

Caretaker of All

There went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground (Genesis 2:6 *KJV*).

Scripture: Genesis 2:4–7, 18–25

Song: “All Creatures of Our God and King”

George Washington Carver said, “There is no shortcut to achievement.” As a renowned agricultural scientist, Carver experienced the typical woes of gardening: weeds, insects, and bad weather. But he also knew what all gardeners know—that at the end of a growing season, there’s a harvest worth every ounce of sweat poured into the tending.

When we read that God *watered* the face of the earth, we are reminded that God cares for all He has made, including us. We know about God’s greatness and might, but we may sometimes quickly skim over the significance of what His Word reveals about Him, even the small things like causing streams and rivers to water the earth (Genesis 4:6).

In our walk with God, we can take time to praise Him for how He tends the earth with great wisdom and power and carefully tends our lives. We can seek to follow in His footsteps as we encourage and care for one another.

Father, thank You for sustaining the earth You’ve created and for faithfully taking care of me. Strengthen me today to bless those around me as I walk in Your grace and truth. In Jesus’ name, amen.

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August 4–10. **Ashley Saulnier**, a veteran and Army wife, lives in Kansas with her husband and children. She is multilingual and enjoys reading, writing, running, serving at her local church, and helping others in need.

A Brief Life for Eternal Glory

The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. . . . Teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom (Psalm 90:10, 12 *KJV*).

Scripture: Psalm 90:1–12

Song: “Take My Life and Let It Be”

After several months of fatigue, stomachaches, brain fog, and eyesight regression, I was diagnosed with Hashimoto’s thyroiditis. Doctors tell me that even when the disease is in remission, my thyroid will always need a supplement. I will always have symptoms, even though they might be mild.

The wisdom of eternity teaches us that while our earthly life is temporary, God is timeless and has a future for us beyond time. Even though we may suffer in this life, God has provided deliverance for us from the worst burdens of all: sin, death, and hell. It’s true that God is able to rescue us from life’s perils (see 2 Corinthians 1:10). But most often, His rescue comes to us through His grace, strength, peace, and presence sustaining us.

The Lord knows our lifespan. As we walk with Him daily, we gain the ultimate wisdom that we can trust Him in all circumstances. At the time God has appointed, He will bring us home to be with Him for eternity. Let us prepare our hearts for that meeting.

Father, as You grant me Your grace and strength today, remind me to spend my time here wisely in close fellowship with You. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Love that Edifies

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth (1 Corinthians 10:23–24 *KJV*).

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:23–33

Song: “Not My Own”

Differing opinions about home decor, preferences about organization, and disagreements about how to spend vacation time are a few things that can disrupt the peace of a marriage. Most married couples would admit that there are relational wrinkles that need to be smoothed out along the way. Although some of these may seem trivial, they can reveal a lot about our willingness to compromise or sacrifice for the sake of the other.

Selfless love marked Jesus' life and ministry. He looked after our well-being to the extent that He gave up his *life*. As we seek to walk in His footsteps, Jesus' sacrifice challenges us—challenges our willingness to consider and care about others' interests.

When spouses defer to each other in reverence for Christ, it strengthens the relationship. Pride and selfishness, on the other hand, hinder and damage a marriage. Graciously working out the wrinkles in our relationships teaches us the way of love and humility, helping conform us to the image of Christ. There are so many ways to benefit others. As we look around, even now, is there a way we can advocate, support, give, help, listen, care, defer, serve—show love?

Father, I want to be ready to care about the welfare of those around me in ways that please You. Teach me Your way of love. In Jesus' name, amen.

Standing on Truth in a World of Lies

The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils (1 Timothy 4:1 *KJV*).

Scripture: 1 Timothy 4:1–5

Song: “’Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus”

Sometimes false teaching is obvious; sometimes it is not. Sometimes it's deceptive and comes through a personality we find appealing, attractive, and unassuming—someone we trust. We might see false beliefs creep into the lives of our friends or family members; or maybe we have our own experience with coming out of deception. In light of how clever some false teaching is, it is important for Christians to have biblical understanding, stand firm in it, and know how to articulate it.

Jesus told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would remind them of His words and ways (John 14:26). As we walk with God by His Spirit, spending time in His Word, the Lord is preparing us for each opportune moment to speak what He would have us say, for as the Scripture says, apart from Him, we can do nothing (John 15:5).

Although our conversations about spiritual truth don't always turn out the way we hope, we can trust God's Spirit to lead us as we interact with others. And in our devotional lives, we can seek to increase our understanding in preparation to expose the lies of the enemy. God is glorified as we stand strong in the truth of His Word.

Father, help me stand on Your truth today and not become ensnared by the lies of Satan, self, or society. In Jesus' name, amen.

No Hiding from God

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? . . . If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. (Psalm 139:7, 9–10 *KJV*).

Scripture: Psalm 139:1–12

Song: “Seeking for Me”

Prominent theologian and preacher Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) was known for his boldness in calling people to serious self-examination in light of God’s Word. His sermons were strong appeals, reminders that spiritual decisions have eternal consequences. His desire was for people to receive salvation, draw near to God, and enjoy His presence as Edwards himself had come to do. He wrote, “It has often been my delight to approach God, and adore him as a sovereign God.”

Psalm 139 reveals God’s sovereignty: He is always with us, and no action, thought, or motive is hidden from Him. In Genesis 3, after Adam and Eve sinned in the garden and God asked Adam where he was, it wasn’t because God did not know. God was calling Adam out of hiding and into His presence.

The encouragement here is that there is nothing we can or need to hide from God. He already knows us to our depths. When we belong to Him, we can know He is pursuing us, calling us to draw near. We’ve been saved from our sin, and He meets us, not with anger, but with mercy and sanctifying grace.

Father, thank You for pursuing me and saving me. I’m so grateful to be safe in Your presence. In Jesus’ name, amen.

A Bold Assertion

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting (Psalm 139:23–24 *KJV*).

Scripture: Psalm 139:13–24

Song: “Search Me, O God”

“No!” is a common irresolute reply from the mouth of my toddler. Sadly, all too often, I’m guilty of the same utterance and attitude. A journey through parenthood reveals how children quickly pick up on a parent’s words and ways of being. Of course, one doesn’t need to be a parent to notice the impact of personal sin in the lives of others.

But when we trust Christ as Savior, our thoughts, intentions, attitudes, words, and actions are in the process of being changed. In Christ we are being transformed (Romans 12:2), and we are called to “work out [our] salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12). This process—the work of God’s Spirit in us—not only changes *us* but also impacts those around us, for God’s glory.

Although it may seem intimidating to ask God to search us, we can be confident that God will do so from the heart of a loving Father. As His beloved children, we can boldly ask Him to bring about the changes we need and to lead us in the everlasting way.

Father, thank You that because of Christ, I have been adopted into Your family. Remind me, as your child, to be confident of Your goodness toward me as You search, transform, and purify my heart. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Triumph over Temptation

Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's (1 Corinthians 6:20 *KJV*).

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:12–20

Song: “Jesus Paid It All”

I recently heard someone say that a certain destructive habit is not really a sin. I've heard other people say, “Well, everyone has their vice.” In fact, the apostle James wrote, “In many things we offend all,” meaning we all fail to do the right thing a lot of times (James 3:2 *KJV*). It's true, we all struggle with sinful desires and temptations, and at times it can feel like a losing battle.

Our struggle to resist temptation is real and ongoing, but there is good news! Jesus, who bought us with a price, does not leave us alone to fight our battles with temptation. By the power of God's Spirit at work in us, we can experience triumph as we focus daily on honoring God and bringing Him glory. We may need help, support, and godly counsel along our way, but God's purposes will prevail in our lives as we seek Him.

So today, even if we're struggling, we can call on God to strengthen us to walk in His ways. We belong to the Lord. Our bodies are for the Lord, a blessing from Him with which we can glorify Him today and every day.

Father, I look to You for strength to resist temptation. By Your Spirit at work in me, preserve my purity and well-being. Strengthen me to flee from what displeases You and, through the victory You give, bring glory to Your name. In Jesus' name, amen.