

## Responding to Revealed Glory

**May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer** (Psalm 19:14).

**Scripture:** Psalm 19

**Song:** “All Around the World”

The New Zealand caves with glowworms are a delight. These bioluminescent larvae cling to their cave ceilings, glowing like tiny stars. As I floated in a boat through the dark cave, looking up at thousands of pinpricks of light gleaming overhead, I felt a still sort of sacredness. The caves were only discovered in the 1800s. Realizing that little worms were glowing long before that with no one to see them left me in awe of God’s love for beauty.

From beginning to end, Psalm 19 is about the revelation of who God is, and our response to Him. David stood in awe of God’s glory revealed through the heavens above and in fearful wonder of God’s pure perfection revealed through His Word. In response, David named God his Rock and Redeemer and asked for forgiveness and help avoiding future sin.

Everything God sets in our paths—whether a fresh understanding of a familiar Scripture, a beautiful landscape, or a tiny glowworm—is an opportunity to learn more about Him. Let’s respond as David did—with joy, humility, repentance, and faith-filled trust.

**Father**, help me to see and respond to Your revelation in even the smallest things. In Jesus’ name, amen.

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February 7–13. **Ruth Anne Burrell** lives in the Kansas City area, where she enjoys finding new coffee shops, trying out new recipes, and dreaming up new stories to tell.

## A Foundation for Courage

**“Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night. . . . The LORD your God will be with you wherever you go”** (Joshua 1:8-9).

**Scripture:** Joshua 1:1-9

**Song:** “How Firm a Foundation”

Harriet Tubman is well known for her courageous work in bringing slaves to freedom as a conductor on the Underground Railroad. She talked openly about her faith in God and how she held on to God, fully trusting Him for strength and direction.

God told Joshua three times to “be strong and courageous” (Joshua 1:6, 7, 9) so he could lead the people to freedom in the promised land (vv. 2-4). Strength and courage come through carefully obeying God’s instructions (v. 7) and recognizing His presence (v. 9). Except for Joshua and Caleb, the entire previous generation of the Israelites died in the wilderness. They hadn’t the strength or courage needed to enter the land, because they did not obey God’s commands and trust in His presence with them.

Without our personal obedience to God and trust in His presence, we will not have a foundation for the strength and courage needed to live faithfully. God strengthens us for the tasks He sets before us when we meditate on His Word and do what He says in steadfast faith.

**Father,** thank You for the grace of Your presence with us. Teach us to meditate on Your Word, and give us the courage to do what You want us to do. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Belief and Action

**This is [God's] command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us** (1 John 3:23).

**Scripture:** 1 John 3:18-24

**Song:** “No Greater Love”

My family's dog is afraid of flies. She is a thousand times bigger than they are, but every time one gets into the room, she hides behind the chair in the corner. We think that at some point she must have been stung by a bee, and now she has a lasting fear of anything that buzzes. Though the flies have no way of hurting her, she thinks they might, and so she acts on that and hides.

Our actions are closely tied to our thoughts and beliefs, as 1 John 3 points out. The commands God asks us to follow are simple: believe in the name of Jesus and love one another. Faith should be tied to love, John says. We cannot love others with words only; we must back up our love with action. And when we love others well, our love serves as evidence that we truly believe in God and belong to Him.

Too often we try to divorce belief from action and faith from love. If we say the right things, we think we are doing well. But true faith leads to genuine love that is seen in our actions, and together these bring the greatest gift of all—living in God, while He lives in us.

**Father**, please reveal any areas of my life where I am not believing correctly or where I am not loving correctly. Give me the courage to love as You love. In Jesus' name, amen.

## Full-Hearted Commitment

**I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands** (Psalm 119:10).

**Scripture:** Psalm 119:1-16

**Song:** “Ancient Words”

A group of my friends loves rock climbing, both indoor and outdoor. I’m a half-hearted climber at best, but many of them have worked for years to achieve their skill levels. They have invested in the equipment and memberships they need to practice, they have learned to strategize difficult climbs, and they have pushed through injuries. They have committed full-heartedly to the sport because they love it.

The writer of Psalm 119 set his heart on learning and following the law of the Lord. He memorized the Lord’s words (v. 11), meditated on His precepts, and considered His ways (v. 15). He sought the Lord with all his heart because he understood the benefits that come from this way of life—he knew that those who walk according to the Lord’s words and who keep His commands will be blessed (vv. 1-2). In addition, he pursued this kind of full-hearted commitment because he found joy in it (vv. 14, 16).

Sometimes studying God’s Word feels like a chore. It can be easy for me to slack off or to treat reading my Bible as an item on my to-do list. But in the times when I have pressed in and studied His Word with a single-minded passion, I have found the joy that comes from knowing Him more fully.

**Father**, please give us new passion for studying Your Word. Help us to seek You with our whole hearts. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Wisdom from the Word

**I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes** (Psalm 119:99).

**Scripture:** Psalm 119:97-112

**Song:** “Your Words of Life”

Orville and Wilbur Wright, who are usually considered the inventors of the first airplane, never graduated from high school. Rather than learning about aerodynamics in a classroom, they spent time observing how birds flew, reading literature written by experts, and studying the problems encountered by others who also had tried to fly. With the knowledge they gained outside of formal education classrooms, they succeeded and flew.

In today’s passage, the psalmist muses over the wisdom he gained through holding God’s commands close and meditating on them. Doing so gave him more understanding than his enemies, his teachers, and even the elders of his people. Learning God’s Word provided a light for his path (Psalm 119:105) and helped him avoid wrong turns (vv. 101, 104).

Our world values formal education, and without it we might feel underqualified for the work God has given us to do. After all, so many others seem smarter and better educated. But these verses indicate that formal education—or lack of it—in whatever field isn’t the whole story. We all have access to the wisdom in God’s Word, and that makes all the difference. We can learn by meditating on the truths God has given us and by listening to people with more experience in Bible study.

**Father,** thank You for the gift of Your Word. Thank You for providing a way to know You and to learn more about You. Please give us increased wisdom as we consider Your Word today. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Freely and Joyfully Given

**“You [Ezra] are to take with you the silver and gold that the king and his advisers have freely given to the God of Israel, whose dwelling is in Jerusalem” (Ezra 7:15).**

**Scripture:** Ezra 7:11-22

**Song:** “Take My Life and Let It Be”

Four years after writing the famous hymn “Take My Life and Let It Be,” Frances Ridley Havergal gained a new understanding of one line: “Take my silver and my gold; not a mite would I withhold.” Feeling called to give away her valuables, she packed them up in boxes and donated them to her church. She then wrote a friend to report the delightful pleasure she had in giving away the items.

When Ezra and the people with him returned to Jerusalem, they carried silver and gold from the king of Persia and his advisers. Several times this text makes a point of saying that the offerings were given freely. This was not a stingy or forced giving. The king had come to recognize the Lord as “the God of heaven” (Ezra 1:2), and he and his people were glad to provide whatever funds Ezra needed.

Giving, whether in financial ways or with time and other resources, doesn’t always feel like a joyful activity. But Frances Ridley Havergal and the king of Persia serve as examples for us. When we recognize God as our true Lord and give freely, generosity is a pleasure.

**Father,** forgive me for the times when I have given unwillingly. Thank You for this reminder that giving brings joy to the giver as well as to the receiver. Thank You for all Your gifts to me! In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Devoted Preparation

**Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel (Ezra 7:10).**

**Scripture:** Ezra 7:1-10, 23-26

**Song:** “While I’m Waiting”

For several years I worked as a biographer, helping people write their stories to pass down to their children and grandchildren. Along the way, I interviewed several successful business owners. I found that they all, without exception, had worked hard to get to where they were. Usually, they’d started out in small, menial jobs, learning their trade and working their way up until they were ready to lead.

Ezra had a similar background. He came from a family of priests, and he likely knew from childhood that he would become a priest too. But he also chose this role for himself. He gave himself to studying the Scriptures so he could follow God’s instruction and teach others to do the same. God responded by giving him wisdom (Ezra 7:25). Preparation and God’s grace equipped Ezra to appoint judges and to teach the Law to those who didn’t know it.

We may not always know the exact roles or jobs God has in mind for our futures, like Ezra did. But we can prepare by setting our hearts on studying God’s Word and prioritizing our relationships with Him. God will fill in the details when He is ready and will give us the wisdom we need to do what He wants us to do.

**Father**, help me to obey You in the present, seeking to obey Your Word and trusting You with my future. In Jesus’ name, amen.