

Seeking Satisfaction

For the merchandise of [wisdom] is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof of fine gold (Proverbs 3:14, *KJV*).

Scripture: Proverbs 3:13-18

Song: “I’d Rather Have Jesus”

As I walked down a wooded path sweeping my new metal detector’s coil low over the ground, its headset clamped on my head, I listened to its beeps. I also carried a shovel. My excitement built. Would I find buried treasure today? a pirate’s loot? silver perhaps? gold? Suddenly, the short beeps blared. Ripping off my headset, I started digging. I stopped several seconds, swiped sweat off my forehead, then resumed my dig till I hit a large silver object. My heart sank. “Great. Just great,” I complained aloud. I’d stumbled upon a huge metal garbage can.

Worldly wealth, like that can, is worthless when compared to God’s wisdom. We may work hard for worldly wealth and seek it just as I sought something valuable in the woods. But once we find it, we’re not satisfied, because we always feel like we need more. Most things are never enough.

God’s wisdom does satisfy us, though. Through His loving guidance and correction, we’ll find godliness and contentment. That’s why Solomon, a man of immense wealth, penned these words. His earthly possessions never satisfied him. Knowing Jesus, loving Him, and diligently seeking His wisdom are what we should all desire.

Dear Lord, please give me the wisdom I need to walk according to Your will. Amen.

July 20–27. **Jack Cunningham** lives in Alabama. He teaches Sunday school and enjoys history and reading.

Don't Run Ahead

Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also the Son doeth likewise (John 5:19, *KJV*).

Scripture: John 5:19-24

Song: “Just a Closer Walk with Thee”

Jebba was a country dog, naïve about a big city's dangers. While still a puppy, she joined my household and moved to New Orleans. Oftentimes I walked her to the veterinarian's for her shots and exams. During one such walk, she darted ahead of me toward on-rushing traffic. “No!” I screamed, tugging her leash. She froze; fear filled her face. She either heard or sensed my panic. I praised her for stopping; never again did she dash out into traffic.

Jesus didn't run ahead of God the Father. Instead, Jesus did whatever He saw His Father doing. He set the example for how we should live. Yet how many times have we dashed out ahead of God like Jebba dashed ahead of me? It's not a wise thing, running ahead, because we're setting ourselves up for failure—and possibly disaster. By obeying the Holy Spirit's gentle tugs, we'll not rush ahead of God, nor will we fumble and stumble and fall flat on our faces. So let's be wise and follow where He leads, in lockstep with His will, like Jesus showed us. He'll give us strength and the ability to do what He's called us to do.

Dear Lord, please lead me in every decision I must make and in every step I take. Thank You, Lord. In Jesus' name, amen.

Love Is Our Witness

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another (John 13:34, 35, *KJV*).

Scripture: John 13:31-35

Song: “Love in Any Language”

During a youth meeting, while our praises rang the rafters, a girl quietly sat near a window behind us. She listened, she smiled, and she waited till our music ended. Then our leader set aside his guitar and introduced her. She’d come to share her testimony, he said. She told us that after she’d seen our love for each other, she’d given her heart to Christ.

This girl perfectly illustrated Christ’s words in today’s passage. Love shows the world that we are Christ’s disciples. Walking in love fulfills His commands. Loving the way Christ did is, I believe, the greatest witness of all.

By loving others, especially those who don’t respond in kind, we’re being wise because we never know what people are going through. Personal difficulties, family crises, or other issues often affect one’s behavior. Through demonstrating love for them, however, we show them that someone cares, even if we don’t know their struggles. It can be a balm to their souls. And who knows? Our acts of love may even open doors to win them to Christ, just as happened with that girl who had attended my youth meeting. Love, after all, is our witness.

Dear Lord, please work in me to love others through me. Open doors so that I may reach out to those in need. Thank You, Lord. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Pick It Up and Read

I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever (John 14:16, *KJV*).

Scripture: John 14:15-17

Song: “Thy Word”

In a country villa’s garden near Milan, Italy, Augustine’s mind and soul raged. In his words, he was “soul-sick.” He’d pursued lustful pleasure, philosophy, and heresies. None gave him peace, and all his arguments against Christianity had failed. Now he sought spiritual purity, but sin battled him hard. Then a child’s voice sang from a nearby house: “Pick it up and read, pick it up and read.” So he opened a book from Paul’s letters. He saw Romans 13:12-14, and verse 14 jumped off the page: “Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof” (*KJV*).

Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit, like a divine prosecutor, pointed out Augustine’s sins, then testified about Christ. The Holy Spirit showed him the truth and guided him in the way. Augustine became one of early Christianity’s most famous leaders.

Just as Augustine discovered he didn’t need philosophy or worldly wisdom, neither do we. They don’t fulfill us, and they steer us into bondage and sin. However, if we pick up our Bibles and read, the Holy Spirit will reveal Jesus to us. Let’s commit ourselves to spending time in God’s Word every day, for His Spirit is also our comforter, our encourager, and our advocate. Jesus said He would abide with us forever.

Dear Lord, as I read Your Word, may I receive a greater revelation of Your Son, Jesus. Thank You, Lord. In Jesus’ mighty name, amen.

Loving God

He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him (John 14:21, *KJV*).

Scripture: John 14:18-24

Song: “Bind Us Together, Lord”

John Newton, who wrote the hymn “Amazing Grace,” encouraged his young Christian friend William Wilberforce to stay in politics after William’s conversion. William was, at the time, a member of Parliament. When he witnessed the horrors of Great Britain’s slave trade, God gave him a passion to end it. After working many years in Parliament, and despite opposition, he finally got a bill passed that abolished the trade in 1807. That same year, the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act entered America’s law books.

William had Jesus’ command to love others, so he demonstrated his love for the Lord by loving the less fortunate. He knew God had called him to serve in Parliament to bring an end to the slave trade’s sinful practice. Gladly he obeyed the call. For him, obedience was not a burden but a privilege.

When we love God, obedience isn’t a burden. It’s a privilege and a joy. That’s not to say it’s always easy, because it isn’t. Sometimes God will call us, like He did William Wilberforce, to accomplish a difficult task. But whatever He’s called us to do, He’ll enable us to do. When we love God, we’ll walk in obedience to His Word and His will.

Dear Lord Jesus, thank You for Your commandments and Your Word. Enable me to please You in everything I do. In Your holy name, amen.

Listen to Our Teacher

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost . . . shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you (John 14:26, *KJV*).

Scripture: John 14:25-31

Song: “Come, Holy Spirit”

For many years, John Wesley struggled to find what he thought would please God. He ministered to prisoners and the poor, studied the Bible, and even went to the colony of Georgia for a brief time as a missionary. He based his religion on good works; that is, till he attended a Moravian meeting on Aldersgate Street in London. While someone read the preface to Martin Luther’s commentary on the book of Romans, the Holy Spirit showed Wesley that we’re saved through faith, not works. By teaching Wesley about faith and God’s grace for salvation, the Holy Spirit delivered him from striving and made him ready to be used by God to bring revival throughout Great Britain, winning thousands of souls to Christ.

The same Holy Spirit is also our teacher. Jesus said He would teach us “all things.” Before we can learn from Him, though, we must first be teachable and willing to obey.

As we read the Bible, let’s not approach it like we would any other book. Instead, because it’s God’s Word, let’s read it prayerfully, asking the Holy Spirit to teach us through it. While we listen to sermons, let’s keep our spiritual ears alert for His voice in the message. The Holy Spirit, our perfect teacher, will teach us all things. We only have to stay alert, listen, and obey.

Father, thank You for Your Holy Spirit. Help me to listen and learn from Him. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Knowing

If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him (John 14:7, *KJV*).

Scripture: John 14:1-14

Song: “I Want to Know You”

Horses and I share a mutual misunderstanding, which explains why I’m not much of a horseback rider. Good riders spend time with their horses, getting to know them. Also, they understand their animal’s body language, which enables them to anticipate what their mounts will do in different situations. All of this takes quality time for both man and his four-legged friend.

Because I’m seldom around horses, I’ve only read a few things about them. Oh, I know a smattering of horse facts and a few breed names, but I neither really know nor understand them. Similarly, we may know what the Bible teaches, we can talk about Jesus and even quote verses; but really knowing Him isn’t mere head knowledge. It goes beyond this.

Knowing Christ means having a relationship with Him. It means spending time with Him, becoming more like Him. Only then will we grow in wisdom and grace. Kneel before Him in prayer, worship Him with all our hearts, attend a good church, read and study His Word. To know and understand anything takes a sacrifice of our time. Since Christ sacrificed himself for us and loves us so much, He’s the most important one we need to know. Let’s all spend quality time with Him today.

Dear Lord, thank You for sending Jesus to offer himself as a sacrifice for my sins. Help me to sacrifice my time so that I may spend time with You. In Jesus’ name, amen.