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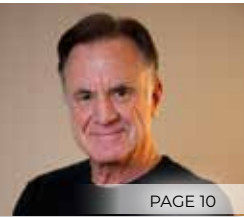


RISE ABOVE!

The Power of a
Miracle Hour

Prevailing
Prayer

Your Open Door
for Blessings



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Rise Above!

Ever find yourself flapping like a pigeon instead of soaring like an eagle? David Cerullo's article on **page 5** explains how to take the limits off your faith and live an extraordinary, Spirit-filled life.



Turn to **page 28** for details about our **THANK YOU GIFT**.

Act quickly—our supplies are limited.

EDITOR'S CORNER



Roone Acree

In this issue of *INSPIRATION MAGAZINE*, we want to show you how to rise above your circumstances and find victory in our living God. In every way, the Lord wants to make this a season of special favor, increase, and overflow in your life. He's getting ready to ARISE and scatter your enemies (Psalm 68:1).

But YOU need to rise up in faith as well. Take this time to claim His promise to lift up your valleys, straighten your crooked and rough places, and reveal His glory through your life (Isaiah 40:4-5). **Rise Above** your circumstances, and declare Him as your Healer...Restorer...Provider...and Peace!

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Keys to Abundant Life Series

Don't miss His amazing promises of grace and favor!



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*"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" So they said,
"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved,
you and your household."—Acts 16:30–31 NKJV*

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Are You an **EAGLE** or a **PIGEON**?



There's a big difference
between soaring and just
flapping your wings.



STRENGTHEN
your walk
with David Cerullo

As God's son or daughter, you are not designed for failure and frustration, but rather for greatness...love...holiness...and victory.

But in order to experience the full blessings of your spiritual heritage, there's a good chance you'll need to have your mind renewed (Romans 12:2), recognizing who God has destined you to be as His beloved child.

Picture what might happen if a baby eagle fell off his family's high mountain ledge and landed among a flock of pigeons. Maybe the pigeons would kindly take the baby eagle into their community and teach him how to live as one of them. But that would be far from his true, God-ordained identity, wouldn't it?

If the young eagle flew among the pigeons, it would never get very high off the ground. Life would be incredibly boring, with no sense

of adventure at all. In the same way, many Christians have become virtually earthbound, surrounded by unbelieving friends. Instead of soaring, they're just flapping their wings.

Friend, God has called you to so much more than that! Instead of having you live the shallow, purposeless life of a pigeon, He wants you to break out of your comfort zone and soar to new heights. And if you've been weighted down by sins or addictions that have hindered you from gaining altitude, this can be the day God's supernatural power sets you free.

What does it look like when you activate your spiritual DNA and reclaim your destiny as an eagle Christian? It's an exciting, abundant life, completely different from life as a pigeon:

*Those who wait on the LORD
Shall renew their strength;
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,
They shall run and not be weary,
They shall walk and not faint
(Isaiah 40:31 NKJV).*

So be honest. If you find yourself flapping like a pigeon instead of soaring like an eagle, allow God's power to enable you to escape your frustrating circumstances. Don't delay, my friend. Take the limits off your faith, and learn to FLY!

PETER'S DILEMMA

Perhaps you've spent many years living like a pigeon, trying to flap your way to success. Unaware of how to tap into the supernatural life of God's Spirit, you end up tired and frustrated, wondering what went wrong.

But when your futile self-efforts failed to bring the desired results, you probably did what any good pigeon would do: you tried flapping harder!

Few people in the Bible illustrate this

principle better than the apostle Peter. As a fisherman, he had always worked hard, flapping his wings all night if necessary to catch an adequate number of fish. When Jesus told him one day where to find a huge haul of fish, Peter admitted, "*Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing*" (Luke 5:5 NKJV).

Can't you feel the agony in Peter's voice? His efforts that night had not just resulted in a substandard catch. No, it was worse than that. He had caught NOTHING!

Later Jesus would explain something Peter and the other fishermen hadn't grasped yet: "*The one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do NOTHING*" (John 15:5 NASB).

You see, this is the difference between a pigeon and an eagle. The pigeon flaps and flaps, but in the end accomplishes nothing of lasting significance. The eagle, in contrast, is energized by the supernatural wind currents of the Spirit. In all sorts of weather, an eagle soars higher and higher because its power source is not its own.

This was a lesson Peter often learned the hard way. In his own strength, his efforts amounted to little. He was brash, impulsive, and hard headed. But when he surrendered his life to God, he found his identity in the living Christ and lived a powerful destiny that would build the foundations of the church (Acts 2).

I'm not trying to undercut Peter's credibility—quite the contrary. I want you to see that despite Peter's flaws and mistakes, God used him in a mighty way. Sometimes he looked like a pigeon and at other times an eagle. But in the end, Peter quit flapping his wings. He learned to trust in the power of the Spirit instead of the strength of his own flesh. And as a result, Peter powerfully impacted the world for God's Kingdom.

God wants you to break out of your comfort zone and soar to new heights!

Despite Peter's flaws and mistakes, God used him in a mighty way.

A LIFE TRANSFORMED

One of the fantastic things about Peter's life is that it's a story of transformation. In his own strength, he was arrogant and outspoken, but his actions rarely matched his bold declarations.

Luke, who wrote the book of Acts, wanted to make sure his Gospel account included an explanation for the turnaround Peter would experience between his denial of Jesus and his later restoration.

The Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death."

Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me" (Luke 22:31–34 NKJV).

Don't miss this important point shown in Jesus' words to Peter: Jesus knew ahead of time that Peter would FAIL...but He also knew ahead of time that Peter would be RESTORED, able to strengthen the other believers.

My friend, perhaps you feel like Satan is sifting you like wheat today. Maybe you're dismayed that your life more closely resembles a pigeon than an eagle.

But you should take great comfort and hope from Jesus' message here. He is at the right hand of the Father today, praying for you as He once prayed for Peter. And in the same way, the Lord is confident that your faith will ultimately prevail! No matter how many times you've failed in the past, He is declaring a day of restoration and resurrection for your future.

You're an eagle, not a pigeon. Trust in His Word and spread your wings...

It's time to soar!



P.S. I can't wait to send you our powerful THANK YOU GIFT this month! Turn to **page 28** for all the details.



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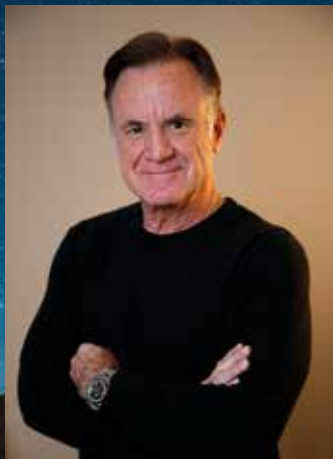
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The Power of a **MIRACLE HOUR**



From *Lost in Space* to saved by grace. Read the amazing story of Hollywood producer Mark Koch.

Achieving his worldly goals nearly destroyed Mark Koch. With dreams of becoming a Hollywood producer, he arrogantly declared, “The only difference between Steven Spielberg and me is a hundred million dollars.” Koch set out to get the millions, and his results were impressive. Koch produced blockbusters like *Lost in Space* and *Black Dog*. But there was a cost beyond dollars that he never expected.

Koch’s family paid that cost, and his wife begged God to touch Mark’s heart. His wife knew the Lord wasn’t done with her

husband, so one week, she persuaded him to go to church with her. “I felt like the preacher was talking right to me,” Mark said. “God showed me *Lost in Space* wasn’t just a movie—it was the truth about me. I was lost in an empty life.” Mark ran to the altar and asked God to forgive, cleanse, change, and use him.

Within three months, the trappings of success—the lifestyle of the rich and famous—evaporated. Lawsuits, lost contracts, and closed doors stopped the flow of money. Gone were the massive home

and luxury cars. Accustomed to spending \$30–40,000 a month, the Kochs found themselves rolling coins to buy food for the family.

“God had to strip me of my pride. He showed me that it was He who had given everything to me...and that without Him, I was nothing. We moved from the big house to an apartment a fraction of the size, but that apartment was more of a home than the house had ever been.”

A men’s event with his church clarified Mark’s vision of true success and birthed a passion for restoring men to the leadership of their homes. He recognized how giving God the first hour of his day had changed his life and his home—and how it could do the same for others.

“I believe if you heal the man, you heal the family—and that will heal our nation. I am more in love with my wife today than when I married her. God has completely restored my marriage. My relationship with my children is great.”

As time passed, friends began to notice the drastic changes in Mark and asked him what he had done to transform his life. He knew the changes were all God’s

work but also recognized there were tangible steps he took each day to seek God and strengthen his relationship with Christ. Mark set out to understand how God had worked in his life, so he could help others experience transformation.

As Mark evaluated his life, he saw that three basic commitments had revolutionized his world: giving God the first hour of his day, investing his time in the lives God entrusted to him, and sharing the message of hope with all who would listen. Mark wrote his bestselling book *The First Hour for Men* to capture these key concepts. In 2016, he expanded it with his book *The First Hour for Men: A 30 Day Study Guide* and began working with Promise Keepers® to reach men and their families on a national scale.

Today, Mark lives out his faith with the same passion that once drove him to seek fame as a Hollywood producer. Pursuing the desire for fame nearly destroyed Mark Koch and all he loved, but pursuing the desires God placed in his heart has brought hope and life to him and millions of others. ❖

If you would like more information, please visit www.thefirsthour.com.

*“I believe if you heal the man, you heal the family—
and that will heal our nation.”*



In-Lawfully Yours



Quirky New York girl Jesse creates a stir when she divorces her cheating husband, then falls for the local pastor.

Tuesday, June 11 at 9:00 p.m. ET

Program times subject to change.
Check inspiration.org/tv for details.

 inspiration | tv™



Monday, June 17 at 9:00 p.m. ET

Fully Alive

Dad and comedian Ken Davis believes there's power in humor. His keen insights and side-splitting laughs will give you the courage to rise above circumstances.



Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. ET

Create Your Now

Even if you can't control everything, you can control your presence! Kristianne Wargo helps you tackle real-life struggles while living authentically...God's way!



Saturdays, June 15, 22, and 29
at 2:30 p.m. ET

The Assignment

God calls us to go into all the world and share the Gospel. But how does He equip us? Watch the Mission One Eleven team as they serve God in Ethiopia.



Weekdays at 8:30 a.m. & 3 p.m. ET

Bible Discovery

The Hembrees guide you through the entire Bible in a year, offering historical and scientific insights along the way. You'll be amazed at what you learn!

I Am an Overcomer!



See how an Inspiration Ministries program spoke life to Teresa and gave her a powerful, new hope in Jesus.

Do you ever feel alone—overlooked by those you love, unnoticed by the world, and abandoned by God? In this busy, technology-driven world, it's easy to fall into that lie. The truth is that God is here, calling you to come closer and embrace His love. It brings us great joy when we hear that He has used Inspiration Ministries to deliver His message to a hurting heart. Read along as Teresa shares her story:

“About 3:00 a.m., I turned on the TV and began surfing through the channels. I came across your program. Mike Smalley was

speaking, and I felt impressed NOT to change the channel. I sensed that I was about to receive a miraculous, absolutely miraculous, infusion of God's healing power.

“I was consumed with various forms of self-medicating, chief of which was abusing alcohol. In fact, having just awakened, I was getting ready to start drinking again. The state of depression I was in was so terrible—indescribable really.”

The message that stopped Teresa was so unexpected that she was compelled to listen. Riddled with guilt over her lifestyle, she

almost couldn't grasp the shocking ideas being presented in this 3:00 a.m. sermon. She knew she needed to confess and repent, but the confessions the preacher asked her to repeat were unfamiliar, even strange, to her:

1. Jesus is the LORD of my life.
2. I am an overcomer.
3. My seed is birthing my future.

As Teresa repeated these three declarations, she couldn't help but feel a wave of freedom. Instead of shame and condemnation, the Inspiration Ministries program was infusing hope for the future based on the love of God. Teresa continues with her story:

“WOW! Listening, focusing, and meditating on these spiritually, critically crucial points greatly empowered me! I am sharing them with all those around me as I look forward to the people my life will touch! I make this donation to you happily!

“By the way, two days after I first viewed your program, I came across Mr. Smalley again in the wee hours of the morning! He was speaking about living life abundantly. This topic is something I really need to hear more about. Thank you for being there in my great time of need. My relationship with God has deepened like an ocean. WOW!”

It is such a privilege to be part of delivering hope around the world and read the stories of those who are impacted by seeds sown into this ministry. We may not be there at 3:00 a.m. when the weight becomes unbearable, and the world feels so dark and alone. But praise God, through technology, we can broadcast voices declaring the truth to the lost and hurting. When hearts hear that message, the light of Jesus enters and chases the darkness away. Join us in rejoicing and praying for the seeds sown and the harvest created! And don't forget to share your needs and victories, so others can pray and rejoice with you. ❖

Fill your heart with hope from the Word:

Jeremiah 29:11

Romans 15:13

Lamentations 3:21–23

1 Peter 1:3–4

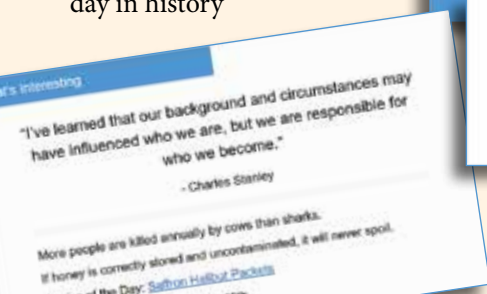
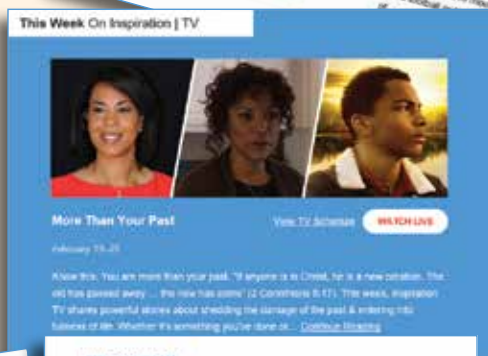
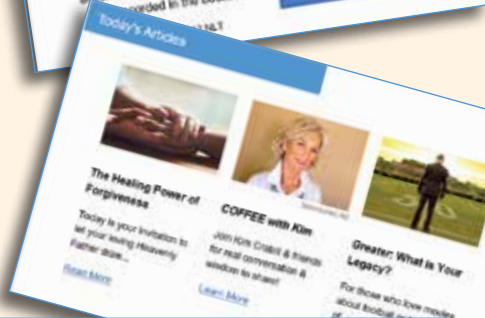
Zephaniah 3:17

Revelation 21:4

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An Outreach of Inspiration Ministries

Prevailing Prayer



Ben Cerullo



In addition to your everyday prayers, you need to engage in *special* prayers that aggressively target and pierce the root of your needs and problems. These are prayers and declarations that **strip the enemy of any authority** and give God permission to move on your behalf.

The apostle Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 (NKJV): *"Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds."*

Your spiritual weapons are mighty in God to overcome the strongholds of the devil. Through the truth of God's Word, you have been given dominion over the strongholds in your life. In exercising this authority, you let the enemy know he no longer has permission to harass you.

Remember, the devil is a liar. That's his nature. Scripture tells

us he's *"the father of lies"* (John 8:44 NIV). From childhood, we learn to believe his lies—lies about God, the world, other people, and our own selves. Yet God wants to uncover those lies in order to replace them with His truth.

Jesus promises us as His disciples: *"You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free"* (John 8:32 NASB).

Ask God to bring to light the lies you've believed. Maybe you know the root, or maybe you don't have a clue. The good news is that there is Someone who does, and He's just a prayer away. If you ask the Holy Spirit, He will reveal the root of the lies in your life. You don't have to go through a long ritual. Simply pray, open your heart, and ask God to show you.

Be patient. The answer might not come right away. But if you will wait on the Lord, He will bring you the answer you so desperately need. ❖

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When you hear someone talk about the Great Commission, what comes to mind? Reaching the world with the Gospel? Teaching people the precepts of God's Word? Well...

Jesus said the Great Commission includes BOTH evangelism and discipleship. In Mark 16:15 (NKJV), He spoke of evangelism, saying, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." But in Matthew 28:19-20 (NKJV), He added that we should also "make disciples of all the nations...teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you."

These twin pillars, evangelism and discipleship, form the mission of Inspiration Ministries...

1. **EVANGELISM...** Every 6 seconds or less, we're presenting the Gospel of Jesus Christ to someone, somewhere, through our evangelistic outreaches. More than **5 MILLION people** last year said YES to Jesus through these efforts!
2. **DISCIPLESHIP...** Last year there were over **14 million views** of David Cerullo's discipleship videos. To receive these daily videos or browse the archives, visit **StrengthenYourWalk.org** or sign up for your FREE e-newsletter at **inspiration.org/newsletter**, and we'll deliver this and other resources to your email.

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Victory Via Prayer

BIBLE READING: 1 CHRONICLES 5

Based on every human standard, the Israelites should have been defeated. They were outnumbered, and their enemy was stronger. But the Israelites had one major advantage: God was on their side.

They did not take His blessings for granted. They cried out to Him during the battle. They did not trust in their experience or past success, their weapons or skills, their wisdom or resources. They trusted in Him. He enabled them to use these resources skillfully and effectively, resulting in victory.

The Bible tells us their victory was complete! They possessed the land and also gained abundant cattle, camels, sheep, and donkeys. This was possible because they were people of prayer.

How often do we fail to achieve victory because we trust in ourselves and our resources? We don't commit our needs to God. We need to learn from the Israelites. When we need help, we need to pray, call on God, and have faith that He wants to take the burdens from us. Trust in Him and realize that He is with us in every battle we face.

The Bible assures us that God is ready to bring us victory in every battle. But for victory, we must commit these situations to Him. These are opportunities to pray, seek His help, obey His Word, and trust Him. Today, call out to Him in the challenges you face. Have faith.

What battle are you fighting today?

SATURDAY

June

1

They were helped against them...all who were with them were handed over to them; for they cried out to God in the battle, and He answered their prayers because they trusted in Him.

1 Chronicles 5:20 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, I commit these battles to You: _____.
Thank You for giving me victory. In Jesus' name, amen.

These were the heads of their fathers' houses... mighty men of strength of mind and spirit [enabling them to encounter danger with firmness and personal bravery], famous men, and heads of the houses of their fathers.

1 Chronicles 5:24 AMPC

PRAYER:

Father, help me to be pleasing in Your sight. I trust in You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Are you following reputable people?

Mighty Among Men

BIBLE READING: 1 CHRONICLES 5

The heads of these families were mighty men, honored in the world with the appearance of success. This strength enabled them “to encounter danger with firmness and personal bravery.” They displayed strength and bravery. They were admired.

These men performed great deeds, defeated their adversaries, and led their armies into battle. They won important competitions, started successful businesses, and wrote distinguished books. Such men often are models of worldly success. Yet, while successful in the world, such men may not be honored by God.

These mighty men were *unfaithful to God*. All their talent, bravery, and strength did not make them closer to God or useful to His Kingdom. They were not pleasing to Him. He was not impressed.

Today, whom are you trusting in the challenges you face? Are they really serving God or exalting themselves? They may be gaining awards from this world, but are they pleasing Him?

It does not really matter how brave or attractive we might be, or what kind of exploits we have done. We may win awards or have the kind of success others admire. But the question is whether God is pleased. The only thing of any importance is whether we are faithful to God. He alone is our Judge, our standard, and our model for conduct.

Today, seek to be pleasing to God in all you do.

God of Breakthroughs

BIBLE READING: 1 CHRONICLES 14

David faced a powerful adversary. It would have been easy for him to accept defeat.

Israel's powerful enemies the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king. They surely knew David defeated their champion, Goliath, and led Israel's armies to victories. These Philistines seemed determined to attack this adversary, proactively going in search of David in a raid west of Jerusalem.

David was ready to confront these enemies. But before taking any action, he inquired of God who told him, “Go up, for I will hand them over to you” (v. 10). When he followed God's leading, he won a great victory.

It was a great breakthrough. God shattered the walls that stood before David. There may have appeared to be no weaknesses, but God had created a breach.

David was conscious of the enormity of the problem he faced and all God had done for him. It was such a powerful moment that he changed the name of the place where the battle was fought. It became *Baal-perazim*, the Lord of the Breakthrough. David wanted everyone to remember that God had given him a great breakthrough there.

We face many adversaries. We can feel overwhelmed and outnumbered. It can seem that defeat is inevitable, and our enemies have no weaknesses.

As you face obstacles, remember you serve the God of breakthroughs. He has the power to give you victory and give you breakthroughs.

What breakthrough are you praying for this week?

“God has broken through my enemies by my hand, like the breakthrough of waters.” Therefore they named that place Baal-perazim.

1 Chronicles 14:11 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, I commit these situations to You: _____. Thank You for giving me the breakthroughs I need. In Jesus' name, amen.

You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice. You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute.

Exodus 23:2–3 NKJV

PRAYER:

Father, give me Your insights into these issues: _____. Give me Your perspective. I trust in You. In Jesus' name, amen.

What has happened when you've followed the crowd?

Following a Majority

BIBLE READING: EXODUS 23

Perhaps no organization has been so committed to measuring public opinions as the Gallup Organization. As part of their process, the Gallup Poll has become part of the American lexicon, measuring trends on subjects ranging from politics to fashion.

Gallup uses a methodology called sampling. Through this process, they first determine the opinions of a relatively small group of people. Then these views are scientifically projected to a larger group. The theory behind this research is that sampling enables researchers to project the views of entire population groups. Out of these polls come reports that reveal what the majority is thinking.

However, even an organization as technologically advanced as Gallup finds itself confronted by research information that can be confusing. They sometimes reach conclusions that may prove to be inaccurate.

God warns that, regardless of methodology, a majority can be wrong. Realize that people are fickle. They change their minds. It can be easy to follow a majority and go along with the crowd. It takes courage to stand alone and a real commitment to follow the timeless Word of God.

In the important issues of life, seek to be committed to follow God. Pray and study His Word. Remember that all things are subject to change and the whims of human emotions and flawed human reasoning. Focus on God and His Word, regardless of what is going on around you.

Breathless Blessings

BIBLE READING: 2 CHRONICLES 9

Why did the queen of Sheba and her large entourage travel hundreds of miles to visit Jerusalem? The Bible tells us she was motivated by *curiosity*.

She had heard of Solomon's fame and decided to learn more herself. She wanted to hear his wisdom for herself, to pick his brain about problems she faced, or questions she might have had on a wide range of subjects. Having traveled such a long distance, she wanted to speak about everything on her mind.

In this dialogue, she must have peppered him with questions. "*Solomon answered all her questions; nothing was hidden from Solomon which he did not explain to her.*" (v. 2). She was dazzled by the kingdom he ruled. The cumulative effect of these experiences and observations left her "*breathless*."

It can be easy to marvel at the way Solomon must have impressed this queen. But all his blessings were gifts from God. His kingdom was characterized by peace, riches, and beauty.

Remember, you serve the same God who so abundantly blessed Solomon. He is ready to give you His wisdom, to make you stand out so others will come to you and ask for your help.

Remember that God has blessed you, so you can bless others. Share the gifts and resources you have been given. Be a testimony to His greatness, and point people to Him. Bring Him glory.

List the blessings God has given you recently.

When the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, the house which he had built, the food at his table, the seating of his servants, the attendance of his ministers and their attire, his cupbearers and their attire, and his stairway by which he went up to the house of the LORD, she was breathless.

2 Chronicles 9:3–4 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for all Your blessings. May I be a witness to others. In Jesus' name, amen.

Unless the LORD builds a house, the work of the builders is wasted. Unless the LORD protects a city, guarding it with sentries will do no good.

Psalms 127:1 NLT

PRAYER:

Father, I place my trust in You. I look to You for protection for me and my family. Thank You for being faithful. In Jesus' name, amen.

Reflect on your level of real trust in Jesus.

Protection

BIBLE READING: PSALM 127

How do we find protection against the attacks of our enemies? In Bible times, protection was provided by a defense system that included high walls built with strong materials. Guards or watchmen were on duty all the time.

In our world, we depend on many things for protection: police and armies, guards and weapons, security cameras, and radars. We lock our doors and are careful about the places we go and the things we do.

The fact is that every defense system has flaws. We need to remember that the Bible says that all these efforts are useless without the blessing of God. He wants us to understand that He is our true source of protection. We still need sentries guarding our cities, but more than that, we need the blessing and protecting hand of God.

The Bible tells us that we should begin our protection with Him—all our plans, all our strategies, everything we do with Him. He needs to be the foundation for our family and personal lives, our relationships, and finances. Do not trust in the things and people of this world but look to Him. Trust Him for your security, safety, and sanctuary from danger.

Whom are you trusting? Have faith in God. Build your life on your relationship with Him. He is faithful and will not disappoint you. And He will give you His peace.

Great Peace Promise

BIBLE READING: PSALM 119

How eagerly people seek peace. It is something they pursue in so many ways—through exercise and relaxation, by taking vacations and various forms of escape, through meditation, and various religious exercises.

But God provided a simple formula for receiving His peace: It is the result of loving His law, obeying Him, and following His principles. He promises great peace.

When we love God's law, we receive great completeness, soundness, welfare, and peace. He promises that we will have stability and internal fortitude. We will be able to depend on Him and His Word in whatever situation we face.

When we fill our minds and hearts with His Word, we constantly are reminded of God and His promises. When we are assaulted by the problems and challenges of life, we can turn to His Word and draw on His strength. We are armed with His principles and have the discernment to realize temptations and avoid them. This can prevent us from being distracted and give us the perspective we need to view our circumstances in context.

The Bible urges us to remember that we gain great peace as we trust in Him. When we love His law, we gain strength to be able to withstand opposition and be victorious in the face of difficulties. God can direct us and give us great peace to keep us joyful, happy, and healthy in all circumstances.

Write out your favorite Bible verse.

Great peace have they who love Your law; nothing shall offend them or make them stumble.

Psalms 119:165 AMP

PRAYER:

Father, I love Your Word. Give me insights and an understanding of Your truth. Thank You for giving me great peace. In Jesus' name, amen.

Listen to me, for happy are all who follow my ways. Listen to my counsel and be wise. Don't ignore it.

Proverbs 8:32–33 NLT

PRAYER:

Lord, search my heart. I humble myself before You. Show me if I am clinging to the wrong things. Direct my steps and give me Your wisdom. In Jesus' name, amen.

Reflect on areas your stubbornness has caused problems.

Submit to God

BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 8

Ferdinand de Lesseps seemed the ideal person to direct the building of the Panama Canal. He had experience, having been responsible for completing the Suez Canal. However, de Lesseps failed to recognize the differences between Panama and Suez to realize that different approaches were needed.

Author David McCullough discovered that de Lesseps was stubborn. As a result, the project became mired in problems. His company lost millions of dollars and was forced to liquidate.

A scandal broke out that rocked the French government. Soon de Lesseps and his son were sentenced to prison. It was a disaster for France. Only after the project was taken over by the United States was the Panama Canal built.

McCullough concluded that the source of de Lesseps's downfall was his insistence "on a sea-level passage through country he knew nothing about." De Lesseps refused to listen to others and disregarded data that challenged his opinions.

How many people remain *stubbornly* committed to habits, customs, and personal biases? How many will not seek God, submit their lives to Him, or are not open to allowing Him to change their ways?

Ask God to examine *your* heart. Do not stubbornly cling to your *own* ways and habits that may be flawed. Listen to Him. Allow Him to guide you, overrule your plans if necessary, and give you His wisdom and direction.

A Song In the Night

BIBLE READING: PSALM 77

It was night, and Asaph was alone. No matter how hard he tried, his mind kept racing. He struggled with problems, mulled over words spoken, wondered what to do, and hoped to find rest. Instead, his worries intensified.

Asaph, the writer of many psalms, had such a moment with what he called his song in the night. We feel his emotions as he admitted he was weary and worn out. He was desperate as his soul refused to be comforted. He tried to find peace by remembering the days of old but was so troubled he could not speak.

As he struggled, he sought the Lord. In these moments, he remembered past moments when he called to God. He remembered His faithfulness and promises. He remembered that God "*works wonders*" (v. 14) and led His people like a flock. Asaph's conclusion? "*What god is great like our God?*" (v. 13).

Asaph's experiences inspired an unknown composer to write a song called "My Song in the Night." In gentle words spoken from his heart, he wrote, "O Jesus my Savior, my song in the night, come to us with Thy tender love, my soul's delight."

In those moments, he knew he could call on Jesus. He didn't need to wander or feel isolated. Even in a desert, he could see His face.

How do you respond in moments like these? Turn to Jesus in song, prayer, and meditation. Delight in Him.

What do you wish you could say to God when you're awake at night?

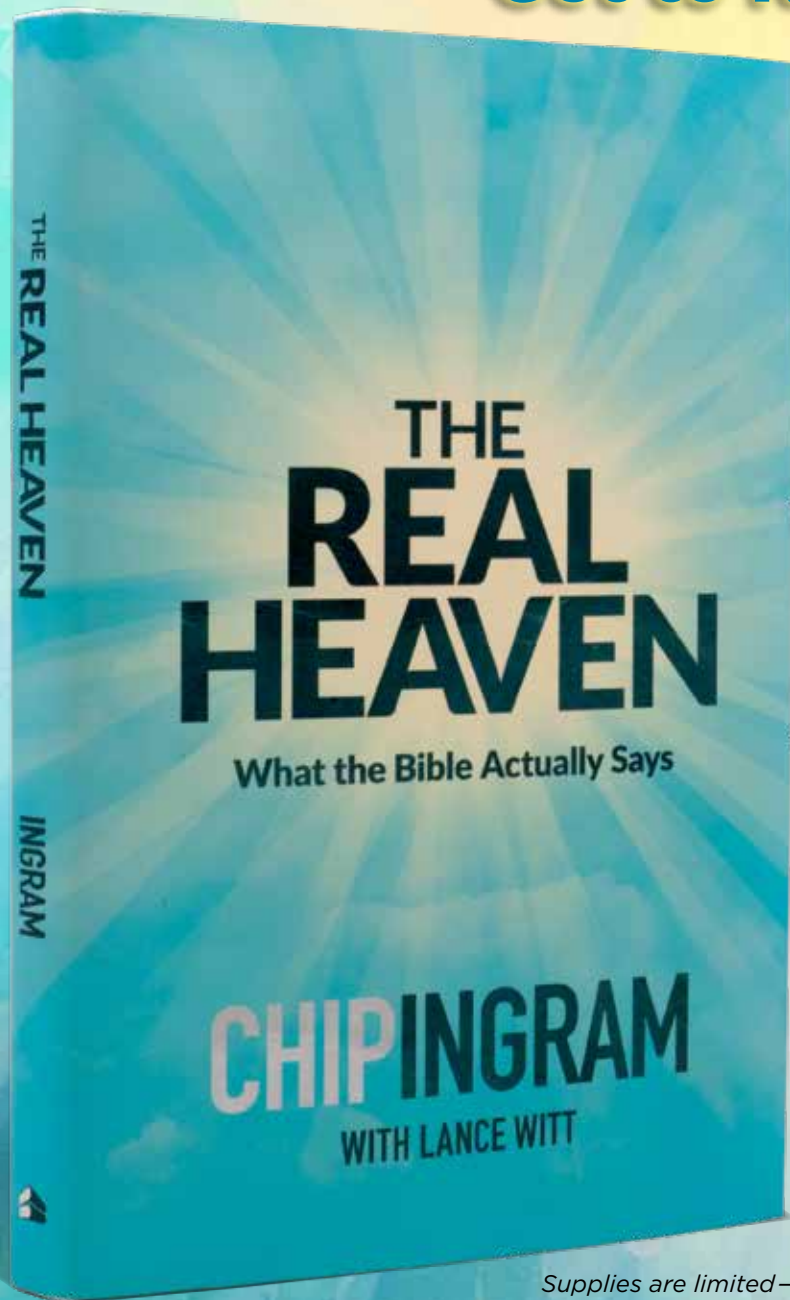
I will remember my song in the night; I will meditate with my heart, and my spirit ponders.

Psalms 77:6 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for rescuing me. I remember all the ways You have been my deliverer. I trust in You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Get to Know the Real Heaven



What comes to mind when you think of Heaven? Clouds? Harps? Angels? Singing? Now, honestly, does that really sound like a great way to spend eternity? The good news is that's NOT what Heaven is like. And when you discover what really awaits you there, it will radically change your view of your future and Heaven.

Join Chip Ingram in his book *The Real Heaven* as he reveals:

- ◆ What our heavenly home will be like
- ◆ What we'll do there
- ◆ What we'll experience
- ◆ How to prepare for eternity today

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The sons of Ephraim were archers equipped with bows, yet they turned back on the day of battle. They did not keep the covenant of God and refused to walk in His law; they forgot His deeds and His miracles.

Psalms 78:9–11 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, I commit these challenges to You: _____. Give me courage and faith. I believe You for victory. In Jesus' name, amen.

What area of your life do you need courage to face?

Turning Back

BIBLE READING: PSALM 78

The men of Ephraim were trained for battle and equipped with all the resources they needed. Despite this preparation, they turned back without even engaging the enemy.

The sad thing was that they had everything they needed to succeed. God had given them His promises. They could even look back at their experiences and realize He had been faithful in the past. They could depend on Him to keep His Word. But they chose to ignore this spiritual reality.

The Bible tells us that God had given them His covenant, but they did not keep it. He had given them His Word, but they refused to believe it. They even forgot all the things that He had done for them, including mighty miracles. They turned aside, forgot the promises of God, forgot His deeds in the past, and went their own way.

God wanted future generations to learn from their example and instead learn to walk in faith and face any situation with confidence in Him. We may find ourselves discouraged and feeling hopeless. We may be tired or feel outnumbered.

Today, remember to trust in God. Don't be dominated by fear or expect defeat. Face opposition with confidence. Always remember that God is with you. Stay confident in Him. Don't turn back. Always move forward. Trust Him.

The Meaning of Life

BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 11

The Bible reminds us of basic facts. Simply, all of us alike face this fate. We all have opportunities to develop these gifts, talents, and resources. In the process, we all have choices.

We tend to focus on our immediate needs and circumstances. This leads to the process of fostering short-term pleasures and eliminating short-term problems.

The idea of developing a longer-term perspective on life is difficult, particularly when we are so dominated by our immediate needs and opportunities. The practical approach seems to be a short-term focus, but in reality, it is the longer-term perspective that is not only more practical but also more beneficial. This is the perspective that deals with issues over the longer term of our lives and leads to benefits that we will enjoy more often and deals with, and even eliminates, longer-term problems.

The Bible encourages us to approach life as a long-term investment. We may think that short-term thinking solves the most problems and benefits us the most. But the problem with this kind of thinking is that we inevitably face a series of short-term problems. Having addressed them once, we inevitably will face them—or other similar issues—again very soon.

Ask God to help you focus on pleasing Him. Invest the resources and opportunities He has given you. Ask God to give you His perspective on life. We have choices. Gain His perspective on how you should live and the choices you should make.

How can you remember to keep a long-term perspective on life?

Riches do not benefit on the day of wrath, but righteousness rescues from death.

Proverbs 11:4 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, I commit my life to You. Thank You for giving me meaning and purpose. In Jesus' name, amen.

Bless the LORD, O my soul...forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction...Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Psalms 103:1-5 NKJV

PRAYER:

Father, I believe You for health. Nothing is too difficult for You. In Jesus' name, amen.

What godly benefits are you most thankful for today?

Complete Healing

BIBLE READING: PSALM 103

David's heart overflowed with thanks and praise. When he realized all God had done for him, he could not help but bless His holy name! David knew that God does not just heal some of our diseases. He heals all of them! God does not just forgive some iniquities, but all of them!

We do not serve a God who does things halfway. He is a God of complete and total healing, forgiveness, and power! And nothing is too difficult for Him.

No matter what we have done, or what problems we might have, we need to think about what God has done in our lives. We need to meditate on His greatness and His power. We need to remember that He is ready to forgive us. He is ready to take away all our burdens.

If we have any sickness, addictions, or infirmities, we can cry out to God. He is the God who "heals all your diseases." He is available to redeem our lives from destruction, crown us with lovingkindness and tender mercies, and satisfy our mouths with good things. And He is ready to renew our lives so that our youth is renewed like the eagles.

He is ready to hear our prayer, so may we call on Him with boldness and confidence. May we not forget to give Him the praise that is due His name. He is worthy!

Gullible

BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 14

Every day we are assaulted with some form of deception: emails or text messages with deceptive claims, and plausible stories concocted in attempts to accomplish something illegal, immoral, or unbiblical.

Others have been deceived into buying products that sound too good to be true, following politicians with views that seem credible, and believing teachers who promise results that sound desirable but don't work and lead them astray. This is why we need to heed the words of the Bible, be prudent, and not simply believe everything we hear.

The Bible encourages us to be careful whom we trust. The information we hear in this world may seem credible. And they may use this information to try to encourage us to buy something, go somewhere, vote for someone, or take some other action.

We need look no further than the example of Adam and Eve who allowed the deceptive words of the serpent to change their attitude about God, define their beliefs, and shape their lives. The consequences could not have been more dramatic.

This is why we need to heed the warnings in the Bible. Realize the dangers of being gullible, trusting people and products without checking their backgrounds, and believing whatever we hear just because it sounds plausible.

Be on guard against deception. Be spiritually sensitive, guided by biblical principles and the discernment of the Spirit.

When have you been tempted not to see if something was from God?

The simple believes every word, but the prudent considers well his steps.

Proverbs 14:15 NKJV

PRAYER:

Father, guide me and give me discernment. In Jesus' name, amen.

The people of Israel shall pitch their tents by their companies, each man in his own camp and each man by his own standard... Thus did the people of Israel; they did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses.

Numbers 1:52–54 ESV

PRAYER:

Father, I seek Your plans and strategies for my life. Help me stay sensitive to Your leading. In Jesus' name, amen.

How are you preparing for your spiritual battles?

Prepared and Ready

BIBLE READING: NUMBERS 1

As he studied the campaigns of Julius Caesar, Napoleon Bonaparte found a major factor that contributed to his success: how the camps of his army were organized.

Napoleon had followed a tradition established years earlier. The Romans had learned the best way to organize camps, so they were prepared for any circumstance. They could go on the offensive or remain in a defensive posture. For hundreds of years, this *preparation* consistently led to protection and victory.

In similar ways, God provided the Israelites with specific instructions about how to set up their camps. Each tribe had a specific role, and everyone had an important assignment. When they followed God's plans, they were successful and safe from attack.

Today is the day each year when we celebrate Flag Day. It is a time to remember how God prepares us for battle and to remember that He has prepared strategies that can give us victory. We can be ready.

You will be assaulted by the enemy. You can be vulnerable if you are not ready! You need the same kind of preparation that characterized those camps of Caesar and ancient Israel: organized, alert, and ready.

If you want to be ready for the battles you will face, surrender your life to Jesus and seek the power of the Holy Spirit. Trust Him to organize your resources and give you winning strategies.

Seek Knowledge

BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 15

The Bible focuses much attention on our motives. Not just what we do but *why* we do it. We demonstrate these motives each day by the things we do.

The Bible tells us some people have a genuine desire to understand. They probe the deeper meaning and seek to grow in their faith.

They demonstrate this commitment by craving knowledge. A companion verse (Proverbs 14:8 NASB) says, "*The wisdom of the sensible is to understand his way, but the foolishness of fools is deceit.*" Many in the world demonstrate the proof of this verse.

These people fundamentally are not interested in knowledge or understanding, but feed on foolishness and gossip. They spend time chasing after speculation, things that really don't matter. They aren't interested in whether something is beneficial, profitable, or even true.

The Bible urges us not to become like these fools. Instead, focus on seeking God. Crave His understanding. Seek to grow in our understanding and knowledge. Care for others and want to do things that encourage others.

These are characteristics in keeping with people who genuinely love God and desire to know more about the world He has made. They seek first His Kingdom and seek to be good stewards of the resources they have been given. They aren't obsessed with silliness or trivial interests but genuinely seek to fulfill their God-given potential and be good witnesses for Him.

How are you seeking knowledge and understanding?

The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge, but the mouth of fools feeds on foolishness.

Proverbs 15:14 NKJV

PRAYER:

Father, deliver me from foolishness. Give me wisdom, and help my life to be pleasing to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

After five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders...they brought charges against Paul to the governor. After Paul had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him [...] The Jews also joined in the attack.

Acts 24:1–2, 9 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, open doors for me to share the Gospel. Thank You for all You have done. Use me to impact others. I trust You. In Jesus' name, amen.

What opportunities is God giving you to witness?

Opportunities

BIBLE READING: ACTS 24

The case seemed solid. It seemed clear that Paul was guilty based on evidence confirmed by credible witnesses. At the same time, Paul seemed to be without defense. What a hopeless scenario this seems to have been!

In his flesh, Paul might have been afraid or worried and given up. Instead, we know that he gave a bold, clear, decisive defense. He rebutted every charge.

The most important part of this development was that this presented him with the *opportunity* to tell the Gospel, give his testimony, and witness what had happened to him. Because of the importance given to his case, his audience included the highest-ranking people in the nation.

Every word he spoke had the opportunity to resonate in the hearts and minds of these people. This process continued in every trial he faced. Every time he faced an accusation or simply had a conversation, he had an opportunity to testify and witness.

Each of us can find ourselves in similar circumstances. Learning from Paul, we must not give up when we are outnumbered, but continue trusting God. Look to Him to give us opportunities to serve Him.

What opportunities has God given you? On the surface, these may seem like trials and tests. But remember that each situation presents an opportunity to witness for Him and testify about His work in your life. Always remember that He is with you.

Healed by His Stripes

BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 53

The Bible says that God desires to heal us and that He desires that we be in health and prosper. Anything is possible with Him (Mark 9:23). The Bible even declares that He suffered with stripes (beatings). His stripes provide spiritual healing for us.

The Bible gives us a complete picture of all that Jesus means to us. He died a violent death and suffered for us. He was not welcomed by the religious community or the religious leaders. He was despised and rejected. And in the process, He was scourged and killed for us.

As we go through life, people may disappoint us or fall short of our expectations. We will discover flaws in our friends and family. People we have trusted may do things we do not understand. Politicians and business leaders will reveal their frailties. But we always can depend on Jesus. He seeks to protect and guide us. And we can believe Him for healing.

Today, if you have a need, you can turn to Jesus in faith. Believe Him for any needs you have. He will not disappoint you. He has experienced pain. He can relate to the challenges you experience, and He knows the kinds of things you are going through. He is ready to comfort and heal You. He is your Messiah.

Trust Him, and believe His promise of healing. That is His desire for You.

Where do you need a healing touch from Jesus?

He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief [...] He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.

Isaiah 53:3, 5 NKJV

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for sending Jesus to be my Savior. Thank You that by His stripes I am healed. I claim Your complete healing. In Jesus' name, amen.

*There we saw the giants
(the descendants of
Anak came from the
giants); and we were like
grasshoppers in our own
sight, and so we were in
their sight.*

Numbers 13:33 NKJV

PRAYER:

Father, I commit
these matters to You:
_____. Thank You for
the answer. I believe all
things are possible with
You. In Jesus' name,
amen.

What impossible situation are you praying about right now?

Perspectives

BIBLE READING: NUMBERS 13

The story is told of a shoe factory that sent two scouts to a region to evaluate prospects. One reported, "Situation hopeless. No one wants to wear shoes." The other wrote back, "Glorious business opportunity. They have no shoes."

The principle was simple: One person saw an impossible situation while the other saw potential. One was filled with doubt. The other, with faith and hope.

This story illustrates how our attitude changes the way we look at life. Those with a negative attitude expect defeat and see reasons for failure. Projects may not just seem challenging but impossible. But it is possible to look at these same problems and see opportunities.

The Bible describes a similar scouting expedition when Moses sent 12 men to search out the Promised Land. One group saw nothing but problems. But two men, Caleb and Joshua, had an entirely different attitude and believed they could be victorious.

All of us face challenges and crises that have no solutions, adversaries that cannot seem to be defeated, giants that have every advantage, or weaknesses that cannot seem to be overcome.

The Bible encourages us to have faith no matter the obstacle. Believe that, with God's help, we can defeat any giant. He can heal *any* sickness, open blind eyes, and restore broken relationships. God can provide the answers we need—even for what seems impossible.

Honey from the Rock

BIBLE READING: PSALM 81

The Bible assures us that God stands by our side, always ready to help. But if we want His maximum blessings, we need to do two things: *listen to Him* and walk in His ways.

These directions are important! The Bible reminds us that many believers are dominated by their own pleasures. But a change takes place when we become aggressive listeners and pay careful attention to God's Word.

Listening gives us greater sensitivity to God. It means being focused on Him, desiring to do His will, being eager to know His Word, and having a heart of obedience. Be in tune with His Spirit, desire to know and obey His Word. Be consumed with love for God.

If we do these things, He *promised* to free us from fear, anxiety, and worry, and meet our needs *abundantly*. He will provide for us and satisfy us "*with honey from the rock*."

How many of us see the rocks of life and conclude that nothing good can come from them? God says that He will bring satisfaction from these very rocks. But we need to have lives consumed by His presence. Be sensitive to His Spirit. Be filled with a desire to please Him.

Today, ask God to help you be a better listener. Surrender your life anew to Him. Seek to walk in His ways. Trust Him. Depend on Him for protection, provision, and *satisfaction*.

How can you improve your listening skills?

*Oh, that My people
would listen to Me, that
Israel would walk in
My ways! I would soon
subdue their enemies
[...] with honey from
the rock I would have
satisfied you.*

Psalm 81:13–16 NKJV

PRAYER:

Father, help me to hear
from You as I read Your
Word. Lead me by Your
Spirit. I trust You. In
Jesus' name, amen.

Whom have I in heaven but You? And I have no delight or desire on earth besides You. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the Rock and firm Strength of my heart and my Portion forever.

Psalms 73:25–26 AMPC

PRAYER:

Father, give me a passion for evangelism and a hunger to reach souls for Christ. In Jesus' name, amen.

How committed are you to sharing the Gospel?

Strength of My Heart

BIBLE READING: PSALM 73

By 1815, Francis Asbury was among the best-known people in America. He earned this recognition through his tireless efforts to reach souls for Christ. He transformed the nation with his zeal for evangelism.

One of the important strategies Asbury developed was the camp meeting. The first recorded such meeting in America was held in Cane Ridge, Kentucky, in 1801. This was attended by more than 25,000 people. During this meeting, hundreds fell under the mighty power of God.

This and other meetings sparked a revival movement. By 1821, nearly 1,000 camp meetings were held each year among the Methodists alone.

Asbury tirelessly traveled the length of America on horseback, crossing the Allegheny Mountains 60 times. He traveled on rocky paths and muddy roads, often threatened by robbers. When plagued by nagging illnesses and hunger, he continued to press on.

Shortly before he died, Asbury paraphrased Psalm 73, writing God “was the strength of my heart and my portion forever!” He gave his life, so a nation could know God.

Consider the example of Francis Asbury. Ask yourself whether God is the strength of your heart. Do you really trust Him? What impact are you making on the world? What will be your legacy? Dedicate your time, talents, and treasures to God. Allow Him to use you to reach people with the Gospel.

Generosity

BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 11

The Bible teaches that life is governed by principles. Some of these principles are in line with commonsense human thinking, with benefits and expectations that are in line with everyday life. But there are times when our human tendencies and expectations are wrong in deceptive ways.

The Bible teaches that the key to success and true wealth comes from giving away, not collecting or hoarding. We are challenged to consider the consequences of increasing the things we own (Ecclesiastes 5:11).

Jesus taught that it was through giving that we gain: “Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over” (Luke 6:38).

Proverbs addresses this principle by teaching about generosity. The Bible says that those who are blessed and prosper are characterized by generosity. They are *delighted* to give.

Further, those who share what they have find themselves blessed by others. They realize they have been blessed, so they can be a blessing. In contrast, those who hoard what they have been given find themselves selfish and self-centered. They fail to follow God’s blueprint for success and the principles He established.

Ask God to help you be a generous person, and develop the habit of being generous with the resources He has given you. Sow into His Kingdom and into the lives of others.

How can you be generous with what God’s given you this week?

A generous person will be prosperous, and one who gives others plenty of water will himself be given plenty.

Proverbs 11:25 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for all You have given me. Help me be a generous person, ready to give to others. In Jesus’ name, amen.

*The LORD is my light
and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?*

Psalms 27:1 ESV

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for all
You have done for me.
Help me be a shining
light for You. I trust
You. In Jesus' name,
amen.

Reflect on all that God means to you.

What God Means to Me

BIBLE READING: PSALM 27

This psalm celebrates all God meant to David. He realized that God was his light, giving him direction and perspective. David knew God had saved him and prepared the way before him. He gave David freedom from fear and poverty, mistakes, and deceptions. God gave him the attitude he needed to prosper in abundant ways.

David realized that God shows us what to do and gives us the power and ability to do it. David knew, *“The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”* (v. 1). The Lord is a fortified place where he could be safe against any foe.

When he was surrounded by enemies, David realized that he had no reason to fear. He could not depend on others, but he could trust completely in God. Our faith and confidence come in the face of the war against us. Then we can help others to gain confidence to win their wars and win our wars together.

All these things were what God meant to David. He had come to depend on Him. This serves as an inspiration for all the things God can mean to us.

Today, look to God and let Him be your light and salvation. Allow Him to take away your fears. Take refuge in Him. Be confident in Him. Realize that in every situation, He is your salvation!

Investigation

BIBLE READING: DEUTERONOMY 17

For many, Sherlock Holmes has been an inspiration even though he was a fictional character invented by Arthur Conan Doyle. Through his creation of Holmes, Doyle, a physician, introduced many new ways of approaching police work.

Even as a fictional character, Holmes was the first to use ballistics and detect poisons. He examined the evidence and looked for clues even in places that may not have seemed obvious. Holmes stressed the importance of *observation* and looking beyond what appeared on the surface. He dug deep into the background.

In similar ways, the Bible encourages us not to go through life blindly, but to pay attention. Don't just listen to rumors or speculation, but investigate matters thoroughly. This was a central feature of the Law, where God stressed that conclusions were not to be finalized without ample evidence.

They were to *“investigate the matter thoroughly.”* God encourages us to study our own hearts and minds, our habits and actions. We are to test what we do and *“examine our ways”* (Lamentations 3:40 NKJV).

Throughout this process, we are called to stay focused on God, trust His Word, pray that He would open our eyes (Psalm 119:18), and diligently study His Word (2 Timothy 2:15).

Seek to be a diligent student of God's Word. Be sensitive to the Spirit's leading. Don't jump to conclusions, but practice investigating matters *thoroughly*.

What do you need to spend time investigating?

*When you hear about it,
investigate the matter
thoroughly.*

Deuteronomy 17:4 NLT

PRAYER:

Father, I commit
these matters to You:
_____. Give me
insight into the answer.
In Jesus' name, amen.

Fear of the LORD teaches wisdom; humility precedes honor.

Proverbs 15:33 NLT

PRAYER:

Father, I seek to honor You with my life. Thank You for teaching me to be wise. I worship You. In Jesus' name, amen.

In what area do you need God's wisdom today?

Training to be Wise

BIBLE READING: PROVERBS 15

The Bible makes it clear: “*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom*” (Proverbs 9:10 NKJV). This is a holy reverence, an attitude of humility. We don’t begin by acquiring information. We gain biblical wisdom when we have the right attitude and when we humble ourselves before Him.

Moffatt’s translation of this verse shows that “*reverence*” for the Lord is more than the beginning of wisdom: “*Reverence for the eternal trains men to be wise.*” Thus, this reverence trains us to be wise.

Through this reverence, we become equipped to become wise. It gives us the tools and resources to be wise, including the right attitude. It leads us into a lifestyle through which we become wise. It provides a platform for wise living.

Reverence for God means thinking of Him first and humbling ourselves before Him. It means that we continue to hold everything we do before Him and submit to Him continually. Unfortunately, many people think of themselves first. They are self-centered and selfish. They do not honor Him.

The Bible teaches that wisdom and favor come through reverence for God and willingness to submit our will to do His will. Seek to put these principles into practice. Learn the importance of reverence for God. Seek Him. Cooperate with Him. Ask Him to *train* you to be wise.

Know the Lord

BIBLE READING: EZEKIEL 5

It was a message God frequently asked the prophet Ezekiel to deliver to His people. This verse is the first of more than 20 references in the book of Ezekiel in which God wanted it known that He had spoken or acted.

This was a message that demonstrated that God wanted people to know about Him. Looking ahead, four times in chapter six, God told how He would act, so “*they shall know that I am the LORD*” (vs. 7, 10, 13, 14). He returned to this theme throughout the book.

The message was clear: God wanted His people to be aware of His presence, His concern, His standards, and His desire that they know Him.

This is still a priority for God. The Bible makes clear that He wants us to be sensitive to His presence. He is the Sovereign God. He cares about us and has a plan for our lives. He does not want us to drift into sin, disobey Him, or follow the wickedness and ungodliness in the world. And He doesn’t want us to be ignorant. He wants us to know Him, trust Him, and serve Him.

Today, remember that God wants to have a *personal* relationship with you. Yes, read and study His Word. But don’t stop there. He wants to make it a priority for you to know Him, not just to know about Him—to know Him personally and intimately.

How has God made it clear that He is your Lord?

I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted; and they shall know that I the LORD have spoken it in my zeal, when I have accomplished my fury in them.

Ezekiel 5:13 KJV

PRAYER:

Father, reveal Your purposes for me. Help me recognize Your leading and live according to Your Word. In Jesus' name, amen.

“What I am doing, you do not realize right now, but you will understand later.” Peter said to Him, “Never shall You wash my feet!” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no place with Me.”

John 13:7–8 NASB

PRAYER:

Father, give me Your perspective on the events of my life. Guide me. I trust in You. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Reflect on puzzling circumstances.

Better Understanding

BIBLE READING: JOHN 13

The son of slaves, Charles Albert Tindley taught himself to read and write and earned a divinity degree through a correspondence course. He worked as a janitor at Calvary Methodist Church in Philadelphia while attending night school, and in 1902, he became the pastor of that same church. At the time of his death, that church had 12,500 members.

Tindley knew that we all go through uncertainties and problems, but God has everything under control. In 1905, he wrote a hymn about what God had taught him, “We’ll Understand It Better By and By.”

We may be tossed and driven “on the restless sea of time,” but someday, “when the mists have rolled away, we will understand it better by and by.” He knew that someday “when the saints of God are gathered home, we’ll tell the story of how we’ve overcome.”

Meanwhile, on our earthly journeys, we need to learn to trust God and His Word. We may encounter trials, but we need to have faith that God will guide us. We may be tested and face temptations and hidden snares, but eventually God will reveal the purpose of every situation we face.

You may have questions and face uncertainties that may not make sense. But be confident that God knows what you are going through. Commit your life to Him. Trust Him and continue to obey and serve Him. You will understand everything by and by.

Preparing

BIBLE READING: 1 CHRONICLES 22

David, apparently without prompting, told Nathan the prophet that he wanted to build a house for God, but God said that David was not to build His house. Instead, this honor was to go to his son Solomon (1 Chronicles 17:1–15).

David could have reacted in many ways. He could have become bitter or frustrated. However, he realized there still were ways in which he could contribute to building the temple. He realized he still could guide the construction of the temple.

So what could he do? He could prepare. He would do everything he could to make sure Solomon was ready for the assignment. The Bible details the many ways David prepared the way. He prepared Solomon and gave him detailed directions. He prepared the resources and plans, the personnel, and the organizational strategy.

When we look at the completed temple, we can focus our attention on Solomon. He could not have completed this work if it had not been for the preparation and contributions of his father.

We need to realize the importance of preparation in the work of God. The one who does the preparation is vital to the completion of the work. Think about how many people participate in this kind of preparation.

Today, remember that God has given you an important part to play in His Kingdom. Do your work with excellence as unto the Lord.

What challenges lie ahead for you this week?

“Solomon my son is young and inexperienced, and the house that is to be built for the Lord must be exceedingly magnificent, of fame and glory throughout all lands. I will therefore make preparation for it.”

1 Chronicles 22:5 ESV

PRAYER:

Father, help me be prepared for the challenges ahead. Give me direction, and the skills, plans, and resources I need. In Jesus’ name, amen.

As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out.

Joshua 15:63 NKJV

PRAYER:

Father, I believe Your promises are true for me. Help me go forward in faith confidently. Thank You for giving me victory. In Jesus' name, amen.

In what area of your life are you seeking God for victory?

Victory Blocks

BIBLE READING: JOSHUA 15

Many people don't realize, or believe, that God desires to bless them, give them victory, and provide health and healing. They may have heard His promises, but for whatever reason, simply don't believe they could be true for them. Filled with doubt, many fail to obey His Word or follow the plans that were prepared for them.

Here, for example, God called His people to move forward in faith, drive out the people who dwelled in the land, and realize that He already had given the land to them. But they simply could not drive out these people. Why? They accepted defeat and could not accept that His promises were true for them. They accepted less than His blessings for them.

In similar ways, many Christians may believe in God, attend church, read the Bible, pray, and have heard about God's promises. Yet many people do not seem to be able to achieve victory. Faced with the absence of victory, we can be tempted to compromise or accept less than God has prepared for us.

Remember that there are many reasons to doubt. People around you may be ready to deceive and mislead you or cause you to feel defeated or discouraged. Ask God to help you recognize deception. But always trust Him. Always believe in Him for success. Always believe His Word is true for you.

Strong vs. Weak

BIBLE READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 2

We often think of Paul as articulate and confident, a powerful writer. However, he confessed to the Corinthians that he struggled in ways that may have been surprising. He admitted that he came to them in *weakness, fear, and trembling*. As J.B. Phillips translates this verse, Paul did not feel strong but was *nervous* and *shaky*.

We can hardly picture a person being less secure. Paul spoke about weakness throughout his letters to the Corinthians. Paul wanted them to learn that we draw strength from the Lord. He can give us whatever we need.

He told them, "*God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty*" (1 Corinthians 1:27). He wrote that he could be strong by trusting in God (1 Corinthians 4:10). He told them, "*To the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak*" (1 Corinthians 9:19–22). He had come to recognize that when he was weak, he could draw on God's strength.

When we feel weak or inadequate, we need to turn to God, remembering that God can provide whatever we need, just as He did for people in Bible times, like Paul. Today, if you recognize weaknesses, don't give up, but turn to God. He is with you. Ask Him in faith for whatever you need. Trust in Him.

What weaknesses are you bringing to God today?

I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.

1 Corinthians 2:3 NKJV

PRAYER:

Father, I realize my weaknesses are opportunities to trust You. Thank You that when I am weak in myself, I am strong in You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished.

Deuteronomy 34:7 NKJV

PRAYER:

Father, I believe
You will give me the
strength I need. I
depend on You. In
Jesus' name, amen.

Write a prayer asking God to give you strength to serve Him today.

A Life of Vigor

BIBLE READING: DEUTERONOMY 34

Moses had lived a full life. He had spoken with God and performed many supernatural deeds. God had used him to deliver His people and led them through challenging circumstances. His body may have aged, but God had renewed his strength and vision. Through his example, Moses demonstrated the kind of renewal possible for any child of God.

As he aged, Moses would be expected to slow down. In modern times, we would expect him to retire. But Moses remained vigorous, healthy, and energetic even at the end of his life. Even in his final days, he was still performing his God-given calling and living life to the full.

Moses had physical strength and flowed with life and abundance. He was not weak, sickly, or limited, but engaged in the full range of human activity. He lived a satisfied life that was not diminished by age or aging.

Remember you can call on God for whatever situations you face at any time in life. You can seek Him for the resources and wisdom you need. Just as He did for Moses, He can provide for you. Your physical strength may be diminished, but He still can provide whatever you need.

You don't have to retire from life. Trust Him to give you energy, wisdom, and whatever else you need.



Right Place, Right Time

A miraculous call from one of our prayer ministers stopped a Chicago man from his plan to commit murder.

It was just an ordinary day at our International Prayer Center when Patricia, one of our prayer ministers, attempted to call an Inspiration partner in Chicago to ask if he needed prayer for anything.

Amazed by God's timing, the man confessed, "Yes, I *desperately* need prayer. My brother-in-law has been abusing my sister and her children, and I'm so angry that I'm on my way to kill him!"

Patricia prayed for the man and asked God to deliver his sister and her family from the domestic violence. "After we prayed, his heart was calmed," she said.

Then the man asked in

bewilderment, "How did you get this telephone number to call me?" Patricia explained that the International Prayer Center must have received his number when he previously called for prayer.

The astonished man informed her, "You called me on my brand-new cell phone, which I just purchased this morning. It was *impossible* for me to have ever called from this number!"

This intervention from the Lord may have been humanly impossible, but with God *all things are possible!* This man could see that Patricia's timely call was a miracle from God, meant to stop him from carrying out violence. ❖

Thanks to your financial seeds, God is using our prayer ministers to touch lives with His love and miracles. Let them pray for YOUR breakthrough as well!

US / CAN / CAR:
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Keys to Abundant Life

Don't miss His amazing promises of grace and favor!

Your Open Door for Blessings

Because each day is a gift from God, we should see it as an open door of grace and favor from Him. The Bible says in Psalm 84:

For the LORD God is a Sun and Shield; the LORD bestows [present] grace and favor and [future] glory (honor, splendor, and heavenly bliss)! No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly (v. 11 AMPC).

What an amazing promise God has given us! The Lord “bestows [present] grace and favor.” That means His grace and favor are tools for us today to open doors of opportunity for our lives

tomorrow...hallelujah! There's a reason we should find joy and contentment in our lives: He's doing His work in us to lead us to His extraordinary victory.

And there's an even greater promise if we look closely. This verse says that we have the promise of His overwhelming goodness in the future when we need it again. His opportunities are infinite and so are His grace and favor for every season. Whenever we feel defeated and discouraged...when we feel that we've missed our opportunity for an abundant life, God gives us a new chance for something amazing to happen.

Proverbs 4:18 says, “*The path of the [uncompromisingly] just and righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines more and more [brighter and clearer] until [it reaches its full strength and glory in] the perfect day [to be prepared]*” (AMPC).

That means we have a clear direction to God's grace in our lives. We have that promise in every season because of His love for us.

Remember, a stagnant, mediocre life has never been God's plan for you. He's never destined you for failure or disappointment, no matter what your circumstances say currently.

Neither does He want you repeating the same mistakes day after day. Your disappointments have long been buried in the sea of forgetfulness. And your mistakes have been long forgiven through His great mercy. God is doing something powerful in you right now!

Don't ever think that you're destined to remain on a treadmill of sorrows. He's given you the capability to learn from your past regrets and move forward into His promises.

Make a decision to be joyful no matter the circumstances, and then you will always be grateful for the person God made you to be. Appreciate the wonderful opportunity of His life in you. Live it to the fullest, and then enjoy every part of what He's doing in you and through you today! ❖

Scriptures to meditate on this month:



Week One

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Ephesians 2:8–9 NKJV



Week Two

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:16 NKJV



Week Three

He who earnestly seeks good finds favor, But trouble will come to him who seeks evil.

Proverbs 11:27 NKJV



Week Four

For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous; with favor You will surround him as with a shield.

Psalms 5:12 NKJV



EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED!

After taking a step of faith, Angela received a new job, restored family relationships, and the salvation of her lost loved ones.

Angela was desperate for a supernatural breakthrough from God. "I had no job, no income, and no savings," she explains. "Unless the Lord intervened, I had no other hope left."

Right at her lowest point, Angela happened to watch an Inspiration Ministries broadcast about sowing for her harvest. "Although \$100 was all the money I had left in the world, I was compelled by the Lord to sow a financial seed into the Good Ground of Inspiration Ministries," she remembers.

Soon things changed for

Angela: "Thank you, Inspiration Ministries," she wrote. "Because I obediently planted a seed into His Kingdom, God greatly blessed me!"

The blessings were many: "First, I began a new job," she reports. "Then much-needed restoration began to take place within my family. Many of my unsaved family members have now given their hearts to Christ!"

How does Angela explain the turnaround in her life? God's favor! She writes: "Everything in my life has changed, and God has given me favor I've never had before!" ❖

What God did for this Inspiration partner, He can do for YOU!

Visit inspiration.org/souls today to sow a seed for souls, or send your prayer request to our International Prayer Center at inspiration.org/prayer.



A Merry Heart...

does good, like medicine. – Proverbs 17:22

A little girl finally got to attend a wedding for the first time. While in the church, the girl asked her mother: "Why is the bride dressed in white?"

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

After a little bit, the girl looked up at her mother and said: "But why is the groom wearing black?"



The teacher asked children to draw a story from the Bible. Tommy was drawing a picture of an airplane. Ah, a cute mistake on the flight into Egypt, she thought. She asked, "Who's in the plane?"

Tommy said that's "Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus."

The teacher asked, "Who's in the front seat?"

"Oh, that's Pontius, he's the pilot."

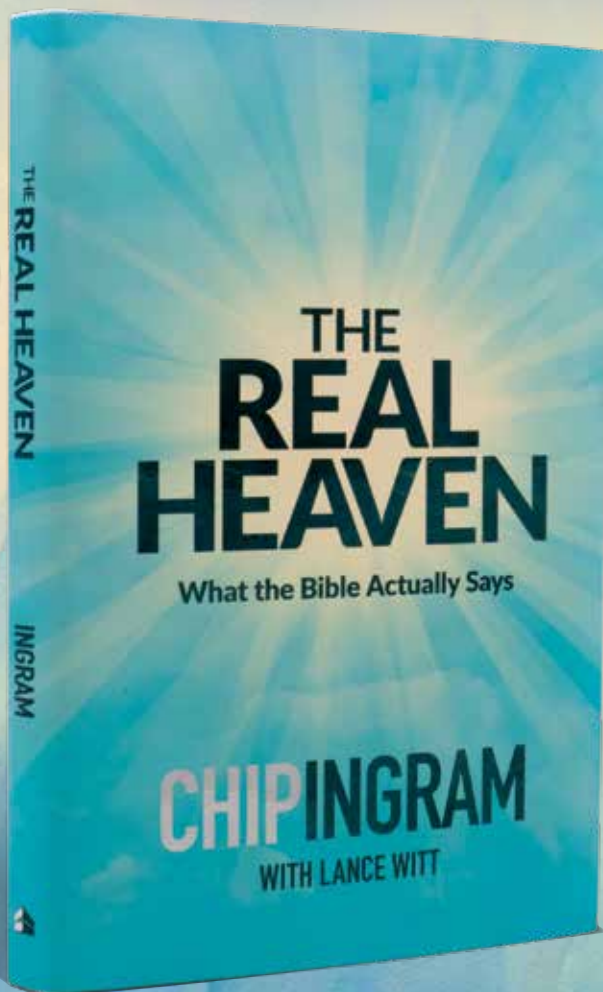


Got some clean, Christian humor you'd like to share?

Email it to: MerryHeart@inspiration.org

What's Heaven Really Like?

Imagine all the best things of life here on earth. Now, if possible, expand that a million times. Better than anything you've experienced so far. Now, imagine living in that kind of environment forever. No struggle. No disease. No pain. No death. No injustice. No evil. Just the best of the best of the best—on spiritual steroids. That's Heaven.



Join Chip Ingram in *The Real Heaven: What the Bible Actually Says* as he digs into the Scriptures, separates myth from reality...and gives us a glimpse of the amazing eternity that awaits us with Jesus.

*See page 28 for details,
and act quickly—
supplies are limited!*