, many nations, organizations, and people have become like Hazor – confident, sure of their own strength, trusting in their power and ability. Many today are just like this. But God promises that eventually *every* kingdom, *every* person will be humbled before Him.

Learn from what happened to Hazor. Remember, “*Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, so that He may exalt you at the proper time*” (1 Peter 5:6). “*God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble*” (James 4:6). If you want His blessings, seek to humble yourself before Him. You can trust that He will exalt you.

Personalize Psalm 139:23-24 [here](#).

Hazor will become a haunt of jackals, a desolation forever; no one will live there, nor will anyone of mankind reside in it.

Jeremiah 49:33 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, search my heart. Reveal any pride. I humble myself before You. May my life bring You praise and glory. In Jesus' name, amen.

THURSDAY

June

30

This is what the LORD of armies says: “The broad wall of Babylon will be completely demolished, and her high gates will be set on fire; so the peoples will labor for nothing, and the nations become exhausted only for fire.”

Jeremiah 51:58 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, thank You that You have a plan for the world. Help me to be faithful to Your plans for me. In Jesus' name, amen.

Toiling for Nothing

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JEREMIAH 51

Babylon was a marvel of the ancient world, a masterpiece of design with magnificent and logically laid out streets. Babylon seemed completely secure. One scholar described how Nebuchadnezzar's engineers “constructed the great chain of fortifications which seemed to make Babylon *impregnable*” with walls 56 miles in length, 335 feet high, and 85 feet thick!

Yet God knew these defenses eventually would fail, that Babylon's broad wall would “*be completely demolished.*”

Many must have thought that this was impossible. Yet, in October 539 BC, just a few years after Nebuchadnezzar's death, Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians. This victory was swift and complete.

The Babylonians worked hard to be invincible, but their elaborate defense system could not protect them forever. Their walls seemed mighty and indestructible, but they were as nothing before God.

These same principles have proven true throughout history. God continually demonstrates that He alone is sovereign. He made the earth and “*established the world by His wisdom*” (v. 15). He controls the affairs of the world regardless of what people think.

God *still* is sovereign over the nations. His plans are secure. He will accomplish His purposes. Make sure that you do not “*labor for nothing.*” Trust your life to Him, and seek the Kingdom that cannot be defeated – the Kingdom of God.

Write a prayer entrusting all your plans to God.

ADONAI

Is Jesus Your Lord?

Adonai is more than just a name of God; it conveys understanding of who God is and claims a right relationship with Him. Abraham, Moses, Joshua, and Isaiah are among the people of Scripture who lived with God as their **Adonai**. They recognized God's role as Master – the One with the responsibility to provide, protect, and direct them. Equally important, they understood “Yes, Lord” as the only appropriate reply to God's instructions. Total submission to the all-powerful Master is the concept rolled into the name **Adonai**.

While blessing, power, and eternal hope are wrapped into this special name of God, it also comes with one of the direst warnings of Scripture. Jesus explained that many will use the name **Adonai** without ever experiencing the relationship it signifies: Lord and Master. And at the end of the age, those who have done so will hear Jesus say, “I never knew you. Get away from me” (Matthew 7:23 NLT).

The empty use of God's name brings eternal destruction.

Living in relationship with **Adonai**, surrendered and obedient, produces the abundant life Jesus promised in John 10:10. But it is humanly impossible to live in right relationship with God without the help of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3). Our celebration of Pentecost is joyful praise for the work of the Spirit in our lives and our world.

Just before Jesus went to the cross, He assured the disciples that His departure would bring blessings to them:

But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you (John 16:7 NLT).

We need the Holy Spirit to live the life Jesus died to give us. The way to **Adonai** is through the cross in the power of the Holy Spirit. ❖

My Dad, My Hero

A Father's Day Tribute



by Ben Cerullo

***“Dad has
always been
self-sacrificing
and there to
support me.”***

My dad has always been my hero. A hero is a person of distinguished courage or ability, admired for brave deeds and noble qualities. In a word, this describes my dad. He has been an example to me of a godly man and loving husband, father, and now grandfather.

Ever since I can remember, Dad has been there to encourage, inspire, and teach me new things. He has always been self-sacrificing and supportive. When I was young, he taught me how to surf, coached my football team, and encouraged me in my adventures, such as motorcycling and skateboarding.

Much of this took extra effort. It would have been easier for Dad to just sit on the sidelines at my football games, but he volunteered to serve as the coach. During one game, he organized a full video-production shoot. The crew filmed the game just like we were playing in the NFL, and Dad edited the film for my team to enjoy.

Dad's work often required him to be away from home, but somehow he always found a way to be there for the big events of my childhood.

Now I see how challenging this can be as my career sometimes causes me to be away from my wife and children.

Even though his involvement in my life often required great sacrifice for him, Dad never made me feel second to his work. He always invested 100% into my life.

My dad's example allowed me to learn about God's love and mercy in a way that can't be taught by words alone. He always made Christ our family's source and the head of our home. He taught my sister Becky and me the ways of the Lord and took pains to instill godly values in us.

Even when Dad had to discipline me, I could always feel his gentleness and understanding. I didn't believe him when he told me the punishment would hurt him more than it hurt me, but as a father, I now know this is true. He loved me and disciplined me much as God does with *His* children (Hebrews 12:5-11).

Despite my Christian upbringing, I went through a period of rebellion, straying from the Lord and getting heavily involved in drugs and alcohol. I know my parents were brokenhearted to see their son fall into this trap of the enemy, yet they never gave up on me. Dad let me know he disapproved of my lifestyle, but he loved me unconditionally throughout this time – and the Lord turned my heart around!

My dad is the most intelligent, humble, loving, genuine, and godly man I know. I am so proud to call him my Dad.

I love you, Dad! Happy Father's Day!

Ben

“My dad’s example allowed me to learn of God’s love and mercy in a way that can’t be taught by words alone.”

A Lifestyle of Blessing!



As we enjoy this special time God has appointed for blessing – the Feast of Pentecost – we celebrate our partners who live to bless others!

Over 200 years ago, the hymn writer Harper G. Smith penned words that perfectly describe the hearts of our Inspiration Ministries Monthly Partners:

Make me a channel of blessing today,
Make me a channel of blessing, I pray;
My life possessing, my service blessing,
Make me a channel of blessing today.

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A Merry Heart...

does good, like medicine. – Proverbs 17:22

Biblical Dad Jokes

Why couldn't Jonah trust the ocean?

He just knew there was something fishy about it.

What kind of cell phone did Delilah use?

Samson

How do we know Peter was a rich fisherman?

By his net income.

Why didn't Noah ever go fishing?

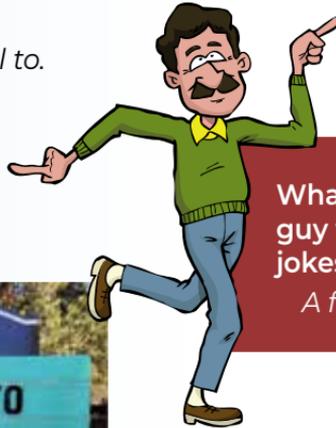
He only had two worms.

How long did Cain hate his brother?

As long as he was Abel to.

Who was the smartest man in the Bible?

*Abraham.
He knew a Lot.*



What do you call a guy who tells dad jokes but isn't a dad?

A faux pas



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

Email it to: MerryHeart@inspiration.org

Want More Grace & Favor?

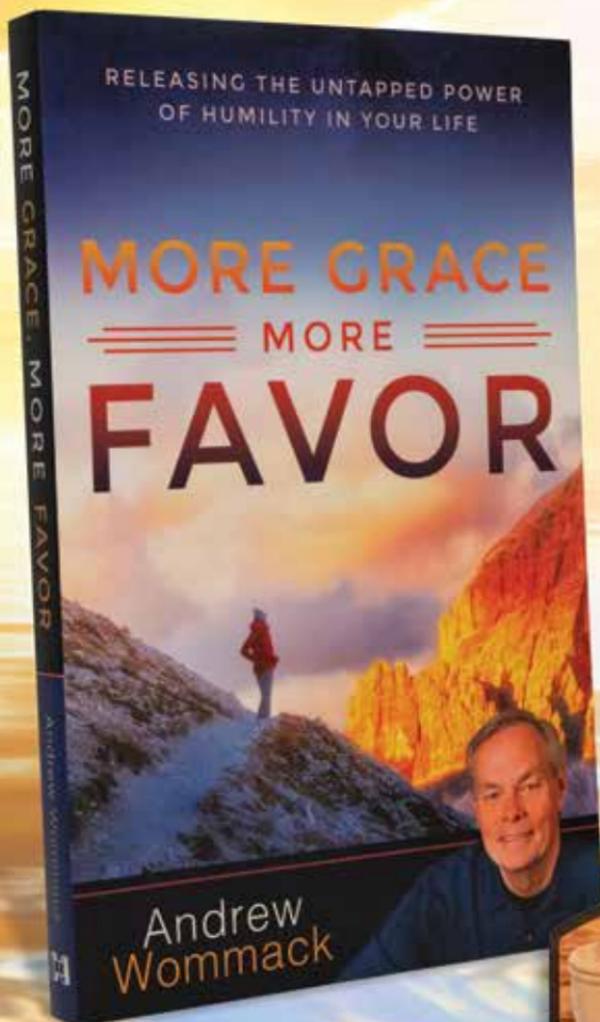
Position yourself to live in the abundance of God's goodness with this month's THANK YOU GIFT. Andrew Wommack unveils powerful truths in his book *More Grace, More Favor: Releasing the Untapped Power of Humility in Your Life*.

This book will open the floodgates of God's favor as you come to realize all God has given you. Discover how to:

- Recognize and avoid the pitfalls of pride
- Align yourself with God and receive all He has for you
- Share God's glory with others with a sweet spirit of gentleness
- Reap the rewards of greatness God pours out on humble hearts

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Deepen your time with the Lord with our handcrafted, olive wood Inspiration Personal Communion Set from the Holy Land. Handmade by Israeli artist Jeries Facouseh, each set imparts a special sense of sacredness to your personal fellowship times with God.



Turn to **Page 28** for details on how to receive your THANK YOU GIFTS this month - while supplies last!