

**GATEWAY DEVOTIONAL**  
**September 2017**

**GATEWAY DEVOTIONAL**  
**REFLECTIONS OF CHRIST**

**A Daily Devotional and Prayer Journal**



**And we, who with unveiled  
faces all reflect the Lord's glory,  
are being transformed into His likeness with  
ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.  
II Corinthians 3: 18.**

# GATEWAY DEVOTIONAL AND PRAYER JOURNAL

SEPTEMBER 2017

## **John 5: 37-40-**

*“And the Father who sent Me has Himself testified concerning Me. You have never heard His voice nor seen His form, nor does His Word dwell in you, for you do not believe the One He sent. You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about Me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.”*

## **II Timothy 2: 15-**

*“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”*

## **Psalms 119: 105-**

*“Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.”*

## SEPTEMBER 1—Highest or Most High God

**READ:** Luke 1: 30-35, 76; Daniel 4: 1-3, 17; Psalm 7: 17

**REFLECT:** Psalm 47: 2—

*“Clap your hands all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy.  
How awesome is the Lord Most High, the great King over all the earth!  
He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet. He chose our inheritance for us,  
the pride of Jacob, whom He loved.”*

In the days shortly before the birth of Christ, Zecharias, a priest from the line of Abijah, was serving in the Temple in Jerusalem “*when the angel of the Lord visited him*”, and told him that he and his wife would have a child who would be a prophet born to “*make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*” Luke 1: 5-17. Both he and his wife were quite aged, but believed that, with the Sovereign God, all things are possible. They knew that this child would be one who would serve the **Lord Most High**, but little did they know that their son’s service would be to God in the flesh, Jesus Christ the **Highest**. This child born to Zecharias and his wife Elizabeth would be John the Baptist, the one in the “*power of Elijah*” who would go before the Messiah, preparing a way for Him, by calling all to repentance and salvation. At the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, John would recognize Jesus as...“*the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world*”, and would also baptize Him, witnessing the Holy Spirit inbuing Jesus with the power to begin His ministry. Luke 1: 17; John 1: 29-30; Mark 1: 9-11. At John the Baptist’s birth, Zecharias was visited by the Holy Spirit and he prophesied, saying, “*Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us, in the house of His servant David, ...and you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest:...*” Luke 1: 68, 76. Earlier, the angel Gabriel had visited Jesus’ mother-to-be, Mary, and told her that her Son Jesus would be “*Son of the Highest.*”

So, these references to “*the Highest*” in the New Testament are a statement proclaiming Christ’s deity. All the references to the “*Most High*” or the “*Highest*” in the Old Testament were names for the Sovereign God, the maker of heaven and earth. In Luke, John the Baptist is declared to be “*the prophet of the Highest*”, and Mary’s child is the “*Son of the Highest*”, so, in essence God and the child born to Mary were One in the same. Jesus was the One and Only God-Man, God in the flesh—the **Highest or Most High God**. Reflecting upon the Luke passage, let us never forget that the Most High God, the maker of heaven and earth is, indeed, the One who loved us so much that He took upon Himself the flesh of man and came to dwell among us and become Our Savior. The Sovereign God, the Highest—Jesus Christ died upon a cross and then arose from the dead to save us from our sin. Praise the Highest, our Most High God!

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that Jesus did not consider His deity anything, but humbled Himself and took on human flesh to come to earth and complete Your will for my salvation. Thank You, Most High God, You are the Highest! In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Psalm 47: 1-9; 83: 18; Deuteronomy 32: 8.

## SEPTEMBER 2—He Whose Love Endures Forever

**READ:** Psalm 136: 1-26 (NIV)

**REFLECT:** Psalm 136 is a psalm or song of thanksgiving and praise. The phrase, “*His love endures forever*” is repeated twenty-six times in this Psalm. Many other versions say, “*His mercy endures forever.*” What better phrase to repeat than one that speaks of God’s unending, everlasting love and mercy!

Verses 1-3 give thanks to God for who He is. Unlike the Pharisees who gave thanks for their own righteousness (Luke 18: 10-14), the Psalmist gives thanks to God for who He is. Give thanks to God, not just because what He does for us is good, but give thanks because He *is* good and because His love and mercy *will* abound forever!

Verses 4-9 praise God as our Creator. God alone does great wonders. For example, God separated earth and water, thus creating a place for man to live. He was merciful then; and, He is merciful today. Once again, His love and His mercy endure forever, in everything...in every aspect of our lives.

Verses 10-22 give thanks to God as the Savior of Israel. The Psalmist lists instance after instance of God’s love, mercy and provision for Israel. Should we ever think or doubt that such love and mercy still exists today or will ever cease to exist? Of course not! God is the same yesterday, today and forever! Hebrews 13: 8.

Verses 23-24 praise God as our Redeemer. God sent His only Son Jesus to be our Savior—our Lord—our Redeemer! As stated in John 15: 13: “*Greater love has no one than this that he lay down his life for his friends.*” This is the kind of love that endures forever. This is the kind of love that, when experienced by mankind, spontaneously results in praise and thanksgiving to the God who gave us eternal life.

Verses 25-26 give thanks to God for His provision and for being our God. God knows our needs, and He will meet them. The same God who gives food to every creature and notices when a sparrow falls from the sky (Matthew 10: 29-31) is concerned about every aspect of our lives as well. He will never stop showering His love and mercy upon us. Rest in Him knowing that His love and mercy that provide for all your needs will never end in your life! Never, not ever!

**PRAY:** Today in prayer, meditate upon Psalm 136 and make your own list of how God has shown His love and mercy to you in the past and give Him thanks. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Romans 8: 31-39; II Chronicles 5: 13-14; 20: 21; Hebrews 13: 15.

## SEPTEMBER 3—Jehovah Elohim

**READ:** Genesis 2: 4-25; Psalm 19: 1-14; 58: 12

**REFLECT:** Elohim is the Hebrew plural of the word “*El*”, which means “*mighty*” or “*strong*”. Secular references say that “Elohim” refers to any or all gods; and, although Genesis 1: 1 says literally, in Hebrew translation, “*In the beginning God(s) created the heavens and the earth,*” we know from Deuteronomy 6: 4, that the Jews believe there is only one God—“*The Lord our God, the Lord is one.*” Genesis 1: 26 says, “*Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness*”, and most Christians believe this is the first clear mention of the triune God. Further Scripture would support that all three persons of the triune Godhead were present at Creation. Genesis 1: 1-3 says that when God created the heavens and the earth, “*...the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters*”; while, Colossians 1: 16 says, in speaking of Jesus, “*For by Him (Jesus) all things were created that are in heaven and on earth...*” Also, John 1: 1-3, 14 say that Jesus was God, and He was the Word and the Word became flesh and dwelled among us. God “spoke” Creation into being by His Word coming forth...e.g., “*Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light.*” Genesis 1: 3.

Research on Elohim reveals an interesting secular explanation for the use of a plural noun being governed by a singular adjective and/or verb, i.e. the gods form a heavenly assembly where they act as one. But, those of us who are Christ-followers know that all three Persons of the Godhead are fully God in essence and cannot be divided into separate deities. As Paul said in I Corinthians 8: 5-6, “*For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for him: and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.*” Many wonder why Genesis 1: 1 refers to God as just Elohim, while Genesis 2: 4 suddenly refers to Him as Lord God, or Jehovah-Elohim. But further examination demonstrates that a reference to God, or Elohim alone, usually is in reference to His existence as Creator God of all Creation and His relationship with the whole world, the One Who gives life to all living things; while Lord God, or Jehovah-Elohim, as in Genesis 2: 4-25, is in reference to a more personal relationship with His own people, eg. Adam and Eve as His first created pair.

Other examples of this occur in Psalm 19, where verses 1-6 refer to God and His relationship with Creation as a whole, while verses 7-14 speak to His relationship with one soul or individual, His “*servant*” (verse 11) revealing Himself to them more intimately through His Word. Also, in Exodus 6: 3, God tells Moses that He now wants to be known to His “*children Israel*” as Jehovah-Elohim because He is in a covenant relationship with them. If you are a child of God, it doesn’t matter whether He is called Elohim or Jehovah-Elohim. Through the shed blood of Jesus Christ you will always be in a personal, covenant relationship with Him. Praise Him, Jehovah-Elohim Almighty! Lord God Almighty!

**PRAY:** Compose a prayer of thanksgiving today, thanking God that through Jesus He is Jehovah-Elohim to you, a God who is loving, personal and intimate but yet mighty! The Lord Your Creator! In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen. Revelation 4: 11.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Genesis 1: 1, 26; Deuteronomy 6: 4; 10: 17; Exodus 6: 3-4.

## SEPTEMBER 4—Elect One

### Labor Day

**READ:** Isaiah 42: 1; Ephesians 1: 4; Matthew 24: 31; Romans 8: 28-33; 11: 1-7, 28-29

### REFLECT:

Isaiah 42: 1—*“Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put my Spirit in Him;”*

Ephesians 1: 4—*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world.”*

Before the beginning of time, God chose Jesus as His Elect One to bring His wonderful plan of salvation to those He would foreordain, or “*elect*” to save. Election is God’s immutable decree to choose those to whom He would provide eternal life through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. If God had never decided to provide a way through His Elect One, Jesus Christ, for sinners to be reconciled to Him, they would never have had their names recorded in the Book of Life for all eternity. The Book of Life is the record written down in Heaven of those God has chosen to save unto Himself—those to whom He has elected to give eternal life. Revelation 3: 5. Under no circumstances will their names ever be erased. Their election is secure. Ephesians 1: 13-14.

What we need to remember as Christ-followers is that God chose us. We did not choose Him. God’s choice of believers precedes and enables their choice of Him. God chooses **by** Himself and **for** Himself, to His own glory. John 15: 16; I Peter 1: 1-2, 15-16, 18-21. If you belong to Jesus Christ and He is your Lord and Savior, your election to receive eternal life is secure and your name is written in the Book of Life. If God has elected you to be in His family, “*God did not appoint (you) to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.*” I Thessalonians 5: 9-10.

**PRAY:** As Christ-followers, pray this prayer today for fellow brothers and sisters in Christ from II Thessalonians 1: 11-12: “*...we pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*” In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Revelation 3: 5; II Peter 1: 10; John 15: 14-16; Colossians 3: 12-17; Psalm 139: 15-16.

## SEPTEMBER 5—Strength of My Life

**READ:** Psalm 27: 1; 118: 14; I John 4: 4; Nehemiah 8: 10

### REFLECT:

II Corinthians 12: 9-11—

*“And He (Jesus) said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, I am strong.”*

What or who do you rely on? To whom do you turn when you feel like your whole world is crashing in and you don’t have the strength to go on? Do you seek reassurance from your spouse, family or friends? Do you turn to food, work or the social media in order to retreat from your problems? Or, do you turn to God? As a Christ-follower, God should be the strength of our life. He is the only One who will be there for us in good times and in bad. He is the only One who will never leave us or forsake us. Deuteronomy 31: 6.

The Apostle Paul told Christ-followers to always turn to God in times of trial, tribulation, weakness, grief and sorrow in order to find their strength by praising, praying and giving thanks. James 1: 2-4 says, *“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”* And Nehemiah told the people of Israel who were in distress and great sorrow after returning from captivity to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem when they were feeling weak and powerless against the threats of their enemies, *“Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”*

Every Christ-follower needs to submit daily to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit so that we find the Strength of Our Life in God alone. Zechariah 4: 6(b) says, *“Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.”* Each of us needs to understand that He is the One we need to turn to, not only during times of trouble, but in all things. Proverbs 3: 6(a) says, *“...in all y(our) ways acknowledge Him...”* We can seek godly advice and guidance from other Christ-followers, especially those who have gone through similar situations. However, our primary source of strength needs to be God.

**PRAY:** Today meditate upon the chorus to Brian Littrell’s song *“In Christ Alone”* and compose a prayer thanking God for being the Strength in Your Life. *“In Christ alone, I place my trust. And find my glory in the power of the Cross. In every victory, let it be said of me, my source of strength, my source of hope, is Christ alone.”* In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Psalm 27: 1-14; Zechariah 4: 6; Deuteronomy 31: 6-8.

## SEPTEMBER 6—Altogether Lovely

**READ:** Song of Songs 5: 16; Psalm 84: 1-2

**REFLECT:** Song of Songs 5: 16—

*“His mouth is most sweet, yes, it is altogether lovely.  
This is my beloved, and this is my friend...”*

The Song of Songs is a love song or poem written by King Solomon describing the romantic love and relationship that he had with a Shulamite maiden who became his wife. She is thought, by many biblical scholars, to be his first wife and so the interaction between them is a perfect example of the sanctity, fidelity, beauty and sexual intimacy that God intended to be between a husband and wife. However, sin entered the picture and Solomon later took 699 more wives and 300 concubines. Song of Songs is also a typology of what God had in mind for His relationship with the nation Israel, and a prophetic picture of the relationship He desires for Christ and His Bride, the Church. Considering this, the words of the Shulamite maiden say, in essence, that the mouth of the Lord is most sweet, and “...*altogether lovely*”. “*Lovely*” means “*pleasing or beautiful*”, and what could be more pleasing than the mouth of the Lord, because from His mouth comes His Word, the gospel of our salvation. The ugliness of our sin keeps us from being lovely and requires His intervention to cleanse us, forgiving our sin, and sanctifying us by the washing with His Word.

The picture of a man dying on a cross conjures up thoughts of aversion and repulsion. And Isaiah 53 would say that there was nothing in the Lord’s appearance that would make us admire Him, or consider Him to be lovely or pleasing. However, the love that He displayed for us on the Cross transforms His horrific death into a thing of beauty that is beyond comparison. Because of the love of God that poured forth in the blood of Jesus Christ through His death, we can have the filth of our sin wiped away and we, as Christ-followers, become “*altogether lovely*” in God’s eyes, too. Our filthy rags of self-righteousness can be replaced with the pure, righteous and altogether lovely robes of Jesus Christ. When we repent of our sin and accept His free gift of salvation, He comes to live inside of us through the Holy Spirit and we become a tabernacle, or temple, of the Living God. Psalm 84: 1-2 says, “*How lovely is Your tabernacle, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.*” So, when the Holy Spirit takes up residence within you, you become a tabernacle of the Lord, and you become “*lovely*” and a thing of beauty to the Lord. He looks upon you and sees the perfection and loveliness of His Son Jesus Christ. God truly gives us “*beauty for ashes*”. Isaiah 61: 3. He is Altogether Lovely and so worthy of our praise. Give Him the glory that is due Him!

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that You take the ugliness of my sin and turn it into something that is beautiful and “*altogether lovely*” in Your sight. I thank You that Jesus took away my filthy rags and adorned me with His righteous robes because of Your great love so that the Holy Spirit could come to dwell within me. I praise You because You are Altogether Lovely! In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Isaiah 53: 1-12; I Corinthians 3: 16; II Corinthians 13: 5.

## SEPTEMBER 7—Holy One

**READ:** Hosea 11: 9; Luke 1: 35; Acts 2: 27; 3: 14; 13: 33-35

**REFLECT:** Hosea 11: 9 says, “*For I am God and not man—the Holy One among you.*”

“*Holy*” means “*sacred, pure, perfect*” and “*set apart, separate.*” Because God is holy, He cannot look upon or be in the presence of sin, so our sin has destroyed our relationship with Him, forever separating us from Him for eternity. Psalm 24: 3-4 says, “*Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully.*” Until God forgives our sin and we are washed clean by the blood of Jesus, we cannot be in the presence of the Holy One.

God is the Holy One, the One who is the Lord of heaven and earth, the God who made everything and Who gives life and breath to all living things, and so He alone is worthy to be praised and to receive glory. Acts 17: 24-28. However, the pride and haughtiness of many men causes them to believe that God, if He exists in their minds at all, is just slightly higher or more supreme than they are. They believe that they can, and do, accomplish all things through their own power and might. But, Scripture would remind us that no one can blaspheme or reproach the Holy One of Israel and go unpunished. II Kings 19: 22. Many times the Old Testament speaks to God using those who are haughty and proud as tools to accomplish His own purposes, bringing punishment, destruction and wrath down upon His disobedient people, but He eventually punishes the wickedness of the evil ones He has used. Isaiah 10: 5-19. The Holy One is also righteous, and He demands justice.

Scripture also refers to Jesus as God’s Holy One, His Holy Son. King David even prophetically spoke of how God would separate His Son, or Holy One, from the pain and destruction of earth and the grave, raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in Heaven. So it is also with those who belong to Jesus—God will not let the grave keep us from Him either. “*I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.*” Acts 2: 25-28; Psalm 16: 7-11.

Jesus Christ, God’s Holy One, has victory over death and the grave so that we too, as Christ-followers, can be in the presence of our Holy God forever. Even though you may have lifted your soul to idols and sworn deceitfully in the past, the blood of Jesus can give you “*clean hands and a pure heart*” so you can ascend the hill of the Lord and stand in His holy place. Psalm 24: 3-4; 15: 1-5. Nothing but the blood of Jesus can make you holy and wash you clean!

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that You call me to be holy because You are holy. I thank You that because of Your great love and Jesus’ obedience to Your will unto death, I too, can be made holy so as to live in Your presence for all of eternity. I praise You! In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Isaiah 10: 5-19; Proverbs 30: 1-5; Psalm 15: 1; 16: 7-11; 24: 3-4.

## SEPTEMBER 8—Head Over All Things

**READ:** Ephesians 1: 22-23; 4: 11-16; 5: 23; Colossians 1: 15-18

**REFLECT:** Ephesians 1: 22-23 says, “*And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*”

God has put Christ as Head over His Body, the Church in the sense of being in “*authoritative control and direction*”, and not in the same sense of being “the source” of something. Bodies are controlled by our brains; so, in essence, Jesus controls every part of the Church, His Body, as He gives it direction and purpose.

Scripture often says that, as a man thinks, so he does, or is. In much the same way, once we belong to Christ, “...*we have the mind of Christ*”, so **we should** “*guard our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—think on these things.*” Philippians 4: 7(b)-8; I Corinthians 2: 16.

As we allow the Holy Spirit to guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, because He is our Head, we need to be ever mindful that what He has promised us, He will do. Satan will try to create doubts in our mind as to our salvation, but once we belong to Jesus, no one can snatch us out of His hand. John 10: 28. God has given us His armor, especially the helmet of salvation, so that we can cast all doubts aside. Considering this, we need to always remember to put on the helmet of salvation and submit our thoughts to Christ. Ephesians 6: 17; Isaiah 59: 17.

Considering Jesus as the Head Over **All Things**, the note to I Corinthians 11: 3 in the “*MacArthur Study Bible*” is significant in saying, “Christ has never been in any way inferior in essence to the Father, but in His incarnation He willingly submitted Himself to the Father’s will in humble obedience.” Likewise, as our authoritative leader, in “*all things*”, we need to totally and humbly submit to Christ as our Head, allowing Him to direct our lives. Proverbs 3: 5-6 says, “*Trust in the Lord with all of your heart, lean not on your own understanding. In all of your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your path straight.*” Are you allowing Jesus to be the Head Over All Things in your life? Record your thoughts.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that Jesus was obedient to Your will and humbly submitted to You so that I can now be humbly submitted to Him. Help me to allow Him to be Head Over All Things in my life so that I can live the abundant and eternal life that He came to bring me in all of its fullness. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** I Corinthians 2: 16; 11: 3; Philippians 4: 8; Isaiah 59: 17; Ephesians 6: 17.

## SEPTEMBER 9—Shield of Your Help

**READ:** Deuteronomy 33: 29; Ephesians 6: 16; Genesis 15: 1-6; Psalm 18: 30; 33: 20; 121: 1-2

**REFLECT:** Deuteronomy 33: 29—“*Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord, the shield of your help and the sword of your majesty!*”

Shortly before he died, Moses gave a blessing over each of the tribes of Jacob, or Israel, and then he gave a final blessing over the nation of Israel as a whole. Sarcastically, he called them, “*Jeshuran*”, which means “*upright*” or “*righteous one*”, to deride them and remind them that they had consistently failed to obey God. Moses wanted them to know that only because of God’s faithfulness and mercy had they been blessed. Only because He was the “*shield of (their) help*” would they prosper in the Promised Land.

Interestingly, two pieces of the armor of God are mentioned in this blessing over Israel—the sword and the shield. “*The sword of your majesty*” possibly speaks to God’s Word and how His promises are true. He is a covenant-keeping God and when He promises to do something, He will do it. Romans 4: 20-21. The other piece of armor is “*the shield*”. In Ephesians 6: 16, the shield as part of the armor of God is the “*shield of faith*”.

Throughout the Old Testament, it was by faith that righteousness was credited to the saints of the Lord, apart from their works. “...*credited as righteousness apart from works*” is used because faith is a gift from God. Romans 4: 16. Faith comes to you only from God’s help and by His grace. Genesis 15: 6; Romans 4: 1-25. “...*faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ.*” Romans 10: 17. So, these two pieces of armor are directly connected to each other. Through the “*sword of your majesty*”, or God’s Word comes faith and faith becomes the “*shield of your help*”. Faith is a trust in God that He will protect you from “*the fiery darts of the evil one*” and fulfill the promises of His Word to you. Ephesians 6: 16; Romans 4: 20-21. In Genesis 15: 1, God told Abram, “*Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.*” Remember, “...*without faith it is impossible to please (God) Him, for He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*” Hebrews 11: 6. “*Abram believed the Lord, and He credited it to him as righteousness.*” Genesis 15: 6. So, faith is trust in God, and trust can, and should, become your shield to protect you from “*the fiery darts of the enemy*”. Ephesians 6: 16. As you trust God, your faith will increase and your “*shield*” will protect you even more, guarding your heart and your mind in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4: 6-7.

Where does my help come from? I know that “*my help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth*”, and that He is my “*shield*”. Do you know where your help comes from? Psalm 121: 2.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that You are the Shield of My Help and You will always be there to protect me from the fiery darts of the enemy. Help me to remember daily to take up the shield of faith and trust in You to protect me as I submit to Your loving care. Lord, increase my faith as I daily claim the promises of Your Word. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

## SEPTEMBER 10—Jesus Christ, The Righteous

**READ:** I John 2: 1-2; Romans 3: 21-26; 4: 13-25

**REFLECT:** God does not want us to sin. However, we are the product of The Fall. At times, we may take situations into our own hands instead of relying on the power of Almighty God. We may also desire things that God may not want for us. While we are here on earth, we will always struggle with sin.

Even though God would prefer for us to not sin, He knows that we are human and that we will make mistakes. That is why He provided a defense. He sent His perfect Son, Jesus, to be our advocate. Jesus lived a perfect life on earth and only He can be called righteous. In the Old Testament period, people, by the Law, had to offer sacrifices to have their sins atoned for. They sacrificed animals that were without blemish and were spotless. Understanding this concept helps us to realize the significance of Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross. Because He was perfect, pure and blameless, His death alone is all-sufficient to atone for all of our sins forever. He is more than qualified to be our defense and our imputed righteousness.

An interesting thing about Jesus' righteousness is that when God looks at each Christ-follower, He sees the righteousness of Christ. We are not declared righteous because of anything we have done, or not done, because we could never be perfect. Romans 3: 23. However, II Corinthians 5: 21 is a beautiful expression of what God did for us through Jesus Christ, The Righteous:

*“God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him  
We might become the righteousness of His Son.”*

This is called imputed righteousness because it is not righteousness that we earn on our own. Rather, it has been attributed to us by the grace of God because of His great love towards us. When we put our trust in God and seek His Kingdom and His righteousness, He adds all other things to us, including the righteous robes of Christ—the One Who is The Righteous! Matthew 5: 6 says, *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.”*

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that You loved the world so much that You sent Your Son Jesus to be The Righteous One that would be the Only One Who could atone for our sins and impute His righteousness to us for all of eternity. Thank You for Your love and the freedom that comes from knowing that there is nothing we can do to merit the righteousness it takes to be able to be in Your presence for all of eternity if we are a Christ-follower. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** II Corinthians 5: 21.

## SEPTEMBER 11—Stronghold

**READ:** Nahum 1: 7 (NKJV); II Samuel 5: 6-10

**REFLECT:** Nahum 1: 7—

*“The Lord is good. A stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him.”*

A “stronghold” is “a place that has been strengthened against attack—a fortress where one can seek protection and security.” Almighty God is the most formidable force and the greatest source of strength and security that there is. As Scripture says, just His name brings to mind a “strong tower”. Proverbs 18: 10.

Although God is our Stronghold, Satan also has strongholds that he uses to draw us into and hold us captive. II Corinthians 10: 3-6. Even though we might belong to Jesus and our eternal salvation is secure, Satan will use anything he can to keep us from enjoying the abundant life while we are here on this earth. He knows our weaknesses and his goal is “to steal, kill and destroy”. John 10: 10. The evils of this world and the lures and lusts of the flesh also become strongholds in our lives, whether it is drugs and alcohol, sexual immorality, materialism or anything that becomes an idol to us.

We need to remember that nothing is too difficult for the Lord. Luke 1: 37. He can bring to nothing, anything that would stand in His way. When David was preparing to attack and take the city of Jerusalem from the Jebusites, they taunted him saying that the “blind and the lame” could even withstand his attacks. Because of its elevation and the deep valleys surrounding it, Jerusalem appeared to be physically impenetrable. However, David had the strength of the Lord behind him, his Stronghold, and he easily took control of the city. II Samuel 5: 7, 9. Many examples exist in the Old Testament where God brought to destruction the fortified cities, fortresses and defenses of Israel’s enemies. Isaiah 25: 2, 12, and 5(a) say, “*You have made the city a heap of rubble, the fortified town a ruin, the foreigners’ stronghold a city no more; it will never be rebuilt. He will bring down your high fortified walls and lay them low; He will bring them down to the ground, to the very dust....as heat is reduced by the shadow of a cloud, so the song of the ruthless is stilled.*”

So, if there is anything that seems unconquerable in your life, a stronghold that has control of you, give it to the Lord. Cast your cares upon Him, for He cares for you. I Peter 5:7; Psalm 55: 22-23. Jesus said to take His yoke upon you, for His burden is light. Matthew 11: 29-30. Run to the Lord, your Stronghold, and give Him anything that is attempting to steal the abundant life that Jesus came to give you as a Christ-follower. John 10: 10.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that You are my Stronghold against the wiles of the enemy and that I can run to You and be safe. Help me to recognize when I am allowing the strongholds of the enemy to gain an advantage in my life, so that I can turn from my wicked ways to seek refuge in You. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** II Corinthians 10: 3-5; Ephesians 6: 17; Isaiah 25: 1-12.

## SEPTEMBER 12—King of Kings

**READ:** Revelation 19: 16; 17: 14;

**REFLECT:** Revelation 19: 11-16—

*“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called the Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written:*

***KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”***

What more needs to be said? Even the prepositions and conjunction in this title for Christ are capitalized—every letter is capitalized! What a picture of the power, supremacy and sovereignty of Jesus Christ! He comes from heaven, mounted on a white stallion with His robe dipped in blood—His blood that was poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. And what slays the nations, but the power of His Word that proceeds from His mouth as the sharp sword! He only has to speak and His enemies are destroyed by the Truth of His Word! He Himself is the Word of God! How magnificent and how powerful! John 1: 1-4, 14.

If you belong to Jesus and have been washed by His blood, then you are one of those included in the armies of heaven that accompanies the KING OF KINGS. Riding a white horse, clothed in clean, white linen, which is the righteousness of Christ, you do not come with Him to fight the battle—it has already been won. But, you come to rule and reign with Him in His Millennial Kingdom. Revelation 20: 6. As the Christian music group Third Day says in one of their worship songs, *“Who is this King of glory, who offers it to me? His name is Jesus, precious Jesus!”* All Kingdom authority and power has been given to Him by God Almighty. Proverbs 8: 15 says, *“By Me kings reign and rulers make laws that are just; by Me princes govern, and all nobles rule on earth.”* But, the irony of this all, is that **Jesus alone is worthy to be called the KING OF KINGS, because He, “who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”** Philippians 2: 6-11. He humbled Himself unto death to save the world even though He was KING! He alone deserves to be called KING OF KINGS! Give Him the glory, honor and praise! Hallelujah!!

**PRAY:** Meditate upon these passages today and compose a prayer thanking God for the reasons you have seen Him work in your own life that would warrant you calling Him the KING OF ALL KINGS. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

## SEPTEMBER 13—Lord of Lords

**READ:** Revelation 17: 12-17; 19: 16; Psalm 136: 3

**REFLECT:** Psalm 136: 3—*“Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords! His mercy endures forever.”*

Deuteronomy 10: 17—*“For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe.”*

A “lord” is “a high official or someone who is given authority to rule over others”. Jesus is Lord of all lords and the One who has supreme authority and power over all the rulers of the earth. At Jesus’ trial, He even told Pilate, “You would have no power over Me if it were not given to you from above.” John 19: 11.

Whether or not anyone wants to acknowledge that God is sovereign, and that all authority and power belong to Him, is of no significance. Nothing can change the fact that He *is* the Lord of Lords, over all. Any delegation of power or authority is given by and from Him in *all* circumstances.

Towards the end of the Tribulation, ten people will become kings for just “one hour” and have authority with the beast, who is the antichrist. At the end of the hour they will give all their power and authority to the antichrist. Then at the Battle of Armageddon, “...these will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings;” Revelation 17: 12-14. Imagine the evil that the human heart is capable of, that someone would give up their eternal salvation, suffering condemnation and hell forever, just for one hour of power! Amazing is the fact that these ten kings would not have any power, even for one hour, had it not been given to them by the Lord of Lords. God as Sovereign Lord has the power to delegate authority to anyone to accomplish His purposes. “For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.” Revelation 17: 17.

At the end of Christ’s Millennial Kingdom, Satan will be loosed for just a short time, but then he will be caught and thrown into the fiery pit of hell, forever. “Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. For ‘He has put all things under His feet’. But when He says, ‘all things are put under Him,’ it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him that God may be all in all.” I Corinthians 15: 24-28. Hallelujah to the Lamb who is the Lord of Lords! Our God reigns!

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that Jesus is not only KING OF KINGS but that He is LORD OF LORDS. Help me to submit to His rule and reign in my life...in *every* aspect of my life. I praise You Lord of Lords! In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** John 19: 11; I Corinthians 15: 24-28; Deuteronomy 10: 17.

## **SEPTEMBER 14—He Who Endured Such Opposition From Sinful Men**

**READ:** Hebrews 12: 2-3; Romans 8: 12-17; Matthew 5: 1-12

**REFLECT:** Jesus does not ask us to go through anything that He didn't experience during His time on earth. Nothing that we will ever experience surprises or puzzles Him. Hebrews 4: 15.

Jesus was betrayed by one of His disciples and doubted by another. Religious leaders continually tried to find fault with Him, and they attempted on multiple occasions to trick Him into contradicting the Law. Luke 22: 47-48; John 20: 24-29; Luke 16: 13-14; 19: 7; 20: 20-26; John 8: 3-6. Beyond all these things, our Savior was not only tempted in every way but He was crucified in the most brutal manner possible.

All of these instances are a mere fraction of what Jesus endured while on the earth. Scripture says that a servant is not greater than his master. Because Jesus suffered persecution and opposition during His time on earth, we can expect that we also may experience some of these same things. John 15: 18-25.

We need not to be discouraged and concerned about possible persecution. Jesus' own words in John 16: 33 say:

*“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.”*

When you are experiencing persecution or other difficult times in life because of your faith in Jesus Christ, remember Whose footsteps you are following in. Romans 8: 17. It may be difficult to see the good when we are going through the bad. But, “...we share in His sufferings that we may share in His glory.” Romans 8: 17. Our suffering does not go unnoticed by our Savior, and we will be rewarded for our perseverance and our devotion to God. Matthew 5: 11-12; Hebrews 6: 10; Galatians 6: 9.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that Jesus is my Savior and that He can empathize with everything that I go through. I thank You for understanding everything. Give me strength during times of opposition that I face for Jesus' sake and grace me with perseverance during times of persecution. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** John 15: 18-25; I Corinthians 10: 13.

## SEPTEMBER 15—Our Great God

**READ:** Titus 2: 11-14; Psalm 95: 3; 145: 3

**REFLECT:** How great is our God? Our God is so great that He “...gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.” Titus 2: 14. Notice that we play no role in this process. Jesus voluntarily gave His life for us. We cannot take any of the credit. He redeemed us.

What is your initial response to the question, “Why do you deserve to go to Heaven?” Would you say, “Because I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior”? Even though it sounds like this would be a good “Sunday School” answer, it is not the correct response. If you are a Christ-follower, you are not going to Heaven because you accepted Christ. Every Christ-follower is going to Heaven because of **what He did for you!** We did nothing in our own strength to deserve eternal life. It’s because after the Holy Spirit convicted you of your sin and you repented that Jesus Christ now accepted you as one of His redeemed due to **His** finished and completed work at the Cross.

Jesus did not have to die on the Cross for our sins. He gave Himself for us. It was a voluntary act of love. Romans 5: 6-8 says, “*You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*” Jesus Christ—Our Great God—died for us when? He died for us while we were still sinners. What an awesome and Great God we serve!

**PRAY:** Today in prayer, consider the lyrics to Todd Agnew’s song “*Our Great God*” and compose a prayer thanking Him for how He has shown Himself “great” in your own life.

*“Eternal God unchanging, mysterious and unknown,  
Your boundless love unfailing, in grace and mercy shown.  
Bright seraphim in ceaseless flight around Your glorious throne,  
They raise their voices day and night in praise to You alone.  
Hallelujah, glory be to our great God! Hallelujah, glory be to our great God!  
Lord, we are weak and frail, helpless in the storm.  
Surround us with Your angels. Hold us in Your arms.  
Our cold and ruthless enemy, His pleasure is our harm.  
Rise up, oh Lord, and he will flee, before our Sovereign God.  
Let every creature in the sea and every flying bird,  
Let every mountain, every field and valley of the earth,  
Let all the moons and all the stars and all the universe,  
Sing praises to the living God Who rules them by His Word.  
Hallelujah, glory be to our great God! Hallelujah, glory be to our great God!*

**FURTHER STUDY:** I Chronicles 16: 25; 29: 11; Jeremiah 10: 6; Nehemiah 1: 5.

## SEPTEMBER 16—Cluster of Henna Blooms

**READ:** Song of Songs 1: 14; Isaiah 35: 1-10; 43: 18-21; Psalm 63: 1=5

**REFLECT:** Song of Songs 1: 14—

*“My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blooms in the vineyards of En Gedi.”*

En Gedi is an oasis west of the Dead Sea in Israel. Surrounded by rugged limestone cliffs on the West, wilderness and parched, desert wastelands on the North and South and the desolation of the Dead Sea on the East, the lushness of its vegetation and vineyards stands in stark contrast to its arid, barren surroundings. And henna is a beautiful green plant with fragrant white blossoms that blooms in the oasis of En Gedi. When the leaves, twigs and flowers of the henna plant are ground, crushed and then mixed with water, the mixture is used as a red dye for hair coloring. Also, many Arab and Far Eastern Indian cultures use it as a dark, blood-red pigment to paint beautiful designs on the hands and feet of brides being prepared for the wedding ceremony. This is interesting considering that the Song of Songs, from which this name for the Lord comes, is a love poem from King Solomon to his Shulamite bride. Prophetically, it is a typology or foreshadowing of the relationship between Christ and His Bride, the Church, as the Holy Spirit prepares the Bride of Christ for her wedding to her Bridegroom Jesus.

If you would travel for a long period of time, carrying a heavy burden on foot without food or drink through the wilderness and desert of the area surrounding En Gedi, you would probably become parched, hungry, thirsty and sunburned. Most likely you would also feel desperate, weary and afraid. Suddenly, if you came upon the abundant, lush provisions of En Gedi with its fresh, cool spring water, the plentiful ripe fruit of its vineyards and the sight of its beautiful clusters of pure, white henna blooms, your soul would be refreshed and your spirit would be renewed.

The same is true of the new life we find in Christ. Without Him our lives are laden with sin, our throats are parched and our spirits are dry and dead—our souls constantly feel desperation, fear and despair. Without Him, we are always hungering and thirsting after something, but are never satisfied. Then, suddenly we come to the oasis which is Jesus Christ and our burden of sin is removed. From His living water of the Holy Spirit, our thirst is forever quenched and our hunger is satisfied with the living bread of His Word. Our filthy, self-righteous rags are replaced with the pure, white, clean linen of His righteousness, as the fragrant, sweet beauty of His Holy Spirit blooms within our hearts. Jesus is, indeed, our oasis and His beauty is like a Cluster of Henna Blooms. When He was crushed, the reddish dye of His blood painted the beautiful design of salvation upon His bride, the Church, in preparation for the Wedding Supper of the Lamb. Oh how He has adorned His Bride!

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that I have become part of the Bride of Christ as a Christ-follower and that Jesus was crushed and His blood was shed so that I could be washed white as snow. Because I am now adorned with His righteousness, He has made my salvation to be a sweet, fragrant aroma to You. Blessed be His name—the One Who is as a Cluster of Henna Blooms. In His name I pray. Amen.

## SEPTEMBER 17—Friend

**READ:** John 15: 12-17; Isaiah 41: 8; Proverbs 17: 17; 18: 24; I Samuel 18: 1-4; II Samuel 1: 26

**REFLECT:** John 15: 13, 14, 17—

*“Greater love has no one than this, to lay down one’s life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you...These things I command you, that you love one another.”*

No greater love has ever been demonstrated than the love that God had for the world when He gave His Son Jesus Christ to die for our sin. And, not only did Jesus willingly offer up His life for ugly, despicable sinners, but then, He still wanted to call us His friends. Amazing! John 3:16.

Next to God’s, or Christ’s love for us, there is another beautiful depiction of the love that can exist between friends in the example in Scripture of the relationship between David and King Saul’s son Jonathan. *“Now when David had finished talking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul...Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul...How mighty have fallen in the midst of battle! Jonathan was slain in your high places. I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; you have been very pleasant to me; your love to me was wonderful, surpassing the love of women.”* I Samuel 18: 1-4; II Samuel 1: 26.

This friendship between David and Jonathan was a foreshadowing of the love that Christ would have for His Body, the Church. Jesus is in a covenant relationship with the Church, and while it is not one of sexual intimacy, it is as close, if not closer than the relationship between a husband and wife. How beautiful to think that our souls are knit together with Christ, Our Friend!

Another aspect of an extremely close and devoted friendship that we will examine tomorrow, is the one between friends when they are so close that they feel free to reveal secrets to each other. While women may be able to relate to this type of friendship more so than men, when it relates to friendship with Jesus, there is no gender distinction if He becomes Your Savior and Friend. If your souls and spirits become knit together, He will also become the Revealer of Secrets to you!

**PRAY:** Meditate on the words to this worship song by Philips, Craig and Dean today and compose a prayer thanking God for the Friend that you have in Jesus as a Christ-follower.

*“Who am I that you are mindful of me? That You hear me, when I call. Is it true that You are thinking of me? How You love me! It’s amazing! I am a friend of God, He calls me friend. God Almighty, Lord of Glory—You have called me friend!”*

**FURTHER STUDY:** James 2: 23; Exodus 33: 11; II Chronicles 20: 7.

## SEPTEMBER 18—Revealer of Secrets

**READ:** Daniel 2: 29-30, 47; Jeremiah 29: 11-14; 33: 3; I Corinthians 2: 1-16; 4: 4-5

**REFLECT:** I Corinthians 2: 7—

*“No, we speak of God’s secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.”*

The secret wisdom of God is the wonderful plan of salvation offered through the death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ. Until Jesus arose from the grave, fulfilling even more, the work that His Father had sent Him to do, God’s secret plan for the forgiveness of sin could not be revealed or understood. Revelation of this secret would only fully be made complete when the Holy Spirit would come at Pentecost to indwell believers in Christ. First Corinthians 2: 9 says, *“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.”*

Even though the Word of God and the message of the Cross are foolishness to those who don’t believe in Jesus; and, the mystery of God’s plan of redemption remains hidden to those not indwelt by the Holy Spirit, God, however, can see into the secrets of every human heart. Nothing can be hidden from Him. I Corinthians 1: 18-25; Psalm 139: 1-18. First Samuel 16: 7(b) says, *“For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”* God searches every human heart and understands each man’s motives. When we stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, He will be able to test our works, separating the wheat from the chaff, because He alone knows our hearts. He will justly give us rewards when He reveals the secrets of our heart’s motives. Was our work done for His glory, or for our own? He knows! I Corinthians 3: 9-15.

How wonderful it is when we unwrap the surprise secret of God’s plan of forgiveness for sin! The joy then multiplies as the Holy Spirit continues to reveal other secrets of God, through His Word, to those who believe. God loves to share His wisdom and secrets with us, and His tender mercies are new every day. Remember, we do not have because we do not ask. So, take the time to ask God to reveal His secrets to you today in your time of prayer. He longs to give you the desires of your heart and He loves to be the Revealer of Secrets from His heart, too! James 1: 5.

**PRAY:** Pray Jeremiah 33: 3 today and at the end of the day, record what the Lord has revealed to you. Jeremiah 33: 3 says, *“Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.”* Show me, Lord, I pray in Jesus name. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Revelation 4: 1; Romans 16: 25-27; I Peter 1: 10-12.

## SEPTEMBER 19—Nail in a Sure Place

**READ:** Isaiah 22: 23-25; Romans 8: 31-39; Job 11: 13-20; John 10: 28; 17: 6-12

**REFLECT:** Isaiah 22: 23-24—*“I will fasten Him as a nail in a sure place, and He will become a glorious throne to His Father’s house. They will hang on Him all the glory of His Father’s house...”* In ancient, biblical times, kings would have their generals and warriors hang the trophies of war on the walls of the temples of their gods. The presence of these trophies stood as symbols that victory over the enemy had been made secure as demonstrated by the spoils on display. Returning without the spoils might indicate that the conquerors had not completely overcome and vanquished the enemy. In much the same way, Christ has won the victory in the battle over sin and death for us, giving us the spoils of war—our eternal salvation. Once we belong to Jesus, we become the temple of the Living God, and God gives each Christ-follower trophies to hang on the walls of our temple, or spirit—the covenant promises of His grace, the forgiveness and removal of our sin and the power of the Holy Spirit, to name just a few. I Corinthians 3: 16; 6: 19-20.

Ephesians 1: 13-14 promises that the Holy Spirit has been put in the “sure” place of our hearts, securing our salvation forever from the moment we believe. *“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession to the praise of His glory.”* Jesus promised that once you belong to Him, no one will be able to “snatch” you out of His hand. He also told God that He had not lost any that God had given Him. John 10: 28-30; 17: 6-12.

Another interesting example of Jesus as our Nail in a Sure Place comes from the typology of Christ, as Scripture depicts in the way pegs were used to “secure” the covering of the Tabernacle. These tent pegs were made of brass, such that they would never rust nor corrode. Exodus 27: 19. They were secured in the ground, but the tops remained out of the ground so that the cords used to fasten down the badger covering could be tied to them. Likewise, the Roman authorities attempted to secure Christ in the ground, behind the seal of the tomb, and the penalty of sin tried to keep Him in the bowels of the earth in hell. But, God provided an “above ground” place on this “Nail” where we could be tied to Him to secure the covering of our sin—His resurrection. Have your cords been anchored to the Nail in a Sure Place?

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You for the security I have in my eternal salvation because of Jesus’ completed and finished work at the Cross. Thank You that You hold me securely in the palm of Your hand and You will never let me go. I praise You! In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**NOTE:** An interesting side note is that Martin Luther nailed the 95 treatises in opposition to the Church’s indulgences to the door of the church, initiating the Reformation battle for the Church. Once again, God’s Word, Jesus, would secure for every Christ-follower a victory over and from the slavery to “good works”. Their trophies of salvation would be nailed to the grace of God and the blood of Christ and the Cross, and not to their own self-righteousness.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Psalm 91: 1-16; Proverbs 3: 24-26; Hebrews 13: 5-6; Job 11: 13-20.

## SEPTEMBER 20—The Beginning

Rosh Hashanah—Feast of Trumpets—The Jewish New Year

**READ:** Revelation 3: 14; John 1: 1, 2; Genesis 1: 1; Colossians 1: 18

**REFLECT:** Rosh Hashanah, or the Feast of Trumpets, is the Jewish New Year and the “beginning” day of the ten days leading up to Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement for the Jewish people. While it is not the first month of the Jewish year, which is Nisan and the beginning of the “religious” year, it is the first day of the seventh month, or Tishri, which is better known as the beginning of the Jewish “civil” or “fiscal” New Year. Because Israel was an agrarian society, the most important time of the year was the fall harvest.

While most new years are ushered in with celebrating and joy, and the sound of the Feast of Trumpets might present a mind-picture of a time of revelry, Rosh Hashanah is a time of quiet, individual introspection. “*Beginning*” on this day, and for the next ten days, Jews are called to reflect upon their sin in anticipation of the Day of Atonement, asking God to forgive them and look upon them with favor. Leviticus 23: 23-25. Many evangelical Christians believe that this will be the day that the Church is “raptured”, and the day that begins the tribulation. As such, it would be “*the beginning of birth pangs*”, or the “*beginning*” of the end, with Christ returning with His Bride, the Church, on the Day of Atonement to usher in His Millennial Kingdom reign, seven years later. Matthew 24: 8; I Thessalonians 4: 13-18. Matthew 24: 31 says, “*He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*” But, like Jesus, said, “*...of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.*” Matthew 24: 36.

Genesis 1: 1 and 2: 3 say, “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.*” It is interesting that the Jewish New Year is the first day when Jews are called to rest in contemplation of their sin—the first day of the seventh month—the end of six months of working and planting, in anticipation of the harvest. The seventh day of Creation was the first day, or beginning of man’s life on earth, and was a day of rest. However, if Rosh Hashanah, or the first day of the call to repentance is, in fact, the day that will mark the first day of the Tribulation, because of sin, it will not be a day of rest, but a day of the beginning of God’s wrath pouring out upon the earth. But it would be the beginning of the perfect rest that the Bride of Christ would be entering into with God forever. Regardless of what this day signifies in God’s greater plan or scheme of things, the most important thing for Christians to remember in relation to “beginning” is that Jesus said that He is the “*Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End*”, and in Him is the “beginning” of eternal life. Jesus has existed from the very “beginning” and He will always be. Revelation 1: 8; 3: 14; John 1: 1-3, 14. And, Jesus is the “beginning”, or Head of His Body, the Church, which He promises He will deliver from the wrath that is to come. Colossians 1: 18; I Thessalonians 1: 9-10; 5: 9-11.

**PRAY:** Father God, I just thank You that You had me in mind from the “beginning” and that I belong to Jesus, the “beginning” of my eternal life. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Isaiah 46: 9-10; 64: 4; Matthew 24: 31; I Thessalonians 4: 13-1

## SEPTEMBER 21—Jesus

**READ:** Matthew 1: 18-21; 27: 37; Philippians 2: 10; John 1: 1-3, 14; Luke 1: 31: 2: 21

**REFLECT:** “*Jesus*” means “*Savior*”, or One who will save men from their sins. “*Yeshua*” is the Hebrew word for Jesus and means “*the Lord is Salvation*”. Jesus is often combined with Christ—Jesus Christ—and Christ comes from the Greek word “*Christos*”. Christos is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word for “*Messiah*” which means “*anointed one*”.

Throughout the Old Testament, the Jews longed for the appearance of their Messiah, or “the anointed one from God”, who would come to save them. He had been prophesied about by the prophets. All who studied the Scriptures knew that, one day He would come and sit upon the throne of David in Jerusalem to rule and reign. That is why most of the Jews contemplated that the Messiah would come as a conquering king, displaying power and might. And, at the particular time in history when Jesus was born, Jews anticipating His appearance longed for Him to come and save them from the oppression of the rule of the Roman Empire, establishing Himself as King over Israel in the likeness of King David. No one expected Him to be born in Bethlehem in a stable, of a teenage Jewish peasant girl from the village of Nazareth—one who was pledged to be married to a carpenter, but who had not yet married. But, God’s ways are not our ways and His plans were totally different from what His people expected. Isaiah 55: 8-9.

Why was He named Jesus? An angel of the Lord appeared to both of His parents prior to His birth, to Mary and to Joseph, to tell each of them, that He should be called by this name. Matthew 1: 21; Luke 1: 30-33: 2: 21.

Who was Jesus? He was the promised Messiah—the anointed One of God sent to save men from their sins. He was God in the flesh, the Word of God made incarnate—the One and Only God-Man. John 1: 1-3, 14. He was the prophesied fulfillment of God’s plan of redemption for mankind—the One who would save those who believed in Him from eternal condemnation. Because of Him and His obedience to do the will of His Father, men would be offered the free gift of salvation and eternal life, their sins being forever removed.

Scripture tells us in Philippians 2: 10-11, “...*that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*”

**PRAY:** Today in prayer, consider the words to two favorite hymns and compose your own prayer, praising God for Jesus and telling Him what the name of Jesus means to you.

*“His Name Is Wonderful”* by Audrey Mieir—“*His name is Wonderful, Jesus, my Lord. He’s the Great Shepherd, the Rock of All Ages, Almighty God is He. Bow down before Him, love and adore Him, His name is Wonderful, Jesus, my Lord.*”

*“He Keeps Me Singing”* by Luther B. Bridge—“*Soon He’s coming back to welcome me, far beyond the starry sky. I shall wing my way to worlds unknown, I shall reign with Him on high. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. Sweetest name I know. Fills my every longing. Keeps me singing as I go.*”

## SEPTEMBER 22—He Who Calls Things That Are Not As Though They Were

**READ:** Romans 4: 13-20; Genesis 18: 1-15

**REFLECT:** Some time ago while I was going through a difficult time, a friend sent me a card that I kept on the front of my refrigerator for a long time. On the front was a cartoon picture of the earth. It showed that while it is night in one part of the world, people in another part of the world are experiencing daytime. The picture shows cities, jungles, oceans and farmlands. The quote on the front says, “I see the big picture. Signed: God”.

God sees circumstances completely differently than we do. While it is hard for us to see past our current circumstances, God knows exactly what is going to happen. Take, for example, Abraham and Sarah. Oh, how they longed for a child for years and years. Though Abraham and Sarah considered themselves to be barren, God knew otherwise. Genesis 17: 17-18, 19; 18: 9-15. God saw their circumstances to be other than what Abraham and Sarah saw in their own eyes and hearts. The same is true in our lives. Our minds cannot comprehend all that God is doing or able to do. Situations that look bleak to us are part of God’s plan to work good in our lives for His glory. Romans 8: 28.

Romans 4: 18-25 elaborates on Abraham’s faith during the time in his life when he was without a child. Even though he had not been given a son:

*“Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what He had promised.”*

Romans 4: 19-21.

Like Abraham, do not allow your trials and tribulations to weaken your faith. Remember that we serve a God who sees the big picture and who sees things in ways that we do not. Do not focus on your circumstances. Rather, focus on the God who never gives us more than we can handle. I Corinthians 10: 13. No doubt hard times will come; but, when they do, remember that these situations provide an opportunity for you to rely on God rather than on your own strength. II Corinthians 1: 8-9; 12: 7-10.

Do you rest in God in the midst of circumstances that are difficult and you have no idea what the outcome will be? Or, do you keep striving to make things happen in the way that seems right to you? Proverbs 16: 9.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega and that He sees the beginning and the end. Thank You that I can rest in You knowing that You have a plan for my life that is good and that will glorify You if I submit to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. Help me to daily trust in You more, even when I do not have eyes to see what the outcome will be. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Hebrews 11: 1-40; Romans 10: 17; Genesis 21: 1-7.

## SEPTEMBER 23—God Full of Compassion

**READ:** Psalm 86: 11-17; Exodus 33: 19; Mark 9: 14-23

**REFLECT:** “*Compassion*” means “*showing sympathetic pity and concern for the suffering of others*”. God is the God who is full of compassion, showing mercy beyond understanding, when it is not deserved; and, Jesus is the demonstration of the fullness of God’s compassion. When God looked upon our sufferings as we struggled under the weight of our own sin, He could have just taken care of it in some mystical, supernatural way. But, instead, He chose to demonstrate His love and compassion to us in the person and humanity of His Son Jesus Christ. Jesus willingly considered His deity to be nothing as He took on human flesh and came to dwell among us. Because Jesus was fully human and tempted in every way as we are, yet He was fully divine, completely perfect and without sin. He alone can say that He understands our temptations and frailties, and can intercede for us. He alone understands. Hebrews 2: 17-18.

One of the most beautiful examples of His compassion was when the father of the demon-possessed boy came to Jesus, begging Him to heal his son. Jesus said, “*If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.*” But the father knew his faith was not strong enough. He feared that his son might continue to suffer because Jesus possibly would refuse to heal him due to the father’s lack of faith. “*Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, with tears, ‘Lord, I believe, help my unbelief!’*” Full of compassion, Jesus healed the boy. Mark 9: 14-29.

Lamentations 3: 32 says, “*For the Lord will not cast off forever. Though He causes grief, yet He will show compassion according to the multitude of His mercies, for He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.*” Keeping this in mind, we need to remember that God does not enjoy bringing His wrath down upon man, but He is a just and righteous God and He cannot look upon sin or allow it to go unpunished. Paul reminded the Romans, that because God is sovereign and just, He said to Moses, “*I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.*” Exodus 33: 19; Romans 9: 15.

So, if you belong to Jesus, but feel like God has turned away from you and hardened His own heart, not showing you compassion while your enemies triumph, you need to remember several things: (1) God’s timing is not our timing—He is patient, not wanting anyone to perish, II Peter 3: 9; (2) vengeance is the Lord’s and no sin will be left unpunished, Romans 12: 19; (3) although our sins are all forgiven, we still have to suffer the consequences of them, Romans 7: 13-25; and, (4) nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus, Romans 8: 28-39. After all, as a believer in Christ, have you not received the fullness of God’s compassion through the Cross of Jesus Christ?

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that You are a God Full of Compassion and that Your mercies are new every morning. Help me to offer compassion to others in the same way by which You have offered compassion to me through the blood of Jesus Christ my Lord and Savior. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Lamentations 3: 31-33; Matthew 9: 36; 15: 32; 20: 29-34.

## **SEPTEMBER 24—God Who Has Not Rejected My Prayer or Withheld His Love From Me**

**READ:** Psalm 66: 20; 22: 24

**REFLECT:** Psalm 66 is a song of thanksgiving. The psalmist gives thanks to a merciful and gracious God who hears our prayers. We do not deserve any of the credit for God hearing our prayers. He does not hear our prayers only when they are said with great eloquence, nor does He pay more attention to our prayers once we reach a certain status or maturity in our Christian walk. No, God hears our prayers out of His mercy and His great love for us.

As stated in Psalm 66: 20, all glory belongs to God:

*“Praise be to God, Who has not rejected my prayer or withheld His love from me!”*

In Psalm 66: 18-19, the psalmist states:

*“If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened;  
but God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer.”*

Based on these verses in Psalm 66, one might expect the psalmist to say in verse 20 that God heard his prayer because he, the psalmist, did not cherish sin in his heart. However, the opposite is true, God hears our prayers, not because of anything that we do or because we have followed a specific format. God hears our prayers because He is God and we are not. God hears because He loves us!

**PRAY:** Consider Matthew Henry’s commentary on these verses and then compose a prayer to thank God that He hears your prayers and doesn’t withhold His love from you.

*“Lest it should be thought that the deliverance was granted for the sake of some worthiness in his prayer, he ascribes it to God’s mercy. This he adds by way of correction: ‘It was not my prayer that fetched the deliverance, but His mercy that sent it.’ Therefore God does not turn away our prayer, because He does not turn away His own mercy, for that is the foundation of our hopes and the fountain of our comforts, and therefore ought to be the matter of our praises.”*

**FURTHER STUDY:** Psalm 31: 22; I Peter 3: 1-7; Ephesians 6: 17-18.

## SEPTEMBER 25—Power

**READ:** I Corinthians 1: 18, 18-31; Matthew 9: 6; 26: 63-64; Acts 1: 4-8

**REFLECT:** Matthew 26: 63-64—

*“...and the high priest answered and said to Him, ‘I put You under oath by the Living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘It is as you said, Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.’”*

Immediately after Jesus said this to the High Priest, the priest tore his clothes, which was usually an expression of grief. While Leviticus 10: 6 and 21: 10 specifically say that it was forbidden for the High Priest to tear his clothes, the Talmud, the book of Jewish civil and ceremonial law, allowed an exception in the case of the High Priest witnessing a blasphemy. Falsely claiming to be the Son of God was considered to be blasphemous. Blasphemy was deserving of death, and that is what Jesus would eventually face accusation for. Not because it was the will of the religious leaders or Pilate, but it would be because it was part of God’s plan to redeem man from the penalty of sin. To fulfill prophecy, Jesus would suffer the penalty of the sin of mankind and be crucified. God would use these men as His tools to carry out His plan, exactly as it had been prophesied. Later Pilate would threaten Jesus, trying to force Him to answer his questions, saying, *“Don’t you know that I have the power to crucify You, and the power to release You?”* But, Jesus answered him by saying, *“You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given to you from above.”* John 19: 10-11.

Just what was this “power” of God? The Greek word for “power” used throughout the New Testament is “*dunamis*”, from which we get the word dynamite. So, the power of God is an explosive power. I Corinthians 1: 18 and 24 say that the message of the Cross and Christ crucified is the “power” of God and the wisdom of God. Although the picture of a man dying on a cross does not seem to be a demonstration of power at all, the real demonstration of God’s power did not end at the Cross—it continued on to Christ’s resurrection. But, it doesn’t even stop there. It continues through all eternity. While raising someone from the dead is miraculous and is a tremendous display of power, the ultimate power is Jesus’ power to forgive men of their sin.

In Matthew 9: 1-8, Jesus healed a paralytic man and told him that his sins were forgiven. The scribes then called Jesus a blasphemer. But, Jesus told them that this had happened so *“...that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins....Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.”* Still, the people did not realize that the power being demonstrated was the Holy Spirit being made manifest in Jesus Christ—God in the flesh. It would take His death and resurrection before even a few would finally believe He truly was the Son of Man, and that *“...all power in heaven and on earth...”* had been given to Him. Matthew 28: 18. All hail the power of Jesus’ name! To Him alone belongs all power, glory and honor!

**PRAY:** Father God, thank You that the resurrection power of Jesus has caused me to be raised to new and eternal life. All praise, honor and glory be to You! In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

## SEPTEMBER 26—The Amen

**READ:** Revelation 3: 14; Isaiah 65: 16; II Corinthians 1: 19-22

**REFLECT:** Revelation 3: 14—

*“...These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness,  
the Beginning of the creation of God.”*

Isaiah 65: 16—

*“So that he who blessed himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth (Amen); and he who swears in the earth shall swear by the God of truth (Amen); because the former troubles are forgotten, for they are hidden from My eyes.”*

In the verse from Isaiah above, the literal translation of the “*God of truth*” is the “*God of Amen*”. “Amen” is consistently used to end a prayer and is an affirmation that the blessing is true and will definitely be answered. Because Jesus is the fulfillment of God’s promise of redemption, Christ’s declaration that He is “*the Amen*” in Revelation 3 is His confirmation that He is the reliable and true witness of God—that what God promised to do, He has done absolutely!

The English translation of “*Amen*” is “*so be it*” or, “*let it be*”. And the Talmud, a collection of Jewish writings on Jewish civil and ceremonial law, says, regarding the use of “*Amen*”, “*Anyone who answers ‘Amen’ with all his strength merits to have opened in front of him the gates of Gan Eden (the Garden of Eden or the presence of God in the world-to-come).*”

Orthodox Jews also say that “*Amen*” is a Hebrew acronym for “*Ayl Melech Neeman*”, which means “*G-d is a true and faithful king.*” When said in unity by the community at the end of the blessing, it is a response to a divine, “*Yes*”, affirming that those repeating it agree, and believe, that : (1) Ayl—G-d is a kind God who gifted mankind by creating the world; (2) Melech—He is the King who gifted Israel with the Torah (Scriptures); and, (3) Neeman—He is the God of veracity and certainty, who will reveal His grandeur to His remnant when He brings His promised gift of redemption in the Messiah.

In Matthew 18: 18-20, Jesus tells the disciples that when two or more are gathered together in His name, there He is in the midst of them, meaning that when two or more pray, filled with the Holy Spirit, He is there and will answer because they are praying in Spirit and in Truth. He also told them that the only access to His Father is through Him, so that is why believers pray in Jesus’ name, ending their petition with a resounding, “Amen!” John 4: 22-24; 14: 6.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that I have access to You in prayer, and that the Holy Spirit within me as a Christ-follower stands with me as a witness to the truth of Who Jesus is—the Way, the Truth and the Life. Thank You that everything I ask of You in Your will, will be given to me as a “Yes” and “Amen” in Jesus’ name. In His name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Matthew 18: 18-20.

## SEPTEMBER 27—He Who Will Come

**READ:** Hebrews 10: 36-37; Acts 1: 9-11; I Thessalonians 4: 13-18

**REFLECT:** Revelation 22: 12, 17; 20—Jesus said:

*“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work....And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely...He who testifies to these things says, ‘Surely I am coming quickly.’ Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”*

Jesus is coming again. Because of this, the writer of Hebrews exhorts us to not throw away our confidence in God and to persevere in our faith. Hebrews 10: 35-36. We have faced, and will continue to face, many challenges and trials in our lives. At times, we become discouraged, and it can seem easier to give in to the pressures of this world. However, Scripture reminds us that the prize we will receive in Heaven far outweighs any achievements that we obtain on earth. Ecclesiastes 2: 10-11; 12: 13-14; Philippians 3: 7-14.

The struggles that we go through serve a purpose. They refine us and make us more and more like Jesus. James 1: 2-4; II Corinthians 3: 18. It is our job to submit to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit as we await the return of Jesus Christ. We also need to be diligent and faithful during those times because we have a reward in Heaven that far outweighs anything we can experience on earth.

The rewards of Heaven and thoughts of us being with Jesus forever can seem to be so far away. It can be hard to look past our present circumstances and understand that what we are going through now is just temporary and fleeting. II Corinthians 4: 16-18. But every Christ-follower has that promise that Jesus is He Who Will Come Again and we will spend eternity with Him! So, *“...do not throw away your confidence. It will be richly rewarded.”* Hebrews 10: 35. We must live by faith in the One *“...who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good.”* Titus 2: 11-14. *“For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not delay.”* Hebrews 10: 37.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that Jesus will return for the Church, His Bride, one day and all Christ-followers will be with Him in Heaven for all of eternity. I thank You that these struggles that I face are just temporary and that my eternal home is not this world but in Heaven with You. I thank You that Jesus is preparing a place for me right now and one day soon He will take me to be with Him forever. In His precious name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** John 14: 1-6; Revelation 22: 12, 17, 20.

## SEPTEMBER 28—Jehovah Hosenu (Lord Our Maker)

**READ:** Psalm 95: 6; Psalm 139: 1-24

**REFLECT:** In Psalm 139: 13, David says, “*You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.*” There is nothing about us that is a surprise to Our Maker. God knows everything about us, and He has orchestrated the events in our lives according to His perfect will. Psalm 139: 1-24; Jeremiah 29: 11.

Sometimes, we grow anxious because we forget that the same God who made our intricate human bodies is the same God who is in control of the situations that affect our lives each day. There is nothing that is too big for our Maker to handle, and He can do more with our lives than we could ever imagine! Ephesians 3: 20-21; Philippians 4: 13.

God has designed each of us with a unique set of skills and abilities. It is imperative that we remember that Our Maker is our source of strength. Let us not boast in ourselves; rather, let us boast only in the power of the One who created us and Who lives in us. I Corinthians 1: 18-31; Jeremiah 9: 23-24. When you are tempted to seek credit for success in your career, for doing a good job on a project that you have completed, for overcoming an addiction, or for witnessing to a loved one who comes to Christ, remember that it is not you doing the work, but that your Maker has designed you to fulfill His unique purpose for your life through the Holy Spirit’s power.

Additionally, what we perceive to be our flaws and weaknesses are really opportunities for us to rely on God and bring glory to Him. II Corinthians 12: 7-10. Our Maker did not create us to be experts at everything. In the same way that God gave Paul a thorn in his flesh, He gives us limitations in order to keep us humble. Instead of complaining about your inability to speak eloquently, the part of your body you would most like to change, or a perceived personality flaw, seek to glorify God through your weaknesses. Where you are weak, God Your Maker can show Himself most strong! II Corinthians 12: 9-10.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that I am made in Your image and that You know every single thing about me...even every hair on my head. I thank You that You have uniquely made me to accomplish things for Your glory for Your Kingdom purposes. I also thank You that You have begun a good work in me and You will complete that work until the Day of Christ Jesus. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Philippians 1: 6; Ephesians 2: 8-10; Genesis 1: 26-27.

## SEPTEMBER 29—God of My Life

**READ:** Psalm 42: 8; Acts 17:24-28; Job 33: 4; John 10: 10; 14: 6

**REFLECT:**

Psalm 42: 8—

*“The Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night  
His song shall be with me—A prayer to the God of my life.”*

Job 33: 4—

*“The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.”*

John 10: 10(b)—

*“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”*

John 14: 6—

*“I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”*

Acts 17: 25—

*“Nor is He worshipped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything,  
since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.”*

Romans 6: 23—

*“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

I Corinthians 6: 20—

*“For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body,  
and in your spirit, which is God’s.”*

Colossians 3: 3-4—

*“For you died and your life is hidden in Christ with God.  
When Christ who is our life appears, then you will appear with Him in glory,”*

James 1: 12—

*“Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved,  
he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”*

I John 5: 12—

*“He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”*

Are you a Christ-follower who has allowed God to be the God of your life?

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that You are God of My Life. I thank You that You give me life, breath and everything that I need. I thank You that You are also the God of my eternal life and that Jesus came to also give me abundant life, here and now...for all of eternity. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

## SEPTEMBER 30—Our Treasure

**READ:** Matthew 13: 44-46; 6: 20; 19: 21

**REFLECT:** Jesus is not referred to in Scripture as Our Treasure as such, but doesn't it seem fitting that He should be Our Treasure? Read Matthew 13: 44 and then consider the following excerpt from John Piper's book, *"Desiring God"*:

*"(In this parable), a person discovers a treasure and is impelled by joy to sell all that he has in order to have this treasure. The kingdom of heaven is the abode of the King. The longing to be there is not the longing for heavenly real estate, but for camaraderie with the King. The treasure in the field is the fellowship of God in Christ.*

*I conclude from this parable that we must be deeply converted in order to enter the kingdom of heaven and that we are converted when Christ becomes for us a Treasure Chest of holy joy—a crucified and risen Savior who pardons all our sins, provides all our righteousness, and becomes in His own fellowship our greatest pleasure."*

Is Jesus your Treasure? Would you sell everything to have a closer, more intimate relationship with Him? Or, do you covet the benefits of Christianity more than the Benefactor?

Once again from John Piper's book:

*"In Hebrews 11: 6, the writer says, 'Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him.' In other words, the faith that pleases God is a confidence that God will reward us when we come to Him. But surely this does not mean that we are to be motivated by material things. Surely the reward we long for is the glory of God Himself and the perfected championship of Christ. We will sell everything to have the treasure of Christ Himself."*

What is the motivation behind your faith? Are you spurred on because of the material blessings that come from God? Do you continue in your faith because it might benefit you in some way? Or, are you motivated by the sole purpose of knowing Jesus as your Treasure? John Piper asks a challenging question that forces his readers to consider the driving force of their faith: *"Would you want to go to heaven if God were not there, only His gifts?"*

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that Jesus is My Treasure. He is more precious than diamonds, silver or gold, as a popular worship song says. There is nothing I desire more than You. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Philippians 3: 8; Hebrews 11: 6, 26; Luke 12: 34; I Corinthians 4: 7; Colossians 2: 2-3; Isaiah 33: 6; Job 23: 12.

