



TLM Daily Devotions

February 2020





Psalm 13

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

¹ How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

² How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?

How long will my enemy triumph over me?

³ Look on me and answer, LORD my God.

Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,

⁴ and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

⁵ But I trust in your unfailing love;
my heart rejoices in your salvation.

⁶ I will sing the LORD's praise,
for he has been good to me.



Psalm 14

For the director of music. Of David.

¹ The fool says in his heart,
“There is no God.”

They are corrupt, their deeds are vile;
there is no one who does good.

² The LORD looks down from heaven
on all mankind
to see if there are any who understand,
any who seek God.

³ All have turned away, all have become corrupt;
there is no one who does good,
not even one.

⁴ Do all these evildoers know nothing?

They devour my people as though eating bread;
they never call on the LORD.

⁵ But there they are, overwhelmed with dread,
for God is present in the company of the righteous.

⁶ You evildoers frustrate the plans of the poor,
but the LORD is their refuge.

⁷ Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!
When the LORD restores his people,
let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!



Moses Knew How to Bounce Back

In December, for our ACL, we spent a day looking at how to build resilience in our lives. Hence, I was just reading up about resilience and came across the following article written by Tim Truzy (Minister).

Life is often a roller coaster of crisis and calm times. Troubles come at us swiftly and leave us immensely drained when they pass. Sometimes, we are not sure if we have the strength to finish the bumpy and stress inducing ride. We may become pessimistic and dread the next turn ahead. Will it twist our lives upside down? Will it cause us to scream as we struggle up another possibly perilous hill? Yet, we somehow recover, facing the next loop on the track of life.

People are like trains, needing to travel onward with the right fuel and drive. We want to have determination when we encounter broken tracks along our route in life, or when we run into difficult foggy troubles where spiritually lifting light seems absent. We call upon memories of heroes in the past we have learned about: sport stars, television characters, and legions of others to refuel our resolve. We essentially want to exhibit resiliency down the track of life. The ability to recover and continue after a crisis is called resilience. People need resilience to cope with changes in life which can be devastating or paralyzing, like a league of dread and doom.

Perhaps, this explains the popularity of comic book superheroes on the screen – such fictional characters constantly demonstrate resiliency in the face of challenges. Human beings also look beyond film and popular fiction to find inspiration in times of crisis. They turn to religious beliefs and teachings to receive encouragement as well. Coincidentally, most religions have prophets and teachers who remind us of how we should demonstrate resilient qualities when confronted with problems. The Judeo-Christian religious teachings are no exception.

Moses – In the *Book of Exodus*. Moses is an important figure with rebound power. He was born into slavery in Egypt and rose in importance within the ruling family. After killing an Egyptian, he fled, fearing retribution. Eventually, Moses found himself, meeting an angel from God in a Burning Bush. Moses led his people, the Israelites, away from Egypt after bringing plagues to that country as directed by God.

Although he experienced several traumatic events, Moses never surrendered to the ordeals of his life. He continued with the mission given to him by God, even when the Israelites were concerned about crossing the Red Sea. Moses saw the whole picture – God wanted the children of Israel to be free. Moses exhibited sturdiness and resilience in paralyzing circumstances, ultimately, achieving the goals given to him by God. The Ten Commandments he delivered to the Israelites is often cited as the basis for all of our laws in Western democracies.

For this reason, Moses is seen as a man who rebounded from a series of potentially crippling catastrophes. Even into the 20th century, leaders such as Dr Martin Luther King used the story to encourage people of colour in the 1960's during the Civil Rights' movement in America. Many have been called the "Moses" of their era, and the Prophet Moses is an essential part of all the religions based on Abraham's interaction with God.

Kalpana Shah - Joined TLMI in April 2017 as a temporary Finance Assistant and from November 2018 became permanent as the Finance Officer.



What can happen when Jesus comes into the HOUSE?

Mark 2:4 -" they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay"

What can happen when Jesus comes into the HOUSE?

Mark chapter starts with Jesus and his four of his newly recruits entering the House ; the house said to be belonging to Peter. Peter and his brother Andrew were called by Jesus while they were at their Profession-Fishermen. Jesus called them promising to make the Fishers of men. They left in obedience from their promising carrier.

Now at the house, where Jesus was preaching to the crowd, something unusual happens. There were four unnamed friends carrying a paralysed person in a stretcher, could not enter the house.

- 1) They did something unusual , difficult task
- 2) They did the unthinkable act
- 3) They were willing to pay the price

All these for the person with paralysis. Having seen the miracles done by Jesus, these four men wanted to help this person too.

Jesus looking at their faith , healed the paralysed person , made him walk , and go to his own home.

How is our faith about those whom we are in contact with?

Our faith in Lord Jesus for who He is and the faith in action can save someone today!

Heb 11:5 – without faith it is impossible to please God.

*James2: 14- " What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds?
Can such faith save them?"*

Dr. Helen Roberts, Medical Superintendent, TLM Hospital, Vadathorasalur, Tamil Nadu, India.



What does a “cutting-edge” Christian look like ?

1) *Numbers 6:27 – “so shall they put my name upon the people of Israel,*

And i will bless them.” - with the aaronic blessing of numb.6:24-26.

->he is a blessed, chosen and predestined vessel of god!

2) *Joshua 6:27–“so the lord was with joshua, and his fame was in all the land.”*

->he is a believer in god. In nt parlance: born again/saved/in christ! - ps71:7.

3) *Judges 6:27 – “so gideon took 10 men of his servants*

And did as the lord had told him. But because he was too afraid of his family

And the men of the town to do it by day, he did it at night.”

->he is obedient/ accountable/ but sometimes also vulnerable - philp.1:6.

4) *2 Chron.6:27ff – “when heaven is shut up and there is no rain
Because they have sinned against you, if they pray..and acknowledge your name
And turn from their sin, when you afflict them, then hear in heaven
And forgive the sin of your servants, when you teach them the good way
In which you should walk and grant rain upon your land,
Which you have given to your people as an inheritance.”*

->he is a prayer warrior of note – always interceding on behalf of his country!

5) *Job 6:27 – “you cast lots over the fatherless and bargain over your friend.”*

->he is a faithful friend and campaigner for the vulnerable in his society!

6) *Prov.6:27 – “can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not burn?”*

->he is a man of integrity/morality/uprightness, eg. Noah, Enoch, Job, Daniel....

7) *Jer.6:27ff – “i have made you a tester of metals among my people,*

That you may know and test their ways.

They are stubbornly rebellious/they are bronze and iron/all of them act corruptly

Their lead is consumed by the fire;

In vain the refining goes on, for the wicked are not removed.

Rejected silver they are called, for the lord has rejected them.”

->he is ‘the genuine article’ – in Christ-like character, conduct and scruple!

8) *Daniel 6:27 – “he delivers and rescues;*

He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth,

He who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions.”

->his ministry is uniquely attested and affirmed by god!

9) *Matth 6:27-“which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to your life?”*

->he is a man of faith, trust and reliance upon god!

10) *Luke 6:27 – “but i say to you who hear, love your enemies, Do good to those who hate you.”*

->he is a man filled to overflowing with love – caring even for his enemies!

Conclusion: 1 Peter 1:8 – “though you have not seen him, you love him.

Though you do not now see him, you believe in him

And rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.” Amen.

Otto Kingsley is the Cape Regional Director of TLM(SA), operating from Cape Town, RSA.



Time with God

PSALM 42:1 "As the deer longs for the water brooks, so my soul longs for you, O God"

David hungered for time alone with God. He looked forward to having time with God the way a deer longs for water and the way we look forward to **being with a beloved**. David really loved God. I have 2 loves in my life:

My first love: When I was a child I started a special connection with my dad, we spent hours and hours together talking, singing, playing, arguing and doing things together. Time just passed without realising when being together. I could not let a day pass without talking to him and sharing each day together.

My second love: When at first I met who today is my husband, we didn't see the time passing. We would speak for hours and hours and we didn't have to make an effort. It was so common to say "wow" we didn't realise how late it became after a great evening chatting. Time just flew by.

When you love someone you cannot wait to be with that person, to hear from that person, you cannot forget them, you cannot pass one day without them coming to your spirit, you talk to them often to keep your relationship live.

Lovers make time to be together.

Not only do those who are in love want to be together, they also find ways to communicate when they are apart. When I moved away from home. I used to call my dad every day. When I'm on a trip I cannot help but call my husband every day.

Real Lovers find every way. They'll call or write to each other, using Skype, WhatsApp, or send mails...anything to stay in touch.

Now let me ask you a question or two.

Do you love God? Really love Him? Do you make time to be alone with Him? Do you speak with him often? Does that time drag, or does it seem to fly? Do you love to talk to Him, and listen carefully for His voice? When you pick up the Bible, which is God's love letter to you, do you hang on every word because you adore its Author? When God sends you signs or words through other people, do you recognise his voice?

If we say we love God but do not yearn to be with Him, maybe our love is not as strong as we think. Because you see, it's impossible to love God and not delight in time spent with Him, time spent reading His word, or listening for His voice. Make time for and with Him today and every day.

Bible Verse for reflection: *Matthew 14:23 After sending them home, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. Night fell while he was there alone.*

Adaptation from "The Word of Promise" Devotional.



God's Autobiography

by Joni Eareckson Tada

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” John 1:1

Novelist Robertson Davies once wrote, “To ask an author...if his work is autobiographical is like asking a spider where he buys his thread.” No author ever weaves words from someone else’s being. They are always his words, reflecting his soul.

The Bible reveals God’s soul to us in a way that no other book is able to do. It is history, wisdom, and poetry. It is unparalleled as a compendium of theology, philosophy, and ethics. It is a gospel tract, distilling the essence of our relationship to the Lord, but it is also an epic, introducing us to the immensity of an eternal God.

Though the Bible contains all these things, it is at its heart an autobiography. The Bible is all about God. Through even the most twisted and unlikely narratives, some even tawdry, we see God’s soul reflected to us. God is revealed as Jacob wrestles with him. God is showcased through the complaint of Job, the anguish of Jeremiah, and the courage of Hannah. God is the voice behind the people’s shouting and singing over the new temple of Solomon; he is the echo behind the weeping over the rebuilt temple of Ezra. God is the silence of the four centuries before Christ, and the exultant glory in the night sky of Bethlehem.

Every word speaks something to us of his soul. It is not just from the prophets’ mouths that we hear his lament over Israel. We hear it in the very telling of the captivity itself. It is not just from John’s apocalyptic pen that we learn of God’s coming judgment. We can see God’s wrath reflected in the agony of his Son on the cross. It is not just from Jesus’ mouth that we learn of God’s love. We know from Jesus’ daily walk with sinners like you and me.

Treasure God’s Word today. In everything you read, you will come to know the soul of God, he who is the lover of your soul.

Father, write your words on my heart today, that I might be your story written to a lost and dying world.

Taken from *More Precious than Silver* by Joni Eareckson Tada

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible: New International Version.

Kindly shared by Dr Paul Jakeman



Psalm 15

A psalm of David.

¹ LORD, who may dwell in your sacred tent?

Who may live on your holy mountain?

² The one whose walk is blameless,

who does what is righteous,

who speaks the truth from their heart;

³ whose tongue utters no slander,

who does no wrong to a neighbor,

and casts no slur on others;

⁴ who despises a vile person

but honors those who fear the LORD;

who keeps an oath even when it hurts,

and does not change their mind;

⁵ who lends money to the poor without interest;

who does not accept a bribe against the innocent.

Whoever does these things

will never be shaken.



Psalm 16

A miktam of David.

¹Keep me safe, my God,
for in you I take refuge.

²I say to the LORD, "You are my Lord;
apart from you I have no good thing."

³I say of the holy people who are in the land,
"They are the noble ones in whom is all my delight."

⁴Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more.
I will not pour out libations of blood to such gods
or take up their names on my lips.

⁵LORD, you alone are my portion and my cup;
you make my lot secure.

⁶The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
surely I have a delightful inheritance.

⁷I will praise the LORD, who counsels me;
even at night my heart instructs me.

⁸I keep my eyes always on the LORD.
With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

⁹Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;
my body also will rest secure,

¹⁰because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,
nor will you let your faithful one see decay.

¹¹You make known to me the path of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence,
with eternal pleasures at your right hand.



Count your blessings

“Give thanks to the Lord, call on His name; make known among the nations what He has done. Sing to Him, sing praise to Him; tell of all His wonderful acts.” Psalms 105:1 – 2.

I am so excited to count about 80 blessings in 2019. I thank God for His promises that He never breaks, He will never forsake His people. I can continually draw near Him and remember without Him I have nothing. Since 2017, I have started to write down all things God has done in my life and all the times God has answered my prayers in an unexpected way. He always has a plan for me, and when I go through trials, I read what I wrote and know He allows things to happen for a reason, He knows what is the best for me. When looking back to 2019, I am very thankful for family, friends and my two years in Nepal, especially for God's love.

When I am appreciative of all He has done for me that makes me want to love Him more, trust Him more, obey more, give more, pray more, sacrifice more, and share the faith more.

I always ask Him to help me to be more grateful for the things I take advantage of and neglect. Help me enjoy the little things in life. Such as no dog barking in midnight that I can sleep well, no power cut for some time that I can use heater in the cold, no shortage of water that I can enjoy a shower, good sunshine day that I can have a hot shower too. No knee joint pain that I can walk thousands of steps in the hospital compound, can dance with patients in the festival time; no snakes seen in hospital compound that I can walk along the wards without fear. No landslides when travelling by road that I can reach the place lesser than 10 hours. No flight cancelled that I can have enough time to catch my international flight to go overseas. Not many troubles to renew my work visa that I am able to continue working in Nepal.....

When I started my second new term in Nepal, the amazing outcome I tasted most after back to hospital was the good maintenance of the filing system, which I have make a lot of effort during last 6 months. I am so glad that the staff is working according to my advice during my absence, and their big welcome showed me their love and trust.

Before I used my own strong will to survive, a very tough person, but now I reply on God's power to overcome, and His peace and joy come. Counting my blessings is always being humble and giving thanks for everything in life.

I am thankful for Jesus Christ who is everything.

Yuek Ming Poon (Hong Kong) Worked with TLMI for 22 years. 1993 – 2000 seconded to INF to work in Nepal in leprosy clinic as Clinic Manager. 2002 – 2004 worked with TLM as POID Technical Officer in India, 2005 – 2012 worked with TLM as Country Leader in China and Laos, 2013 -2015 worked with TLM in PNG as Capacity Building Advisor. June 2015 left TLM and then studied in Vancouver Regent Bible College from September 15 to April 2016, and then back to HK involving in Nepali ministry. 2017 back to Nepal with INF as Leprosy Nursing Advisor in Green Pastures Hospital. 2019 started second term with INF in Nepal as LNF leprosy Advisor.



“Suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope.”

Astronomy has been a passion of mine since childhood. I have a great view of the sky and most Moonless nights you'll find me outside, exploring the many jewels of the Southern sky. However, I've begun to tire of the incessant Cape wind and so have started to dabble in astrophotography. I say dabble, as anything more serious than dabbling is a certain path to financial ruin, a Cold Shoulder and even colder suppers. The process is made somewhat more complicated by my neighbour's cat, who delights in tromping on my equipment, triggering cameras at inopportune moments. I think that he fears for my sanity and is attempting to distract me. My less charitable friends would say that the opportunity for saving me from myself has long-since passed.

Due to revolutions in computing and digital imaging, it is now possible for backyard observers to produce images far superior to images that were produced by large professional telescopes in the pre-digital era, with the added joy of being able to do so from the comfort and convenience of the shed, rather than the wind-blasted garden.

There are lots of competitions to which backyard observers can submit their images. If you're visiting London, you could view the winning entries into The Insight Investment Astronomy Photographer of the Year competition at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich. Online, you'll find numerous websites showcasing images of glorious galaxies and radiant nebulae, all taken with telescopes that would have been considered laughably small in the pre-digital generation. The secret is that modern systems allow backyard observers to capture numerous images over many nights. These large bundles of data are dumped onto the computer, which stacks the images over the course of several hours, thus enhancing the tenuous details in the images. Due to technicalities which escape me, each additional image adds less information to the final product than the one preceding it and so on down the chain, when means that you have to collect a vast number of images to have any prospect of capturing the tresses of one of the brighter nebula which are such popular targets for astronomers. It is very much a case of one plus one plus one equalling two and a bit – definitely not three. The beauty of it all [and perhaps the sadness too] is that you don't need to understand much about the process – you just have to keep capturing those images. There is something brutally industrial about the process which makes my hands [which have polished their fair share of telescope mirrors] shake a bit with Luddite fuelled dismay.

And so it is that on cloudy nights, when you surreptitiously view astronomy equipment for sale, you'll come across people selling their photography set-ups with the disclaimer “I don't have time for this anymore.”

If there is one thing a backyard observer needs in abundance, it is persistence and even the most dedicated photographers reach a point where they can go no further. The Bible is full of admonitions about endurance and it's a quality that we rightly celebrate in the Leprosy Mission, with our long-term vision and understanding that we are in this for the long haul. You'll have your favourite verse and probably several have popped into your mind as you've thought about this topic. Here's a verse that is perhaps less well known than others:

“Whoever is slothful will not roast his game, but the diligent man will get precious wealth.” Proverbs 12:27 English Standard Version (ESV)

For each one of us, “precious wealth” will mean something slightly different, but numerous passages in the scriptures affirm truths underlying our pursuit of that which is precious: there are no short-cuts [1 Chronicles 16:11]; it will be tough [James 1:1-27]; there will be obstacles [Proverbs 24:16]; it requires hard work [1 Corinthians 15:58]; sacrifices are required [Revelation 2:10; 2 Corinthians 4:8-9]. I understand why astro-photographers finally call it a day [or should I say, a night?] Sometimes the thought of having to capture yet another batch of images is less appealing than the warmth of the duvet. But for you and me, as we step out into 2020, let's remind ourselves that we have a way to go yet. As outlined above, we know in broad terms what to expect. Despite all the obstacles we will face, this could be

the year when we take that final set of images which reveals the beauty of an object shrouded in darkness for all these years because no one else had the patience to persist until all the information had been gathered. *“Do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded.” [2 Chronicles 15:7]*

Peter Laubscher - Country Leader, Southern Africa. Peter and Elizabeth Laubscher have worked with the Leprosy Mission since 1981. They are blessed with three children. Peter cruises the waters of False Bay when he's not trying to polish scratches out of telescope mirrors.



Remembering

When I was in my very early twenties I volunteered to be part of the cooking team for a Christian boys' camp. I don't have many memories of it, but one incident has always stuck in my mind. It was a conversation a group of us had with the teacher who ran the camp. He was telling us about one of the older boys at his school who had gone up to him one day to say that he was losing his faith. The teacher told us that at first he was so upset he didn't know how to respond, but then he remembered a verse in chapter 2 of the book of Revelation. It had been addressed to a church that itself was in danger of abandoning the love for God that it had at first: "**Remember** from what you have fallen". So the teacher reminded the lad of what it had been like when he first became a Christian and how thrilled the boy had been to have this new relationship with God. He encouraged the boy to **remember** the past, because God loved him just as much now as then.

Remembering is such an important theme in the Bible. As Moses instituted the annual Passover Festival for the Jews, he said to the people, "**Remember this day on which you came out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, because the Lord brought you out from there by strength of hand...**" Ex 13,3' And after explaining how the Israelites were to keep the Passover, Moses said, 'It – the Festival – shall serve for you as a sign on your hand and as a reminder ... for with a strong hand the Lord brought you out of Egypt.' It was such an important moment in Israel's history, and this festival of remembering kept it in the nation's consciousness.

The Greek word, 'Anamnesis' from which, of course, we get our word amnesia occurs in both Luke's Gospel and in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, in their description of the Passover meal that Jesus shared with his disciples before his crucifixion. As Jesus broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, and also gave them the wine, he said, 'Do this **in remembrance** of me' and 'in remembrance' is a direct translation of 'Anamnesis'. I once heard a vicar explain that Anamnesis involves so much more than just remembering the past. It involves the use of our imaginations to bring the past into the present, and let it take us forward into our future.

It's a wonderful description of what we do when we take Holy Communion. We bring ourselves into Jesus' presence now as we receive the bread and wine from him. As the bread is broken and wine given we think again of the sacrifice he made for us through his death on the cross. Then, being strengthened we go into the week – into our future - having been reminded that Jesus is alive and with us always.



Morning and Evening Prayer

Welcome, welcome, welcome

I welcome everything that comes to me today because I know it's for my healing.

I welcome all thought, feelings, emotions, persons, situations, and conditions.

I let go of my desire for power and control.

I let go of my desire for affection, esteem, approval and pleasure.

I let go of my desire for survival and security.

I let go of my desire to change any situation, condition, person or myself.

I open to the love and presence of God and God's action within. *(Father Thomas Keating)*

We all have days when we wish things were different; when we find it hard to welcome what comes our way. This prayer challenges us to welcome everything while, at the same time, letting go of our ideas and desires about how things should be. It is a great prayer to pray at the beginning of each day as we open ourselves to God's presence and His work in us.

Psalm 37:5 says "Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and he will help you" and in Proverbs 3:5-6 we read, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take."

Because none of us knows what lies ahead of us from day to day it is a blessing to know that our God does know and that we can trust him to help us through. *"Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you." Isaiah 41:10*

Then, at the end of the day, we can bring the day's events, relationships, challenges and opportunities to God leaving them with him as we rest and prepare for a new day with all it will hold.

Lord, it is night.

The night is for stillness. Let us be still in the presence of God.

It is night after a long day.

What has been done has been done; what has not been done has not been done;

Let it be.

The night is dark.

Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives rest in you.

The night is quiet.

Let the quietness of your peace enfold us, all dear to us, and all who have no peace.

The night heralds the dawn.

Let us look expectantly to a new day,

new joys, new possibilities.

In your name we pray. Amen.

(from Night Prayer in 'A New Zealand Prayer Book')

Kathleen Gavin (nee Finlay) New Zealand Physiotherapist with TLM in India, Nepal & Bangladesh 1981-1996. Now an ordained Anglican Priest and Spiritual Director living in Raglan, NZ and member of the Leprosy Mission NZ Board.



"Get down to my level."

He is able to sympathise with our weaknesses. Hebrews 4:14-16

As a child, he was scared of dogs and tended to magnify their size and evil intentions. One day he came rushing into the house and in a frightened voice declared "Daddy, there is a dog THAT big outside that wants to eat me." As he described the size of the dog, he lifted his hand above his head to demonstrate.

We went out to investigate and sure enough there was an enormous dog there, but it soon became evident that it was far more interested in a bit of affection or someone to play with than in eating anyone.

Without thinking too much, I said to my son "You know that you should not exaggerate, the dog is not that big." His reply drove home an important reality. "For you, he is small, but for me he is massive, get down to my level and look." I did, and he was right.

As I look at how others deal with the problems and challenges of their lives or as I give out advice and counsel, do I make the effort to get on their level? Do I attempt to discover and understand the person or am I just a dispenser of pious platitudes? We can be astonished when others wrestle with issues that for us are not a problem ... and tend to excuse or justify those things with which we struggle.

The Bible teaches us that God, in Christ, came down to our level. He knows from personal experience the struggles we face. He stood where we stand. He not only faced the same issues, He dealt with them. He is not an advice-giver or judge who does not understand, He is able to identify with us.

I can come to Him with confidence knowing that He empathises. Can others find a similar attitude in me?

Silvano Perotti - Secretary for Europe then Deputy International Director and Director for Support and Development TLMI
Born in Italy - retired in Switzerland.
Worked with TLMI until 1990.



Psalm 17

A prayer of David.

¹Hear me, LORD, my plea is just;
listen to my cry.

Hear my prayer—
it does not rise from deceitful lips.

²Let my vindication come from you;
may your eyes see what is right.

³Though you probe my heart,
though you examine me at night and test me,
you will find that I have planned no evil;
my mouth has not transgressed.

⁴Though people tried to bribe me,
I have kept myself from the ways of the violent
through what your lips have commanded.

⁵My steps have held to your paths;
my feet have not stumbled.

⁶I call on you, my God, for you will answer me;
turn your ear to me and hear my prayer.

⁷Show me the wonders of your great love,
you who save by your right hand
those who take refuge in you from their foes.

⁸Keep me as the apple of your eye;
hide me in the shadow of your wings
⁹from the wicked who are out to destroy me,
from my mortal enemies who surround me.

¹⁰They close up their callous hearts,
and their mouths speak with arrogance.

¹¹They have tracked me down, they now surround me,
with eyes alert, to throw me to the ground.

¹²They are like a lion hungry for prey,
like a fierce lion crouching in cover.

¹³Rise up, LORD, confront them, bring them down;
with your sword rescue me from the wicked.

¹⁴By your hand save me from such people, LORD,
from those of this world whose reward is in this life.
May what you have stored up for the wicked fill their bellies;
may their children gorge themselves on it,
and may there be leftovers for their little ones.

¹⁵As for me, I will be vindicated and will see your face;
when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.



Psalm 18

For the director of music. Of David the servant of the LORD. He sang to the LORD the words of this song when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. He said:

¹ I love you, LORD, my strength.

² The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;
my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

³ I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise,
and I have been saved from my enemies.

⁴ The cords of death entangled me;
the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.

⁵ The cords of the grave coiled around me;
the snares of death confronted me.

⁶ In my distress I called to the LORD;
I cried to my God for help.
From his temple he heard my voice;
my cry came before him, into his ears.

⁷ The earth trembled and quaked,
and the foundations of the mountains shook;
they trembled because he was angry.

⁸ Smoke rose from his nostrils;
consuming fire came from his mouth,
burning coals blazed out of it.

⁹ He parted the heavens and came down;
dark clouds were under his feet.

¹⁰ He mounted the cherubim and flew;
he soared on the wings of the wind.

¹¹ He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him—
the dark rain clouds of the sky.

¹² Out of the brightness of his presence clouds advanced,
with hailstones and bolts of lightning.

¹³ The LORD thundered from heaven;
the voice of the Most High resounded.

¹⁴ He shot his arrows and scattered the enemy,
with great bolts of lightning he routed them.

¹⁵ The valleys of the sea were exposed

and the foundations of the earth laid bare
at your rebuke, LORD,
at the blast of breath from your nostrils.

¹⁶ He reached down from on high and took hold of me;
he drew me out of deep waters.

¹⁷ He rescued me from my powerful enemy,
from my foes, who were too strong for me.

¹⁸ They confronted me in the day of my disaster,
but the LORD was my support.

¹⁹ He brought me out into a spacious place;
he rescued me because he delighted in me.

²⁰ The LORD has dealt with me according to my righteousness;
according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me.

²¹ For I have kept the ways of the LORD;
I am not guilty of turning from my God.

²² All his laws are before me;
I have not turned away from his decrees.

²³ I have been blameless before him
and have kept myself from sin.

²⁴ The LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness,
according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.

²⁵ To the faithful you show yourself faithful,
to the blameless you show yourself blameless,

²⁶ to the pure you show yourself pure,
but to the devious you show yourself shrewd.

²⁷ You save the humble
but bring low those whose eyes are haughty.

²⁸ You, LORD, keep my lamp burning;
my God turns my darkness into light.

²⁹ With your help I can advance against a troop;
with my God I can scale a wall.

³⁰ As for God, his way is perfect:
The LORD's word is flawless;
he shields all who take refuge in him.

³¹ For who is God besides the LORD?
And who is the Rock except our God?

³² It is God who arms me with strength
and keeps my way secure.

³³ He makes my feet like the feet of a deer;
he causes me to stand on the heights.

³⁴ He trains my hands for battle;
my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

³⁵ You make your saving help my shield,
and your right hand sustains me;
your help has made me great.

³⁶ You provide a broad path for my feet,
so that my ankles do not give way.

³⁷ I pursued my enemies and overtook them;
I did not turn back till they were destroyed.

³⁸ I crushed them so that they could not rise;
they fell beneath my feet.

³⁹ You armed me with strength for battle;
you humbled my adversaries before me.

⁴⁰ You made my enemies turn their backs in flight,
and I destroyed my foes.

⁴¹ They cried for help, but there was no one to save them—
to the LORD, but he did not answer.

⁴² I beat them as fine as windblown dust;
I trampled them like mud in the streets.

⁴³ You have delivered me from the attacks of the people;
you have made me the head of nations.
People I did not know now serve me,
⁴⁴ foreigners cower before me;
as soon as they hear of me, they obey me.
⁴⁵ They all lose heart;
they come trembling from their strongholds.

⁴⁶ The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock!
Exalted be God my Savior!

⁴⁷ He is the God who avenges me,
who subdues nations under me,
⁴⁸ who saves me from my enemies.
You exalted me above my foes;
from a violent man you rescued me.

⁴⁹ Therefore I will praise you, LORD, among the nations;
I will sing the praises of your name.

⁵⁰ He gives his king great victories;
he shows unfailing love to his anointed,
to David and to his descendants forever.



A new passion for God through prayer 1

Some thoughts for growing closer to Our Heavenly Father and becoming more like Jesus.

1. Pray that God would awaken the passion inside of you to live for Him and Him alone.

Ask God to set a fire within you—a hunger for more of Him and His Word.

Pray that your desire to be close to God would only continue to increase.

Spend a few minutes remembering and journaling about how you felt when you first came to know Jesus. Ask God to make you feel that way again. **Holy Spirit stir inside of me to have a new passion for my God**

I know much has been said & written about prayer, yet these are a few ramblings of my mind. Through the years that I've known my God my level of passion towards Him can often be measured by the time I spend in prayer & how I pray. Not always but sometimes. Times of need seem to intensify my prayer mode, times of blessing, lighter & less intense.

Then there are times when life is sort-of settled, no needs, no requests this can be a danger zone for lack-lustre prayers. A loss of passion for praying. Paul is writing to the Ephesian church & has this to say: *Ephesians 3:14-21 NIVUK For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*

Could Paul be saying: "Stay hungry for God! Look & understand from deep down inside of you, who you are because of Jesus & what He wants us to do on behalf of heaven & His Bride, The Church." Pray for more passion for Our Heavenly Father & His mission to reach & save the lost! **Passion promotes prayer!**

This requires **discipline** in our prayer lives. How do we develop this? Paul gives us a few clues.

1. **Decide to start praying.** Set aside time & place to pray. (...I kneel before the Father...)
2. **Don't be repetitive** in your praying, assign a subject, a topic for each day & pray into that. Don't be afraid to change if needs be. (...out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being...)
3. **Know that our God is able to direct & answer** our discussion with Him. (... who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine...)
4. **Let love be your motivation for praying.** Love towards Our Heavenly Father & others. (...established in love - to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,...)
5. **Prayer is influential**, to bring to Jesus the Christ & to the generations that follow us. (... to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations...) *Romans 15:5-6 NIVUK May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind towards each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Make prayer count, prayer is more important than you think!

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A new passion for God through prayer 2

Some thoughts for growing closer to Our Heavenly Father and becoming more like Jesus.

Pray for steadfastness. The world is full of many distractions, and each new year brings the opportunity for more disorder. Pray for steadfastness. Ask God to steady your heart, direct your steps and help you keep your eyes fixed on Him. Thank Him for giving you the strength you need to stand firm on His promises when the rest of the world is wavering.

Being steadfast & stable. We live in a world that is overloaded with distractions. The cyber environment has produced a kaleidoscope of activities that can & do distract us from our intimacy with God. You can access any subject, entertainment, news etc. Because it is instantly available at the touch of a finger. Can this & does it affect our relationship with Our Heavenly Father? Only you can answer that question for yourself. For me it's a constant battle. So my heart cries out today: Holy Spirit help me to be steadfast, steady my heart & mind, direct my steps and help me stay focused on You! I've prayed, I've asked this, what now? In my walk with God I've always tried to define the line of His part & my part in our relationship. I've found it's not a straight line! Each is a new day, each day I need to pray: Holy Spirit help me to be steadfast, steady my heart & mind, direct my steps and help me stay focused on You!

His part: *2 Peter 1:3-4 NIVUK "His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."*

My part: *2 Peter 1:5-8 NIVUK "For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

I can remember walking on a swing bridge that was stretched over a deep river & because it was my first time to do this I felt a little afraid of the height & the swinging motion of the bridge. To make me feel safe I held onto the ropes on each side of me, they brought stability to me that built my confidence in my ability to walk across the swing bridge. His part & **me doing my part** creates stability to my Christian walk. Embrace what God will & can do for you, coordinate it with your part & bring steadfastness & stability to life. It's not how high you jump on a Sunday, it's how straight you walk for the rest of the week.

I'd like to pursue the idea of His part & My part. **His part:** *2 Peter 1:3-4 NIVUK "His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."*

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A new passion for God through prayer 3

I've noticed at Christmas time people can't wait to open their gifts. Younger children will rip open gift after gift because they want to see what's next. Yet often we neglect or ignore God's gifts to us.

His divine power has given us everything we need... Are you able to fully grasp the magnitude of this gift to us? His gift to us is not from a supermarket or some expensive up-market shop, it's

His divine power that He has given to us! This is a gift that meets every thing we've ever wanted or needed! ...**given us everything we need...** God has a purpose behind this gift: ... **so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.**

His part: 1. Is for us to be like Him.

2. For us to escape the corruption in the world. Not from the world but the corruption in the world.

3. To enable us to take control of evil desires - that is desires that damage our relationship with God.

My part: 2 *Peter 1:5-8 NIVUK "For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Our Heavenly Father is appealing to us to take His gift to us and make the necessary changes, through the divine power of this gift, to cause us to be effective and productive in and for the Kingdom of God!

My part: "make every effort to add to your faith..." Friends this is our part - My part that I have to do when I declare that Jesus is my Lord! Visit the steps, work at the steps, bring change to yourself that will cause you to be effective and productive in and for the Kingdom of God! Receive this divine power as a gift, open it up, use it to its full ability - to become more Christlike. **His part & my part –**

He has done His part! *John 19:30 NIVUK "When he had received the drink, Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit."* All Jesus needed to do for us was done! Jesus said: *It is finished.* So His part was done it's now up to us!

My part! Let's look at Peter's advice again, remembering that the objective of my part is: *"they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."*: 2 *Peter 1:5-8*

"For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

This is the key thought behind "my part": *"For this very reason, make every effort to add to your .."*. This seems like we have to up our Christian game. No longer just breezing along but head down & make an effort with the full help & backing of Our Heavenly Father because,

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life...

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A new passion for God through prayer 4

1 ...add to your faith... Firstly I have to have a faith! What's that? Romans 10:8-13 NIVUK *But what does it say? 'The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,' that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: if you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, 'Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.' For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile – the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'*" This is the starting point of our walk as a Christian, as Jesus put it: You must be born again & this is it!

2 ...add goodness... Goodness can also be virtue which is: Showing high moral standards. We do not live & practice immoral ways that we may have lived before the time of our salvation. Romans 12:1 NIVUK Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship."

3 ...add knowledge... We have to study God's Word, The Bible, to find out how we are to live, act & behave now that we are The Bride of Christ because of our trust & faith in Jesus. *2 Timothy 2:15 NIVUK "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."*

4 ...self-control... Self control is defined as the ability to manage your actions, feelings and emotions because **you** know it isn't good for **you**. This is so important as a Christian, continually we're being presented with alternatives that should not be part of our Christian lifestyle. • Self-control should be practiced at every level and aspect of life! Some ideas for Improving Self-Control • Avoid temptation. • Plan ahead. • Practice using self-control. • Try focusing on one goal at a time. **...perseverance...** Perseverance is an interesting word. It means a continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure, or opposition. It requires steadfastness & being single-minded. Perseverance can produce stability in our lives: James 1:8 & 4.7-10 NIVUK ...Such a person is double-minded and **unstable** in all they do. ...*"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up."*

My part: My prayer: Holy Spirit strengthen my resolve to be decisive, determined & deliberate in what I do! **My action:** Remember & **DO** what I've desired to do!! **...godliness...** The New Testament word for godliness, in its original meaning, conveys the idea of it, a personal attitude toward God that results in actions that are pleasing to him. This personal attitude toward God is what we call **devotion** to God. It is always **devotion in action**. (My part) • It is not just a warm, emotional feeling about God, the kind of feeling we may get while singing some grand old hymn of praise or some modern-day chorus of worship. • Neither is devotion to God merely a time of private Bible reading and prayer. • It's a **"lifestyle practice"** of devotion to the ways and things of Our Heavenly Father. This is true devotion and godliness. **...mutual affection...** This is known as "philiis" love, brotherly affection, brotherly fondness. There is no gender or sexual connotation in this word. It's an attitude we develop and live out towards other people. I show and practice "mutual affection" to other people because mankind (humans, people) have been created in God's image. Every person on earth has been created in God's image, out of all things created only one part of creation was created in His image! Humans are the **"God-image"** creation. Every person you see and meet carries God's image! This so reminds me of what John wrote: *God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.* ...the world... the God-image creation! Can you love others, regardless of their state, position, poverty and wealth like Jesus? **...love...** So much has been written and taught about this agape love, let me share a little rambling of my mind. The word translated as love here is the Greek word Agape. Agape love is not a feeling; it's

a motivation for action that we are free to choose or reject. Agape is a sacrificial love that voluntarily suffers inconvenience, discomfort, and even death for the benefit of another without expecting anything in return. It's unconditional love from one person to another. We are called to agape love through Christ's example: Ephesians 5.1-2 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. This is Jesus's thoughts on agape love: Matthew 22:36-40 NIVUK Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?' Jesus replied: ' "**Love** the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." **This is the first and greatest commandment.** And the second is like it: "**Love your neighbour as yourself.**" All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.'" **So what's my part? To love the God-image creation like Jesus loves it!** Remembering to take care of the rest of His creation. ...For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, **they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**" His part and my part work together to make us effective, productive and increase in our knowledge of Jesus! Our Heavenly Father has made it possible to be who He wants us to be! This is where we started:

His part: 2 Peter 1:3-4 NIVUK "His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."

My part: 2 Peter 1:5-8 NIVUK "For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

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A new passion for God through prayer 5

Some thoughts for growing closer to Our Heavenly Father and becoming more like Jesus.

Pray for spiritual growth. Ask God to give you the grace to know Him more, in spirit and in truth. Thank Him for His commitment to complete the good work He began in you, as Philippians 1:6 promises. During your time with Our Heavenly Father, make a list of areas where you'd like to grow specifically this year. For example, maybe you'd like to serve in the community more, get involved at your church, tell more people about Jesus, keep a God gratitude journal or just spend more time in God's presence. Philippians 1:6 ...being confident of this, that **He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion** until the day of Christ Jesus. 1 Corinthians 1:7-9 NIVUK Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. **He will also keep you firm to the end**, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Our Heavenly Father longs for us to grow in our spiritual walk with Him. The comfort we have is that God is beside us - inside us, guiding and directing us in our walk! ...will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

What is spiritual growth?" Spiritual growth is the **process of becoming more and more like Jesus Christ**. When we place our faith in Jesus, Holy Spirit begins the process of making us more like Him, conforming us to His image. This is a **daily process**, moment by moment, step by step, little by little as we deal with living a life submitted to the internal work of Holy Spirit as He enables us to renew our minds in our journey to become more and more like Jesus. *Galatians 5:16-17 NIVUK So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh.* They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. This is the battlefield arena and the type of struggle we face.

1. To be able to trust that Our Heavenly Father knows what's best for us all the time!
2. To follow and believe what The Word teaches and tells us is true and given to us by God through His indwelling Spirit.
3. That what we see, hear and read in the natural is **not necessary** God's plan. 1 John 2:16 For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.”
4. We have an enemy called the devil who continually opposes God's plan for us. The key way that he does this is making the physical more important than the spiritual. *Romans 12:1-2 NIVUK Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

Objective: To become more like Jesus.

How is this done: Through the power of Holy Spirit living in me and me doing my part in the deal.

The challenge: Is to follow the leading of Holy Spirit as close as possible. This is difficult because there is a constant battle between the desires of the flesh and the direction Holy Spirit wants us to go. ...live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh

My part: It's hard work! Thank God for His grace and mercy!

1. We have to take control of the way we live, think and respond to whatever comes across our paths.
2. It is a practice of renewing our minds. This is done by constant reviewing of how we live and think according to Biblical standards. It also involves discussion with other believers.

3. Developing a plan of change or recovery that includes being responsible to someone who you can trust and work with.

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A new passion for God through prayer 6

Some thoughts for growing closer to Our Heavenly Father and becoming more like Jesus. **4. Thank God for His never-ending love.** Romans 5:8 NIVUK ...But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." 1 John 4:10, 16, 18-19 NIVUK This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ...And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. ...There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us.

With these verses in mind, how do I respond to such love? A few ideas:

- Ask that He would cultivate within you a deeper **understanding** of His love.
- Ask Him to **fill you with His love** until you are overflowing.
- Pray that your life could be a **reflection of His love** to everyone you meet. Having prayed the above and because we believe in prayer, Our Heavenly Father has heard us and will respond to us.

So what's **my part**?

1. Find out how God's love works. Study the Bible verses that tell us about His love to us.

- For example the verses listed above and below: *Psalms 103:17-18 NIVUK But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children – with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts.*

Jeremiah 31:3 NIVUK The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: 'I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.

Exodus 34:6-7 NIVUK " ...'The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.

Psalms 145:8-9 NIVUK The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.

The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. Stop and in your minds eye make a picture of Our Heavenly Father using these verses.

- **I have loved you with an everlasting love**
- slow to anger, **abounding in love**
- **rich in love.** Journal your thoughts, emotions and then think about tangible ways that you can show God's love to others.

This is **my part**, He has done and shown us **His part!**

Romans 15:5-6 NIVUK May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind towards each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Enjoy the exciting journey!

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A new passion for God through prayer 6

Some thoughts for growing closer to Our Heavenly Father and becoming more like Jesus.

6 Trying to understand joy and purpose during difficult times! This is a challenging subject to say the least! Joy in difficult times sounds like an oxymoron. Yet as Christian believers God through His servants encourages us to be joyful! Could it be joyful because it will come to an end? I think there could be more to this joy we're called to display, experience and live by. This portion of scripture from James is a challenge to me: *James 1:2-4 NIVUK Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.* James links trials with testing and that the objective of the trials and testings that we go through is to **mature** us. So what is the testing of our faith?:

1. What we believe in;
2. Our unwavering determination to trust Our Heavenly Father regardless of what circumstances would want us to believe;
3. That His Word, His promises, The Bible is true and trustworthy at all times and situations;
4. ...There are much more but this is enough to stimulate our thinking. Joy is an attitude, a state of being, a transitional state, it is private and public and if accepted and practiced it results in one becoming a more mature person.

The phrase I want to pickup on is: ...*whenever you face trials of many kinds...*

- The indication here is that there will be many trials and many types of trials.
- The ability to winning, passing the test is genuine God given joy. Especially if we've faced the test with joy.

We know the story of Abraham, he faced his great test **trusting God's word to him**: *Genesis 22:1, 12, 14 NIVUK "Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, 'Abraham!' 'Here I am,' he replied. ...Do not lay a hand on the boy,' he said. 'Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.' ...So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, 'On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.'"* Abraham **remained faithful** to God in such a difficult test, a test that touched the very heart of Our Heavenly Father. Could it be that in His foreknowledge He knew that He'd be sacrificing His only son? This test of Abraham showed his **level of maturity** by his **obedience** to God's very difficult instruction. If God tested Abraham to expose what was in his heart and mind, be sure He will do the same to us! Be ready and prepared that there will be testing coming your way from Our Heavenly Father! Let's see what the apostle Paul understood about trials: *Romans 5:3-5 NIVUK "Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."*

Paul shows the hallmarks of a **mature** person:

Perseverance: Being determined in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success. **Character**: The mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual, particularly for us as practicing Christians.

Hope: ...And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. Why would Our Heavenly Father want to test us to expose our hearts and minds? I think: 1. To show us what's really buried deep inside each of us. 2. If necessary make changes in our lives. 3. To mature us. *Consider it pure joy* when we are being tested, it's maturing us! Another thought: **2**

*Corinthians 1:3-5 NIVUK "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, **who comforts us in all our troubles**, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ."*

As we see from this scripture the following points can be gleaned:

1. God Our Heavenly Father is a Father of compassion. Let's define compassion

- It's a deep sympathy for the sorrows of others, with an urge to alleviate their pain. Our Heavenly Father has an eternal desire and urge to see us go through the pain we're experiencing, that will bring maturity to us. Our Heavenly Father knows our pains! Let's look at sympathy it is a general kinship with another's feelings no matter of what kind. Our Heavenly Father is connected to us in each and every situation we find ourselves in.

2. God Our Heavenly Father is s Father of **comfort**.

- **Comfort** is a place of physical ease and freedom from pain or constraint, the easing or alleviation of a person's feelings of grief or distress

- The **comforter**, Our Heavenly Father helps us to get relief in a difficult situation.

- *...who comforts us in all our troubles...* Not only does Our Heavenly Father want to ease any trouble we're going through He wants us to grow and mature in them so that we can then be of use to His Kingdom by helping others! *...so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.* God has a plan for everything!

Summary: I'm in a situation where I need comfort (for any kind and type of trouble). My Heavenly Father understands my situation, He wants to and does see me through it. He eases and delivers me **so that I can help someone else!**

Trying to understand joy during difficult times: Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, Joy in difficult times results in:

1. Us maturing and becoming more like Jesus.

2. Us being able to help others! Thank you Jesus!

John 16:33 NIVUK I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.

Dan Izzett - Zimbabwe. Retired pastor. I was diagnosed with lepromatous leprosy in 1972. Served on TLMI board for eight years and on the Zimbabwe board for 15 years. I now serve on the ALM board and do advocacy for them.



Some features of Paul's letter to Romans

There is an obvious difference between the letter of Paul to Romans and any other of his letters to other churches or individuals. The difference is realized immediately after reading his letters to Corinthians, the difference both in atmosphere and of method. One of the main reason of difference is that Paul had no contribution is the establishments of the church in Rome. He had no direct and personal relationship with the congregation there. Therefore he is not writing to them about the concerning issues or problems the particular church is facing like other churches. But Paul explained very well the teaching of Christ in this letter to Romans. Therefore this letter looks like He has given systematic study and meaning of Christ teaching.

Sanday calls it Testamentary. This is Paul's theological last will and testament. He was distilling the very essence of his faith and belief.

Burton calls it Prophylactic. A Prophylactic is something that protect and guards against infection. Paul felt that the best protection against the infection of false teaching was antiseptic of truth.

We also come to know that Paul had great and deep desire to visit Rome. He could visit there before writing this letter. It might be well said that the name of Rome written of Paul's heart. Paul saw that the whole west lying in front of him, virgin territory to be won for Christ. But if he was to launch a campaign in the west, he needed a base of operation. This was only one such base possible –and that was Rome. All these situations encouraged Paul to write this letter to Romans.

Summary of Paul's all letters -He gives us an idea of Christian life in everyday action. Paul presents his people with ten telegraphic rules for ordinary, everyday life.

1. Love must be completely sincere.
2. We must hate that what is evil and cling to that which is good.
3. Be affectionate to each other in brotherly love.
4. We must give each other priority in honour and be eager to show respect to one another.
5. Work hard and do not be lazy
6. We are to rejoice in hope.....the best is yet to come.
7. We are to have patients in the time of trouble.
8. We are to persevere in prayer.
9. We are to share with those in need.

10. We are to provide hospitality.

Let us ask God to give us wisdom and strength to follows these rules in our daily life.

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No faith; No favour

Jesus, the Son of God and also the son of man had performed many miracles among many people in many places in Israel, but not in Nazareth, his own home town. Probably one can rephrase the popular adage “Familiarity breeds contempt” to “Familiarity breeds unbelief” in this case with its consequences.

In *Mark chapter 6, verses 3-6* the scriptures record a context to understand this phenomenon. *“Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him. Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home.” He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. He was amazed at their lack of faith.”*

For the folk in His birth place Jesus had remained a carpenter’s son; despite any number of great miracles of healing/feeding that He had performed, in public, in front of multitudes. They could not believe Him as nothing beyond what they had known Him when he was growing up as a young man; learning and later practicing carpentry. They were stuck to a situation of looking at Jesus from His parentage and profession and not the Person of Son of God. They did not believe that He was anything but ordinary and not extraordinary. Their perspective remained worldly, very narrow.

Their visualization of Jesus was restricted. They had refused to accept that a carpenter’s son can be a prophet. He was one among us, nothing more. They could not disassociate themselves from the mundane to the Godly. How can one among us can be greater than us? There was unbelief in the person of Jesus, the Saviour. He was viewed from a historical point of view. Only a biological personality and not one who is anointed by God. Historicity, parentage, geographical location became the barriers to know the true Jesus. Was there a sense of jealousy in their hearts? Did that jealousy lead to unbelief?

Jealousy is a sure opening for Satan to enter one’s mind and cement it. Their eyes were blinded by Satan and they accepted such blindness. Satan masks the anointing on believers in the sight of others. This deception alienates people in coming to know and accept who Jesus truly is. His true identity does not lie in the material body of Jesus but in His spiritual body. It is a matter of accepting Jesus for who is in the scriptures rather than typecasting Him according to my perception of who He is. The differentiator is the prism through which I view Jesus. There can be many alternative ways to interpret the person of Jesus, many wrong ones. Some of them are simply refusing to accept the reality of Jesus as the Son and servant of God. I can exalt Him only when I accept Him in faith for who He is., Son of God, member of the triune God. Without that faith God’s grace and power do not manifest in my life.

Faith in the person of Jesus sets us apart from others. Since there was no trust in Jesus, there was no manifestation of His miraculous powers in the lives of those near and dear. Who ultimately lost out because of their unbelief? The people of Nazareth themselves. Unbelief limits/negates the manifestation of God’s power. On the contrary counting the blessings (which is actually manifestation of God’s grace) grows our faith in Jesus. Need the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to truly understand the magnificence of God. Only when I have steadfast faith in the person of Jesus, can His miraculous powers manifest in me and I become part of His miracles.

In gratitude, for His glory **PLN Raju**, Former Director (Resource Mobilization) The Leprosy Mission Trust India New Delhi



“How many loaves do you have?” he asked. “Go and see.”

Mark 6:38 On this occasion Jesus starts up one of the lessons in his discipleship training program. He had chosen twelve men to educate and he had a lot to teach them about the Kingdom of God and how to be a real follower of Jesus. I think the subject of this lesson was: **“What God is calling you to do, he makes it possible through God’s power”**.

We all know the background for this story from the Sunday school. A big crowd of starving people and no practical means to meet the need to feed them. No financial recourses (Philp mentioned the amount of around a half a year wages), nowhere to buy food. So it was an impossible situation. In spite of that Jesus asked them to give food to the crowd.

1. The calling – the challenge Often when God is calling us we have the same reaction as the disciples: “It is actually not possible” We have no resources, no abilities, no knowledge and no experience. They had just a couple of fishes and some bread and Andrew said: *“but how far will they go among so many?”* What about our calling? No leprosy transmission by 2035? No discrimination? No new disabilities? Is it possible with our small resources? Or are you facing a situation in your personal life without human solutions?

2. The conditions and structure for the miracle The disciples had to create the good conditions for the miracle by faith. So they let the crowd to sit down in groups of hundreds and fifties and created a favorable structure for the coming miracle. When the people asked the disciples why they have to move into groups they answered: “Wait and see” because they didn’t really know but they obeyed Jesus by faith.

We are right now creating the structure for God’s miracle!

3. Give space to Jesus to make the miracle, hand over the action to Jesus

The disciples have to leave their own calculations about the money in their pockets and their impracticable plans and hand over everything to Jesus. Jesus made the impossible possible! When they left their small resources to the blessings of Jesus – the miracle was a fact!

4. Let nothing be destroyed!

For Jesus it was important that there was order even in the supernatural move of God. There was an abundance of bread and fish but no plans for throwaway food! No! Collect the leftovers! Be responsible for what God provides and don't take the miracle for granted. Don't be nonchalant but a good and careful steward!

5. Don't forget!

Don't forget the miracle and the lesson! It's very easy to forget. *“Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?”* “Twelve,” they replied. He said to them, “Do you still not understand?” Mk 8:17-18

Let us remember God’s miracles and his precious lessons in our life to create faith for the future!



Me too!!

Esau said to his father, "Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless ME TOO, my father!" Gen 27,38

I see this scene. I hear this scene. I feel this scene. I love this scene. This is my scene.

I see the firstborn, running home from hunting, excited, innocently happy, close to the fulfilment of the promise to receive the right of the firstborn. I see him shining, hurrying to prepare the favourite food his father had desired and he had promised him to prepare it for The Event, to please to him! The inheritor, the firstborn! Approaching the father's home, just a few steps... some metres, some minutes, and IT will happen very soon, his heart already clothed in glory, yes, almost....: he will be blessed and proclaimed inheritor!!

And few minutes later he looks like a beggar. Like a bubble – shining, reflecting heaven, the rainbow and the sunshine, – and now OFF! All he had been preparing himself for: is off! Dirty, dusty, torn, worn, tired and sweating, like a beggar. The drama, the deepest of all disappointments, the depth of wickedness and trick: in less than a minute annulled all his hope.

I see Esau, the firstborn-beggar, with his last minute run, crying, seeking the last chance, shouting: *"Haven't you reserved any blessing for me?"* - Could a question be more bitter, sadder, deeper and tragic than this? "Are you out of blessings, my father? Any hope for me? Missed it, lost it, am I deprived of it forever? Can human wickedness achieve that? Can blessing be stolen, indeed?"

I hear his shouting, his desperate cry, that of a hard man, I see him weeping, muddy tears flowing down on the rough face of a hunter – and chuckling, begging like a helpless child... *"Bless ME TOO, my father!"*

I am that last minute runner, firstborn beggar. This is my cry. Perhaps yours as well during endless nights? Have you ever felt the same? Then you understand what it is about. Have you seen your face in a mirror by then? You almost could not recognize yourself, could you? *"Haven't you reserved any blessing for me?"*

And you see, morning and sunlight arrive. Even for a beggar. Also for the last minute running beggars, who are so childishly sincerely seeking the heart of their Father, wanting to please to Him, are longing for the Heritage of Glory, who are brave enough to pour out their heart, doing their best, even dirty, even torn, even victims of human tricks...they are longing, begging for His blessing. *"Bless ME TOO, my father!"*

And our Father, God of heaven and earth, the Almighty and Infinite, the Merciful and Glorious, He who is Love Himself: has! He has reserved blessing, sufficient and anew and anew, infinitely and endlessly! He is never short of it, never keeping it back, He can never be manipulated, as He sees my heart, in its full depth. As He knows all, therefore He knows that I am loving Him. And again and again His response on my desperate

"Haven't you reserved any blessing for me?"- question is:

"Yes, I have! Even for you, my child!"



How well are you taking care of yourself's well-being and your health?

5 Reasons Why God Wants Us Healthy, Well and Fit to Serve Him There are probably a few hundred reasons that might motivate you to care for yourself and to be healthy. Here are five, actually four, reasons that motivate me at a really deep level... and I think that these are reasons why God would want us all to be motivated by.

1. It glorifies God
2. You're taking care of your body – His temple
3. It's being a good witness – In community outreach programs
4. You'll have more energy & enthusiasm – be better equipped for what God has planned for you
5. I need your help with a 5th reason?

It Glorifies God The Bible says in *1 Corinthians 10:31* that whatever we do, we're to do it to the glory of God. It also tells us in Isaiah that we were created and formed by God to glorify Him. This is our primary purpose in life – to glorify God. We do that when we care for our body and live a healthy lifestyle.

Our Body is God's Temple and for Us to Care For One scripture that reminds us that our body is God's temple is *1 Corinthians 6:19-20*. God's Holy Spirit lives inside a believer. After we accept Jesus into our heart, God gives us His Spirit to help us live the kind of life He wants us to live. Since God actually lives in us, Paul tells us in this verse that our body is His temple. Since God "bought" us with a high price, Jesus' death, than, we are obligated to care for our body which is His temple.

Being Healthy is Being a Good Witness *Acts 1:8* reminds us that we are to be witnesses for other people. People look for us to be models of the Christian faith. We ought to desire to live our lives in a way that represents our faith well. Taking care of our health is one way that we can be a good witness to others we serve and work with.

You'll Have More Energy & Enthusiasm to Do God's Work *Ephesians 2:10* helps us see that we are God's masterpiece, created to do the good things that He had planned a long time ago for us to do. We all know that the more fit and healthy we are the more energy & enthusiasm we will have. The more energy that we have, the more we can put into whatever task we are doing. We'll also be better able to sustain ourself for the long haul.

What's a 5th Reason? What is one other reason that you think God wants us to be healthy? Comment by adding a 5th reason that you think would be pleasing to God.

Something to Reflect On

What we believe determines what we do. I suspect that if you believe what I've written above, and you value your relationship with God, it's likely that you are taking good care of your body and your health.

That's why your personal relationship with God is very important to you!



Psalm 19

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

¹The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

²Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.

³They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.

⁴Yet their voice^b goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.

In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.

⁵ It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
like a champion rejoicing to run his course.

⁶It rises at one end of the heavens
and makes its circuit to the other;
nothing is deprived of its warmth.

⁷The law of the LORD is perfect,
refreshing the soul.

The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.

⁸The precepts of the LORD are right,
giving joy to the heart.

The commands of the LORD are radiant,
giving light to the eyes.

⁹The fear of the LORD is pure,
enduring forever.

The decrees of the LORD are firm,
and all of them are righteous.

¹⁰They are more precious than gold,
than much pure gold;
they are sweeter than honey,
than honey from the honeycomb.

¹¹By them your servant is warned;

in keeping them there is great reward.

¹² But who can discern their own errors?

Forgive my hidden faults.

¹³ Keep your servant also from willful sins;

may they not rule over me.

Then I will be blameless,

innocent of great transgression.

¹⁴ May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart

be pleasing in your sight,

LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.



Psalm 20

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

¹May the LORD answer you when you are in distress;
may the name of the God of Jacob protect you.

²May he send you help from the sanctuary
and grant you support from Zion.

³May he remember all your sacrifices
and accept your burnt offerings.

⁴May he give you the desire of your heart
and make all your plans succeed.

⁵May we shout for joy over your victory
and lift up our banners in the name of our God.

May the LORD grant all your requests.

⁶Now this I know:

The LORD gives victory to his anointed.
He answers him from his heavenly sanctuary
with the victorious power of his right hand.

⁷Some trust in chariots and some in horses,
but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.

⁸They are brought to their knees and fall,
but we rise up and stand firm.

⁹LORD, give victory to the king!

Answer us when we call!

Authors in Alphabetical Order

Textuarium

Allan Ekstedt	26 February		Genesis 27,38	27 February
Damaris Villanueva	6 February		Exodus	3 February
Dan Izzett	17-23 February		Exodus 13,3	12 February
David, king of Israel	1, 2, 8, 9, 15, 16, 29, 30 February		Psalms 13	1 February
Dorothy Owen	28 February		Psalms 14	2 February
Glynis Forbes	12 February		Psalms 15	8 February
Helen Roberts MD	4 February		Psalms 16	9 February
Joni Eareckson Tada	7 February		Psalms 17	15 February
Kalpana Shah	3 February		Psalms 18	16 February
Kathleen Gavin-Finlay	13 February		Psalms 19	30 February
Marta Risko	27 February		Psalms 20	1 March
Otto Kingsley	5 February		Psalms 37,5	13 February
Peter Laubscher	11 February		Psalms 42	6 February
Pradeep and Sarah Failbus	24 February		Psalms 103,17-18	22 February
Raju PLN Dr	25 February		Psalms 105,1-2	10 February
Silvano Perotti	14 February		Proverbs 12,27	11 February
Yuek Ming Poon	10 February		Mark 2,4	4 February
			Mark 6,3-6	25 February
			Mark 6,38	26 February
			John 1,1	7 February
			Romans	24 February
			Romans 10,8-13	20 February
			Galatians 5,16-17	21 February
			Ephesians 2,10	28 February
			Ephesians 3,14-21	17 February
			Hebrews 4,14-16	14 February
			James 1,2-4	23 February
			1 Peter 1,8	5 February
			2 Peter 1,1-8	18 and 19 February

The Bridge - TLM Daily Devotions

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