

Living Wisely

Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom (Psalm 90:12).

Scripture: Psalm 90:1-12

Song: “Take My Life and Let It Be”

Sometimes I lose sight of how short my time on earth is and what is and isn't eternally important. When this happens, I'm easily distracted by things that ultimately don't matter beyond today. Years ago I routinely allowed myself to get sucked into arguments on social media. But as I evaluated the fruit of these interactions, I realized I was creating barriers to faith for others while robbing myself of precious time. God reminded me that His way of imparting truth is gentle, loving, and timely—not harsh, angry, and abrupt.

Scholars believe Moses wrote Psalm 90 shortly before his death, after four decades of leading God's people through the wilderness (Deuteronomy 2:7). Moses had faithfully represented God to the people except at Kadesh where, in anger, he struck the rock instead of speaking to it (Numbers 20). As a result of his disobedience, Moses was not allowed to enter the promised land—only to see it from afar (Deuteronomy 34).

In the “wilderness” of life today, it's tempting to respond to some situations with anger and frustration rather than trust-filled love. To counter this, we need to pause, step back, seek God's wisdom, and gain a fresh glimpse of the *eternal* promised land.

Father, help me live wisely today with eternity in mind. In Jesus' name, amen.

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Resting in Our Salvation

I am writing to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name (1 John 2:12).

Scripture: 1 John 2:12-17

Song: “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing”

For years, my daughter doubted her salvation. Being more analytical than her comparatively expressive peers, she often felt deficient. This was especially evident to her during youth events, where many friends displayed an emotional spiritual high she never experienced. As a result, in fear, she prayed for salvation whenever anyone shared the gospel . . . just in case she'd previously done so incorrectly.

Perhaps some of the ancient believers the apostle John was addressing fought similar insecurities. False teachers denied that Christ came in the flesh. They claimed to have special knowledge others didn't have and that this knowledge was needed for salvation. John wrote 1, 2, and 3 John to refute these lies and to assure the true believers. He wanted them to know they'd been forgiven (1 John 2:12), had conquered evil through their union with Christ (v. 13), and knew God the Father through faith in His Son (v. 14). They had all they needed to stand firm and secure in Christ.

I've talked with many who've doubted their salvation. They worry that perhaps God truly hadn't—and couldn't—forgive them. Others, like my daughter, have tried to gauge their own faith by others' experiences or expectations. If you struggle with doubt, remember this: Salvation comes through faith in Christ alone—not by works, intellect, or an emotional response.

Father, when doubts arise, help us to rest securely in Your grace. In Jesus' name, amen.

The Love That Binds Us

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well (1 John 5:1).

Scripture: 1 John 5:1-5

Song: “The Unity of Brotherhood”

While on a short-term mission trip to El Salvador, I was immediately intrigued by the intense and obvious love the believers showed for one another. Whenever our translator encountered another person of faith, he grew excited and ushered us over for an introduction, saying, “This is a sister!” or “This is a brother!” This occurred numerous times and in various locations. Once as we were driving up a long, steep road toward a remote village, he called our attention to a woman walking. Pointing her out, he proclaimed, “She’s a sister!” It was clear that these Christians cherished their bond in Christ.

The apostle John said believers would have this kind of deep love for one another. This is evidence of our salvation, since it is only in Christ that we can love like Christ. His Spirit draws us to himself and also to one another. Shortly before His death, Jesus prayed that we, His followers, would be one, just as He and the Father are one (John 17:20-21). That’s deep, supernaturally empowered unity.

God has given us such a precious gift in our fellowship with one another. Through faith, we’ve all been adopted into an eternal family. We are the deepest type of brothers and sisters, joined forever by our loving Father.

Father, keep me united with my faith family and ready to offer Your love and support along the way. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Full Expression of Life

“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness” (Isaiah 43:19).

Scripture: Isaiah 43:14-21

Song: “One Day”

Of all the wonders I’ve witnessed as a believer, I’m most astounded by God’s transformation of my own life. He birthed within my once angry, foul-mouthed, drunken self a new life I couldn’t and wouldn’t have been able to believe previously. I’ve grown a lot in Christ since those young-adult years, but I’m still not all God redeemed me to be. You see, I’ve experienced a glorious taste of God’s kingdom, but the full feast is yet to come.

God’s promise in Isaiah 43 is a similar, already-but-not-yet reality. Speaking of the Babylonian captivity, God promised His people He’d rescue them. But He was also foretelling the coming Messiah, the redemption He’d bring through His Son, who at the end of the age would banish every last trace of evil once and for all.

While today we enjoy the blessings that come with salvation, our souls still long for more—for that day when pain and suffering will end completely. Yet we live with joy and hope, knowing that our full liberation will indeed come. The God who delivered His people from Babylon, who has saved wondrously in the past, will do so again. And in its fullness it will be most glorious—the total and eternal freedom for which our souls long.

Father, thank You for the new life You’ve made to spring up within us through Christ. And thank You for the promise of what’s yet to come. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Our Deepest Thirst

“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost” (Isaiah 55:1).

Scripture: Isaiah 55:1-5

Song: “Living Water”

One hot summer, I made myself ill by not drinking the right liquids. I was training for spring triathlons, and while I routinely hydrated myself, my body wasn't getting what it needed. As a result, my electrolytes became depleted through perspiration. After about the fourth day of this, I could tell something was seriously wrong but I didn't know what. Thankfully, my wise husband realized what I needed and hurried to get me a sports drink. I gulped it down and began feeling better almost immediately.

The people Isaiah spoke to experienced thirst as well, only theirs stemmed from spiritual lack. It was a thirst that their pleasure-seeking and idolatry couldn't quench. Seeing their need, God invited them to himself. He offered life—free of charge—to all who would recognize their need and come to Him.

In John 7:37, Jesus extended such an invitation again to all who will come to Him. We can attempt to satiate our souls with lesser things, leading to increasing spiritual dehydration. Or we can receive—by God's grace—all that we truly need from our Savior. As we spend time with Him through prayer, worship, and Bible reading, He saturates our souls with living water that first fills us up, then flows from us in service to Christ.

Father, I come to You today to receive refreshing by Your Spirit through Your life-giving Word. In Jesus' name, amen.

His Love Holds Tight

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? (Romans 8:35).

Scripture: Romans 8:31-39

Song: “O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus”

For the longest time I believed all love was conditional and that everyone eventually left. Experience had taught me that the other person would stick around only as long as life together was easy, our relationship was convenient, and I met expectations. Sadly, I viewed God from that same perspective. As a result, when hardships came I assumed I must've done something wrong, angered God, or that I simply wasn't worth His efforts.

Perhaps for believers in ancient Rome, when hardships came they were tempted to believe they had displeased God in some way. But Paul—a righteous, faith-filled man who suffered more than any of us can likely imagine—assured them this wasn't the case. No matter what they'd been through, the cross of Christ proved that God was for them. Nothing, not even death itself, could take His love from them.

God wants us to have the assurance Paul had. God, who loved us even when we were at our most unlovely, will continue to love us now and throughout eternity. We don't have to earn His love. In fact we couldn't, even if we tried. He invites us, instead, to rest in that love that will not fail.

Father, thank You for loving with Your perfect love, before we even understood what love was. Help us grasp the depth, reach, and strength of Your love. In Jesus' name, amen.

Pain Will End

He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away (Revelation 21:4).

Scripture: Revelation 21:1-9

Song: “I Can Only Imagine”

I battle chronic pain. And while I don't necessarily enjoy the discomfort, I do appreciate the hope-filled anticipation it stirs within me. Prior to developing my condition, I rarely thought of Heaven. I was focused on the day's events, whether pleasures or frustrations. But through my temporary struggle, God has lifted my sights to my true, eternal, and glorious home.

The apostle John wrote Revelation to believers going through suffering much worse than my pain. These men and women experienced intense persecution, some to the point of death. From a temporal viewpoint, their situation may have appeared hopeless. But that was far from true because, in Christ, their eternal victory was sure. In the book of Revelation, God promised that in His eternal kingdom, inexpressible joy will swallow up death and pain for good.

Life today can feel hard and frightening, and our news channels and social media feeds might make us feel as if all is lost. But Scripture promises the opposite. Our Savior—who conquered sin, death, and the grave—will one day return to take us home. He himself will wipe away our last tears, turning all sorrow to laughter and all mourning to joy.

Father, thank You for the promise of Heaven and of eternity spent with You. Thank You for the peace of knowing that any and all pain we experience now will one day be no more. In Jesus' name, amen.