

A DAILY INVITATION
INTO *the* FATHER HEART of GOD

GOD
IS
FAITHFUL



DAVID
WILKERSON

“Dave Wilkerson was a man of prayer and dedication. The way he used to pray for me in the beginning days of my conversion set the stage for my life. This book is a beautiful reminder of his devotional life and a valuable tool for each of us to use in our daily walk.”

Nicky Cruz

“The life and witness of David Wilkerson is a testimony to the power of Holy Spirit ministry and the wisdom and sanity of a life lived in alignment with God’s Word and ways. This devotional guide will doubtless assist many on the pathway to such a Christ-honoring lifestyle.”

Dr. Jack W. Hayford, chancellor/founder, The King’s University;
founding pastor, The Church On The Way, Van Nuys, California

“My friend Dave Wilkerson’s voice continues to speak words of encouragement to people of faith. You will be blessed daily as you meditate on his devotional thoughts from the Word of God.”

Pastor Jim Cymbala, The Brooklyn
Tabernacle, Brooklyn, New York

“I knew David Wilkerson for the last seventeen years of his life. We have, within the pages of these devotionals he wrote, the privilege of understanding the things he embraced that allowed Christ to use his life so mightily. Although he saw in the Spirit what would cause many of us to tremble, he never lost his confidence in the all-sustaining power of God. In the pages of this book you will discover why.”

Carter Conlon, senior pastor, Times
Square Church, New York City



GOD
IS
FAITHFUL

A DAILY INVITATION
INTO *the* FATHER HEART *of* GOD



DAVID
WILKERSON



Chosen

a division of Baker Publishing Group
Minneapolis, Minnesota

© 2012 by World Challenge, Inc.

Published by Chosen Books
11400 Hampshire Avenue South
Bloomington, Minnesota 55438
www.chosenbooks.com

Chosen Books is a division of
Baker Publishing Group, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Printed in the United States of America

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means—for example, electronic, photocopy, recording—without the prior written permission of the publisher. The only exception is brief quotations in printed reviews.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Wilkerson, David, 1931–2011.

God is faithful : a daily invitation into the father heart of God / David Wilkerson.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-0-8007-9535-1 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Devotional calendars. 2. God (Christianity)—Fatherhood—Meditations. 3. God (Christianity)—Faithfulness—Meditations. 4. God (Christianity)—Love—Meditations.

I. Title.

BV4811.W59243 2012

242'.2—dc23

2012001937

Unless otherwise identified, Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations identified NASB are from the New American Standard Bible®, copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Scripture quotations identified KJV are from the King James Version of the Bible.

The internet addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers in this book are accurate at the time of publication. They are provided as a resource. Baker Publishing Group does not endorse them or vouch for their content or permanence.

Cover design by Studio Gearbox

12 13 14 15 16 17 18 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

From the family of David Wilkerson

To Barbara Mackery

for her faithfulness and steadfastness to Brother Dave
as his executive assistant for 41 years;
Barb's contribution to the ministry and to our family
has been indescribable.

To Bettina Marayag

for her continual encouragement to Brother Dave
about these devotional readings, and her enthusiasm
for getting them before a readership.

And to David and Carol Patterson

whose vision for these devotionals began long ago,
knowing how deeply the messages
would minister to the body of Christ;
and whose faithful labors and energy
have brought them to your hands today.

CONTENTS

Introduction 11

- Part 1 The Father Heart of God**
He Delights in Us, His Children 13
- Part 2 God's Hand of Goodness**
He Delights in Blessing Us 55
- Part 3 A Believing Heart**
He Delights in Our Faith 111
- Part 4 The Life of Prayer**
He Delights in Intimacy with Us 167
- Part 5 God's Healing Hand**
He Delights in Restoring Us 221
- Part 6 Holy Before the Lord**
He Delights in Our Obedience 255
- Part 7 Sharing God's Burden**
He Delights in Our Service 319
- Part 8 Help Is on the Way**
He Delights in Helping Us 357
- Part 9 God Has Everything Under Control**
He Delights in Planning Our Future 387

INTRODUCTION

My father, David Wilkerson, was an evangelist, pastor and writer, and oftentimes was used by God as a prophet. He was called by God at times to “set a trumpet to his mouth” and sound a warning call to America.

In one of my last conversations with him before he went to be with Christ, my father told me we are no longer in the time of warning about difficulties to come—but that we are presently in those times of difficulty. During these times of difficulty, he said, our mission now is to encourage the faint, to strengthen those who have become weak and to lift high the name of Jesus—as lover of our souls, provider of our needs and great advocate fighting on our behalf against the evil one.

Are you finding trials and tribulations pressing in on you? Are the perilous times tempting you to grow weary? Are you ready for a word “in season” that will build up your most holy faith? Then these daily devotions are for you. The writings contained here reflect the mission of my father’s last days: to lift up the hands of the saints. I know you will be encouraged.

Gary Wilkerson

P A R T

1

THE FATHER HEART OF GOD

He Delights in Us, His Children

GOD'S DELIGHT

God not only loves His children, He takes great pleasure in us. I see this kind of parental pleasure in my wife, Gwen, whenever one of our grandchildren calls. Gwen lights up like a Christmas tree when she has one of our dear little ones on the line. Nothing can get her off the phone. Even if I told her the President was at our door, she would shoo me away and keep talking.

How could I ever accuse my heavenly Father of delighting in me less than I do in my own offspring? At times my children have failed me, doing things contrary to what I taught them. But never once have I stopped loving them or delighting in them. If I possess that kind of enduring love as an imperfect father, how much more does our heavenly Father care for us, His children?

Joshua and Caleb stood up in the midst of Israel and cried, "If the Lord delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us" (Numbers 14:8). What a simple yet powerful declaration. They were saying, "Because our Lord delights in us, He will vanquish every giant. Therefore, we must not look at our obstacles, but keep our eyes on our Lord's great love for us."

All through Scripture we read that God delights in us: "But the blameless in their ways are His delight" (Proverbs 11:20). "The prayer of the upright is His delight" (15:8). "My strong enemy [was] . . . too strong for me. . . . But the Lord . . . delivered me because He delighted in me" (Psalm 18:17–19).

It is absolutely imperative that we believe God delights in us. Then we will be able to accept that every circumstance in our lives will eventually prove to be our Father's loving will for us. And He will bring joy out of our struggle.

YOU ARE GOD'S TREASURE

The Word says, “And an adulteress will prey upon his precious life” (Proverbs 6:26). The adulteress spoken of in this verse is Satan—and he hunts down those who are precious to God.

The Bible gives us a vivid illustration of this in Numbers 13 and 14. Israel had sent twelve spies to search out the Promised Land. When the spies returned after forty days, ten of them planted three lies in the hearts of God's people:

1. “There are too many people in the land. They are too strong for us.”
2. “The cities are walled too high. The strongholds are impregnable.”
3. “There are giants in the land, and we are no match for them. We're helpless, finished!”

These lies took the heart right out of Israel. Scripture says the people endured a night of despair. “So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night” (Numbers 14:1). More than 2 million people were weeping, wailing, moaning—focused completely on their weaknesses and inabilities.

Beloved, the devil still lies to God's people today. He whispers, “Your trials and temptations are too overwhelming. You are too weak to resist the power coming against you.”

The word that God spoke to Israel is for us today: “You shall be a special treasure to Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine” (Exodus 19:5). “For you are a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure” (Deuteronomy 14:2).

Joshua and Caleb had a revelation of their preciousness in God's eyes. They said, “Because He delights in us, the land is as good as ours” (see Numbers 14:8).

David had the same revelation: “He delivered me because He delighted in me” (Psalm 18:19). Likewise, every victorious Christian today has this same revelation: “We cannot fail—because we are precious to the Lord!”

CALLED FROM BEFORE CREATION

The apostle Paul says of God, “Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began” (2 Timothy 1:9).

Every person who is “in Christ” is called by the Lord. And we all have the same mandate: to hear God’s voice, to proclaim His Word, never to fear man and to trust the Lord in the face of every conceivable trial.

Indeed, God made this promise to His prophet Jeremiah when He called him (see Jeremiah 1:1–10). Just as it was with Jeremiah, we do not need a message prepared to speak before the world. He has pledged to fill our mouths with His Word at the exact moment it is needed—if we will trust Him.

Scripture shows us that Paul was tested as few ministers ever have been. Satan tried to kill him time after time. The so-called religious crowd rejected and ridiculed him. At times even those who supported Paul left him abused and forsaken.

But Paul was never confounded or perplexed before men. He was never dismayed or put to shame before the world. And Paul never burned out. On every occasion, he had an anointed word to speak from God, just when it was needed.

The fact is, Paul simply would not be shaken. He never did lose his trust in the Lord. Instead, he testified, “I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him until that Day” (2 Timothy 1:12). He is saying, “I have committed my life fully to the Lord’s faithfulness. Live or die, I am His.” And he urged his young charge Timothy to do likewise: “Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus” (verse 13).

TAKE HOLD OF YOUR TRIAL BY FAITH

If we didn't have conflict, pressure, trials and wars within, we would become passive and lukewarm. Decay would set in and our temple would lie in ruins. We would not be able to handle the territory we have gained. That is why the enemy's plan against us is clear: He wants to remove all the fight from us.

The simple truth is we find all our resources—strength to go on, power over the enemy—in our spiritual battles. On that day when we stand before the Lord, He will remind us: “Do you remember what you went through on that occasion? in that awful battle? in the midst of that awful trial? Look at what you accomplished through it all.”

The fact is God put His treasure in human bodies. He has made you a temple, a house for His Spirit to dwell in. If you become lazy and careless, neglecting the maintenance work needed—regular prayer, feeding on God's Word, fellowshiping with the saints—decay will set in and you will end up in absolute ruin.

As I look back on my own years of ministry, I recall many times when it would have been easy for me to quit. I would pray, “Lord, I don't understand this attack. Where did it come from? When will it end? I don't see any purpose in it at all.” But over time I began to see fruit from those trials. That fruit—resources, strength, spiritual power—supplied me in a way I could not have attained through any other means.

I urge you: Take hold of your trial and believe that God has allowed it. Know that He is using it to make you stronger—to help you take spoils from Satan, to make you a blessing to others and to sanctify it all to His glory.

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Corinthians 4:17).

A REVELATION OF LOVE

Joseph's brothers did not know how much they were truly loved until God used a crisis to reveal it to them. "The famine was over all the face of the earth, and Joseph opened all the storehouses" (Genesis 41:56).

"When Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons . . . 'Go down to that place, and buy for us there.' . . . So Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain" (42:1–3).

Twenty years had passed since these brothers' crime of selling Joseph into slavery. In that time he became Prime Minister of Egypt. For seven years Joseph had stored grain in preparation for famine. Now Jacob's sons went to Egypt intent on getting corn—but God was sending them to get a revelation of love! They were about to experience mercy, pardon and restoration—and they would learn what the grace of God was all about. Deserving nothing but judgment, they were going to receive pure grace.

Sin had kept the brothers out of touch with Joseph. In fact, they probably assumed he was dead. When they arrived at Pharaoh's court and came before Joseph, they did not recognize him, but he knew them immediately (see 42:8). His heart was filled with compassion at the sight of the brothers he loved so dearly.

These proud men were not yet ready for a revelation of grace and mercy, however. First they needed to see the exceeding ugliness of their sins and face their guilt and shame. The message of the cross of Christ is unconditional love—and God showed this truth to Joseph.

Joseph put his brothers in prison for three days—not to punish them, but to give them a chance to face the truth about their sin. It is impossible to understand God's grace until we come to the end of our own resources and experience His mercy. That grace delivers us from all shame and guilt.

WHO DREAMED UP THIS PLAN FOR SURVIVAL?

Then the word of the Lord came to him [Elijah], saying, ‘Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan’” (I Kings 17:2–3).

As Elijah looked ahead to the coming crisis, things looked absolutely hopeless to him. But God had a specific survival plan in mind for His faithful servant. “Go east to the Jordan River, and there you will find Cherith, a little tributary. You can get all the drinking water you need from that brook. In addition, I’ve arranged for food to be delivered to you daily, by My courier ravens.”

How could any person ever dream up this kind of plan for survival? How could Elijah ever have imagined he’d be sent to a hidden brook to find water to drink, when there was nothing but drought everywhere in the land? How could he have envisioned a daily supply of bread being brought to him by ravenous birds that ate everything they sank their beaks into?

Later, times got hard for Elijah, because the brook finally dried up. But God stepped in again, giving the prophet another fresh word of direction. He said, “Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you” (verse 9).

Again, I have to ask—how could anyone ever think a poor widow woman, in the midst of a depression, could feed a man for days, weeks, months? The fact is, God uses the most insignificant things of the world for His glory. He told Elijah, “If you will go to her and do what I tell you, you will survive. Listen to Me and you will make it through!”

The evidence is overwhelming: God—our adviser, counselor and survival expert—has a detailed plan for every one of His children, to help us face the worst of times.

IT BEGAN WITH REPENTANCE

The Church as we know it today began with repentance. When Peter preached the cross at Pentecost, thousands came to Christ. This new Church was made up of one body, consisting of all races, filled with love for one another. Its corporate life was marked by evangelism, a spirit of sacrifice, even martyrdom.

This wonderful beginning reflects God's word to Jeremiah: "Yet I had planted you a noble vine, a seed of highest quality" (Jeremiah 2:21). The Lord's next words, however, describe what often happens to such works: "How then have you turned before Me into the degenerate plant of an alien vine?" (same verse). God was saying, "I planted you right. You were Mine, bearing My name and nature. Now you have turned degenerate."

What caused this degeneration in the Church? It always has been, and will continue to be, idolatry. God is speaking of idolatry when He says to Jeremiah, "But My people have changed their Glory for what does not profit" (verse 11).

The number-one idol among God's people is not adultery, pornography or alcohol. It is a much more powerful lust. What is this idol? It is a driving ambition for success. And it even has a doctrine to justify it.

The idolatry of being successful describes many in God's house today. These people are upright, morally clean, full of good works—but they have set up an idol of ambition in their hearts, and they cannot be shaken from it.

God loves to bless His people. He wants His people to succeed in all they undertake honestly. But there is now a raging spirit in the land that is overtaking multitudes. It is a spirit of love for recognition and acquiring of things.

A man of the world said, "He who dies with the most toys wins." Tragically, Christians, too, are caught up in this pursuit. How far we have strayed from the Gospel of dying to self, ego and worldly ambition!

GOD DELIGHTS IN YOU!

The Holy Spirit gave David a revelation that is the key to all deliverance. David could say, “The reason God delivered me from all my enemies and all my sorrows is because I am precious to Him. My God delights in me!” “He delivered me because He delighted in me” (Psalm 18:19).

Do you need deliverance from temptation or trial? From a problem that is far too big for you? The key to your victory is in this verse. God delights in you—for you are precious to Him!

These thoughts are found throughout the Psalms: “The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy” (147:11). “For the LORD takes pleasure in His people” (149:4).

I can tell you of God’s delight in you: “You are precious to the Lord.” You may think, “That is sweet, but it is only a lovely thought.” No, this truth is much more than a lovely thought. It is the key to your deliverance from every battle that rages in your soul and the secret to entering into the rest God has promised you.

Isaiah had a revelation of God’s great delight in us. He prophesied, “Fear not . . . you are Mine. . . . When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned” (Isaiah 43:1–2).

Isaiah was talking about what people go through spiritually and mentally. Israel was in captivity at the time, and God sent them a broken-hearted prophet. That prophet told them, “God wants you to know that you belong to Him.”

Right now, you may feel overwhelmed by trials that threaten to consume you. God does not always keep them from coming, but He does promise this: “I will walk with you through it all. This trial or circumstance will not destroy you. It will not consume you. I take pleasure in you, My child. So, walk on. You will come out on the other side with Me beside you.”

TURTLEDOVES

God has kept me through all my struggles by showing me King David's secret hope. At one point in his life, David, lamenting and complaining, wondered why God was angry with him. He called on God to "Take [Your hand] out of Your bosom and destroy them" (see Psalm 74:11).

It seemed to David that the enemies of God were taking control. In his despair, he prayed, "Oh, do not deliver the life of Your *turtledove* to the wild beast!" (verse 19).

Like David, in my most trying times I was encouraged to see myself as His lovebird, resting on His promise to keep me out of the snares of the wicked. Like a turtledove, we long for the presence of our beloved Savior.

I picture Christ coming to me in the form of a dove—His Holy Spirit—revealing to me His constant love and continual care. How unspeakable that such a great and majestic God would condescend to relate to my needs as a turtledove. Did He not Himself descend as a dove upon Christ at the baptismal waters?

Child of God, are you going through difficult times? Is there suffering in your home? Do you hurt? Are you confused at times because of the severity of it all? Remember, you are the Lord's little turtledove—and He will never turn you over to the wicked one. He will deliver you from every snare of the enemy and show you how devoted He is to you in your hour of need. He is there beside you, at all times, as a dove, whispering and sharing His love with you.

The sparrow falls to the ground, but not the turtledove. He is kept in the hollow of God's hand, safe and secure in the Father's love. Best of all, the Lord will deliver us out of our troubles and prove His everlasting faithfulness to us. We shall come through it all, in full rest and trust in His power and love.

GOD'S GIFT TO HIS SON

I can scarcely take it in when I read these words: “And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one” (John 17:22).

In a true sense, it may be said that God so loved His Son that He gave Him the world. Think of it. We have our Lord's word, confessed before His own Father, that He has given Himself to us as fully as His Father gave Himself to Him. He has given us the same intimate love His Father gave Him—and that is His glory manifested in us.

We have been brought into the same kind of special love relationship that Jesus shares with the Father. Even more, Christ opens up the circle of love between the two of them and brings us into it. We are made partakers of a glory beyond comprehension. How incredible that Jesus should bring us to the Father and plead, “that they may be one with Us!” We share completely in the fullness of God's love for His Son by being in Christ.

Did you not know we are God's gift to His Son—a gift of love? “They were Yours; You gave them all to Me.” Christ is so in oneness with the Father, He brings the gift back to Him and says, “All Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine” (verse 10). This kind of love can take nothing to itself—but gives its all.

What an honor—to have Christ place us in the palm of His great, loving hand and present us to the Father, saying, “Behold, Father—they are Ours! I will love them, Father, and You will love them.” How can our minds grasp it all?

GOD WANTS TO PLANT US ON THE MOUNT OF HIS PRESENCE

Many people shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways’” (Isaiah 2:3).

“Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer” (56:7).

The message of the Holy Spirit today to all of God’s people is, “Get back to the mount—get back into His holy presence.” Many are now hearing that call and making time for prayer and seeking God. Others, however, go about their way, too busy with “Kingdom details” to climb the holy hill.

Isaiah saw both the glory of an awakened ministry and the tragedy of blind watchmen who were asleep. While some watchmen shake themselves and go back to the mount of God to hear a fresh word from heaven, others are lost in endless activities and self-advancement.

“His watchmen are blind, they are all ignorant. . . . Sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. . . . They all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his own territory” (56:10–11).

Isaiah said they got this way—self-centered, preoccupied, spiritually dead—because they are “those who forsake the Lord, who forget My holy mountain” (65:11).

The Spirit is raising up an army of “mountain men” who will spend time alone with God—shut up in His presence, hearing His voice, getting new vision, and returning with joy to deliver “those who wail for grief of spirit” (see 65:13–14). They shall return—with the power and dominion needed to save the Church from chaos.

GET TO KNOW THE VOICE OF GOD

God wants us to know that no matter how difficult things may get for us, He will sustain all who trust in Him. How does He do this? By the power of His still, small voice speaking to our inner man.

This is confirmed by the prophet Isaiah: “Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it,’ whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left” (Isaiah 30:21).

Isaiah delivered this word to Israel in the very worst of times. The nation was under judgment, in absolute ruin, with everything breaking down. Isaiah told Israel’s leaders, “Turn to the Lord now! He wants to give you a word of direction—to go this way, go that way, here is the way.”

But they would not listen. They decided to turn to Egypt to find help in being delivered. They thought they could rely on the Egyptians’ chariots, horses and supplies to see them through.

God did not send judgment on Israel at that point. Rather, He decided to wait patiently until the bottom fell out of every plan. He said, “While they’re running around scheming how to survive, I will wait. I want to show them My mercy, in spite of their wickedness!” (see verse 18).

Sure enough, things only got worse for the nation. Finally, when all their schemes had fallen through, God told the people, “Now, let Me take over. I know the way out, and I will direct you and deliver you. I will lead you by My voice—speaking to you, telling you what to do down to the last detail.”

It is vitally important that you know the voice of God. He made it clear, “My sheep know My voice.” There are many voices in the world today—loud, demanding voices. But there is that still, small voice of the Lord that can be known and heard only by those who trust what Jesus said.

HIS NAME IS FORGIVENESS

Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy. He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:18–19).

How is our Lord distinguished from all the other gods worshiped throughout the world? Of course, we know our God is above all others, set apart in every way. But one clear way we know the Lord to be distinguished from others is by His name: “the God who pardons.”

Scripture reveals our Lord as the God who forgives, the only God who has the power to pardon sin. “Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity?”

We see this name of God confirmed throughout the Scriptures.

- Nehemiah declared, “But You are God, ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abundant in kindness, and did not forsake them” (Nehemiah 9:17). The proper translation of the phrase “a God ready to pardon” is “a God of propitiation” or “a God of forgiveness.”
- Moses asked the Lord for a revelation of His glory. He was not allowed to see God’s face, but the Lord did reveal His glory to Moses through a revelation of His name. What name of God was revealed to Moses? “The LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin” (Exodus 34:6–7).
- David gives us the same Hebrew description of God. He writes, “For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You” (Psalm 86:5). David penned these words out of his own personal failure and difficult experience. Truly he had found Him to be the God who pardons, just as He promised.

All of these tell us the name of our God: Forgiveness!

GETTING TO KNOW THE FATHER

I believe our natural children get to know our nature and character most during their times of crisis. When they are in the midst of pain and need, they recognize our deep care and provision for them.

When my children were growing up, I did not have to lecture them about what I am like. I never had to say, “I’m your father—I am patient and kind, full of mercy toward you. I am tenderhearted, ready to forgive you at all times.” It would have been ludicrous for me to make this kind of proclamation. Why? Because my children learned about my love during their crisis experiences.

Now that they are grown and married with children, my sons and daughters are getting to know me through a whole new set of experiences. They are learning even more about me by my attitudes and actions toward them in this new time of need in their lives.

So it is with us in getting to know our heavenly Father. From the time of Adam down through the cross of Christ, the Lord gave His people an ever-increasing revelation of His character. Yet He did not do this by simply proclaiming who He was. He did not try to reveal Himself by merely announcing, “The following names describe My nature. Now, go and learn these, and you will discover who I am.”

God revealed these aspects of His nature to His people by actually *doing* for them what He proclaimed Himself to be. He saw His children’s needs, foresaw the enemy’s strategy against them and intervened supernaturally on their behalf.

Get to know your heavenly Father—slowly, purposefully, on a heart level. Ask the Holy Spirit to recall to you the heavenly provision God has given you during your times of need. Then ask the Spirit to build into you a true heart knowledge of I AM—the God who is everything you need, at all times.

LEARN TO STAND UP AND FIGHT ON YOUR OWN

You have to learn to fight your own battles. You cannot depend on someone else for your deliverance.

Perhaps you have a prayer warrior friend you can call and say, “I have a fierce battle before me. Will you pray for me? I know you have power with God!” That is scriptural—but it is not God’s complete will for you. God wants *you* to become a warrior. He wants you to be able to stand up against the devil.

God promised Gideon, “Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man” (Judges 6:16). God assured him, “I have sent you—therefore, I will be with you.”

Then the people of the city came looking for the godly man who tore down their idols (see verses 28–30). Where was Gideon? He was hiding, still unsure of God’s promises, still wondering if God was with him. Gideon cried, “If the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about?” (verse 13).

So it is with many of us. Jesus has promised us, “I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20). Yet we have not learned to stand on His Word and fight!

Things will begin to change the moment you are fully persuaded that God is with you—that He speaks to you and will show you all you need to know. You are stronger than you think. Like Gideon, you may wonder, “How can I fight? I am so weak, so inexperienced.” God answered Gideon, “Go in this might of yours” (Judges 6:14).

“What might?” Gideon must have wondered. In truth, his might was bound up in God’s word to him: “Surely I will be with you.”

Beloved, that same word—“I am with you”—is your strength to fight. You will receive that strength believing this word—and by acting on it. God is faithful!

GOD'S LOVE IS CONVEYED TO US ONLY THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

According to John, all of God's love dwells in Jesus. He writes, "And of His fullness we have all received" (John 1:16). How have we received the Father's love? We have obtained it by being in Christ.

You may ask, "What is so important about knowing God's love is conveyed to us through Christ? How does that impact our lives?"

We have to look to Christ as our example. Jesus has already told us the Father loves us in the same way He loves the Son. So, what impact did the Father's love have on Jesus?

"By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us" (1 John 3:16). Here was the fruit of God's love in Jesus: He gave of Himself as a sacrifice for others. The second half of this verse tells us the purpose of God's love in our own lives. It reads, "And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." God's love leads us to present our bodies as living sacrifices, as Jesus did.

Have you ever thought about what it means to truly lay down your life for your brothers and sisters? John is not talking about becoming martyrs on foreign soil or registering as an organ donor. Nor does he mean we are to take the place of some condemned criminal on death row.

No, the only kind of Christian who can bring life and hope to his brethren is a "dead" one. Such a servant has died to this world—to all self, pride and ambition.

This "dead" Christian has allowed the Holy Spirit to take a spiritual inventory of his soul. He sees through the ungodliness in his heart and willingly goes to God's altar, crying, "Lord, consume me. Take it all." He knows that only through being cleansed by Christ's blood can he give his life in love for his brethren.

WILDERNESS JOURNEY

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian, likened the Christian to someone trying to cross a sea of floating ice pieces. The Christian cannot rest anywhere while crossing—except in his faith that God will see him through. He cannot stand anywhere too long, otherwise he sinks. After taking a step, he must watch for the next. Beneath him is the abyss and before him is uncertainty, but always ahead is the Lord—firm and sure. This traveler does not see the land yet, but it is there as a promise in his heart. Likewise the Christian traveler keeps his eyes fixed on his final place.

I prefer to think of life as a wilderness journey—like that of the children of Israel. The battle of King Jehoshaphat, along with all the children of Judah, is also our battle (see 2 Chronicles 20). Sure, it is a wilderness; yes, there are snakes, dry water holes, valleys of tears, enemy armies, droughts, impassable mountains. Yet when the children of the Lord stood still to see His salvation, He spread a table in that wilderness—raining manna from above, destroying enemy armies by His power, bringing water out of rocks, taking poison out of snakebites, leading the people by pillar and cloud, giving them milk and honey, and bringing them into the Promised Land with a high and mighty hand.

God instructed them to tell every following generation: “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the Lord of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6).

It is time for you to stop looking in the wrong direction for help. Get alone with Jesus in a secret place and tell Him all about your confusion. You will wonder if God is working at all, but there is nothing to lose. Peter summed it all up: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (John 6:68).

“Look to Me, and be saved . . . for I am God, and there is no other” (Isaiah 45:22).

THE UNRELENTING LOVE OF GOD

The word *unrelenting* means “undiminished in intensity or effort—unyielding, uncompromising, incapable of being changed or persuaded by arguments.” To be unrelenting is to stick to a determined course.

What a marvelous description of the love of God. Nothing can hinder or diminish His loving pursuit of both sinners and saints. David, the psalmist, expressed it this way: “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there” (Psalm 139:7–8).

In speaking of the great highs and lows of life, David is saying, “There are times when I’m so blessed I feel lifted with joy. At other times I feel like I am living in hell, condemned and unworthy. But no matter where I am, Lord—no matter how blessed I feel or how low my condition is—You are there. I cannot get away from Your unrelenting love!”

Paul was bent on destroying God’s Church. He hated Christians and breathed out threats of slaughter against all who followed Jesus. After his conversion, Paul testified that even during those hate-filled years—while he was full of prejudice, blindly slaughtering Christ’s disciples—God loved him.

The apostle wrote, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). He was saying, “Even though I wasn’t conscious of it, God was pursuing me with unrelenting love.”

Through the years, Paul became increasingly convinced that God would love him fervently to the end, through everything. May his declaration be ours as well: “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38–39).

HE BROUGHT US OUT TO BRING US IN

Before the cross, there was no general access to God. Only the high priest could enter the holy of holies. Jesus' cross made a path for us into the Father's presence. By His grace alone, God tore down the wall that blocked us from His presence.

Consider Israel's miraculous deliverance. As God's people crossed over on dry land they saw the waves crash down on their enemy behind them. It was a glorious moment, and they held a mighty praise meeting: "We're free! God has delivered us from the hand of oppression."

Israel's story represents our own deliverance from the guilt of sin. We know that Satan was defeated at the cross, and we were immediately set free from his iron grip. Yet there is more to God's purpose in saving and delivering us. You see, the Lord never meant for Israel to settle on the victory side of the Red Sea. His greater purpose in bringing them *out of Egypt* was to take them *into Canaan*, His land of fullness. In short, He brought them *out* in order to bring them *in*—into His heart, into His love. The same is true today.

Israel's first test came just a few days later, and they ended up murmuring and complaining, totally dissatisfied. Why? They had experienced God's deliverance, but they had not learned His great love for them.

Here is the key to this teaching: You cannot come into joy and peace—indeed, you cannot know how to serve the Lord—until you see His delight in your deliverance; until you see the joy of His heart over His communion with you; until you see that every wall has been removed at the cross; until you know that everything of your past has been judged and wiped away.

God says, "I want you to move on into the fullness that awaits you in My presence!" Do not miss God's greater purpose.

INTO ARABIA

If I seek to please man, I cannot be a servant of Christ. If my heart is motivated by the approval of others—if that mindset influences the way I live—my loyalties will be divided. I always will be striving to please someone other than Jesus.

A few years after the apostle Paul was converted, he went to the church in Jerusalem to try to join the disciples there. “But they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple” (Acts 9:26).

The apostles knew Paul’s reputation as a persecutor. “And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ. But they were hearing only, ‘He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy’” (Galatians 1:22–23).

Barnabas helped the apostles get over their fear of Paul and they offered him fellowship. But Paul decided to itinerate among the Gentiles. Indeed, Paul is careful to describe his calling very clearly: “I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ” (verses 11–12).

In Galatians 1:17, Paul points out that “I went to Arabia.” He is saying, in essence, “I did not get my revelation of Christ from the saints in Jerusalem. Instead, I went into Arabia—to the desert—to have Christ revealed to me. I spent precious time there, hearing and being taught by the Holy Spirit.”

What Paul is saying here applies to all who desire to have the mind of Christ: “I received my anointing on my knees—from the Lord Himself.” Paul had emptied himself of selfish ambition and found total satisfaction in Christ and His faithfulness. When your mind is set on pleasing Christ, you will never need the applause and approval of men.