

out of their work, their children, the moon, the ocean, a sport, an celebrities, hobbies, or entertain- it is, it's an attempt to fulfill the g or someone.

biggest motivator of all we do and es.

who is worthy of our worship, and ll miss out on great blessings we

's the way He shares Himself with mself into us—His love, power, joy, cess He transforms us into who we

what we worship, so the more we e like Him (Psalm 115:4-8). And ed to be without that happening s about God is that even though d solely at Him, we are the ones ng God to make something that o our greatest blessing?

worship and praise fulfills us in filled—in ways we didn't even se He wants to give us certain en we are praising Him. Every g changes in us—in our mind s.

God is, the more you will love m, the more you will worship

What's Happening in Your Life

our lives in a powerful way orship to Him. Our worship

demonstrates our love for Him and opens the way for Him to work powerfully in our lives to transform us and our impossible situations. That's why it's God's will that we give thanks and praise to Him *in every situation*. When we don't do that, we shut off possibilities for great things God wants to do in our life. Worship can even stop or reverse something that is headed in the wrong direction.

There have been countless times in my life as a believer where I prayed and prayed about a problem, praising God that He cared about a particular situation and He was greater than what I was facing. But there came a time when God instructed my heart that I was to continue praising Him no matter what did or did not happen. I was to trust that He had the answer to what was needed and the power to change things, and His timing and judgment were perfect. I took that stance of trust in Him until breakthrough finally came.

Worship establishes an atmosphere in which God moves powerfully. Things happened that I believe would not have without that powerful dynamic.

God requires worship and praise of all of who believe in Him because He wants us to be sold out to Him one hundred percent. And He does that because He has so much He wants to give us and do in our lives, and He must be able to trust us with the blessings we will receive.

"Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You. Then the earth shall yield her increase; God, our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him" (Psalm 67:5-7). Blessings happen to people who worship Him.

What parent doesn't want their children to express love and appreciation for them without wanting something? God wants that too. That's why we need to make worship of Him a priority, not just something we may or may not remember to do. It must become a way of life.

We were created to worship God, and when we are doing what

quickly move into other aspects of

David from his enemies, he worshipped, saying, "The LORD is my God, my strength, in whom is my salvation, my stronghold. I am worthy to be praised; so shall I be" (Psalm 18:2-3).

prayer, or the answer to prayer, or for whom we worshipped God until the victory was complete.

Lavishly. "Lavishly" means to go all out with both hands, spare no expense, and pay the cost.

That way, telling Him of your love, devotion, respect, awe, and reverence to be in you and your life.

Love, dear, revere, and glorify the Lord who is filled with His love, joy, peace, and love for others. All of those things are like a life-giving serum. It will determine who God made you to be will be more fully realized without a heart of lavish worship.

greatest act of love toward God. And we must make. If you choose not to praise Him, you are going the way you want it to go. If you are answered, you will miss what God

because He is always—every moment of your life—praise continually be in your heart

and your mouth. Soon you will not be able to stop yourself from worshipping Him.

There Is Never a Time When You Don't Need to Worship God

Those who do not worship God soon forget all He has done.

When the Israelites didn't worship God, they started worshipping their own ways. They stopped seeking His counsel. And they did that even after God had done many obvious miracles in order to free them. They complained and lusted after other things and were not thankful for what He had provided for them. So God let them have what they wanted, but there was an enormous price to pay.

"They soon forgot His works; they did not wait for His counsel, but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tested God in the desert. And He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul" (Psalm 106:13-15).

A lean and empty soul will never be satisfied or filled. There will never be enough. It will always be miserable.

Every time we worship God with all of our heart, He fills our emptiness with Himself. "Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! For He satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness" (Psalm 107:8-9).

We can't ever allow ourselves to get into the situation where we believe we don't need to worship God. We must not think for a moment that nothing can shake us—that we don't need God and we can't fail. We must not have a false sense of security and suppose we don't need to pour ourselves out before the Lord in praise and empty ourselves before Him in humble worship. We cannot imagine for even an instant that God's rules don't apply to us.

That's what David did the day he ordered his troops to be counted. He listened to the enemy's lies instead of showing love, adoration, and thanksgiving to God in worship. "Satan stood up against Israel,

and moved David to number Israel" (1 Chronicles 21:1). So David told his leader, Joab, to number the troops. But Joab had the fear of God in him and tried to talk David out of doing that because he knew it would displease the Lord.

Joab pleaded, "Why then does my lord require this thing? Why should he be a cause of guilt in Israel?" (1 Chronicles 21:3). But David would not be dissuaded and the troops were counted.

David's thinking was that the number of his soldiers was what gave him strength and security. He forgot it was *God* who was *with them* that brought him victory.

When David finally recognized his sin against God, his "heart condemned him" and he mourned because of it (2 Samuel 24:10). He confessed and repented of it before God, but he still had to pay the consequences, which was a plague that killed seventy thousand men (2 Samuel 24:15).

All this happened because he didn't humbly worship God, which would have softened his heart to hear God's voice, and then he would not have listened to the voice of the enemy.

David had been the great lavish worshipper, the one who went all out and gave himself totally to worshipping God, but pride crept into his heart. As a result he suffered a reduction in the number of troops he had, the very thing he was most proud of. He paid an enormous price—but so did his men, I might add. This only goes to show why the Bible says we are to pray for all people who are in authority over us (1 Timothy 2:2).

David was fully restored to God because of his repentant heart. He said to God, "You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, *to the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent*. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever" (Psalm 30:11-12).

David recognized that when things were going well he thought he could not be shaken. He said, "In my prosperity I said, 'I shall never be moved'" (Psalm 30:6). This is the mistake too many of us

make when we fail to see what we should look to the Lord at all times.

We have to ask ourselves if we are listening to the Lord to save us more than we are relying on our own strength in order to fortify ourselves in our lives. *is doing*, and *can do* in our lives. There is never a time when we don't need the Lord. If we are not listening to Him, then we are listening to the world.

God Blesses Those Who Worship Him

Something powerful happens when we worship God. It affects the people. This doesn't diminish the love between us and God alone, but it adds to it when we worship corporately. It affects our hearts and minds. And that blessing is from God.

Much is said in the Bible about God blessing His people with other believers. "Let them praise the LORD, O *people*" (Psalm 107:32). "My people shall say, 'Blessed be the LORD; I will pay my vows before Him'" (Psalm 115:12).

David told God that he did not want to be a doer of evil deeds, but he wanted to be a doer of good deeds with the voice of thanksgiving. "Praise the LORD, *I have loved the habitation of Your glory dwells*" (Psalm 26:5, 7). "In the congregations I will bless Your name, O LORD" (Psalm 135:2).

When we are in the house of worship to Him, we are in His house. Loving the house of God is not loving the ground. Loving the house of God is loving the Lord, but that we love where God is exalted among the people who are in His presence dwells where He is worshipped. We can sense the awesome power of God in His house of worship. It affects us with strength and power.

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make when we fail to see where our help comes from and why we
should look to the Lord at all times (Psalm 121:1-2).

We have to ask ourselves if there is anything we are counting on
to save us more than we are relying on God. Are we adding up things
in order to fortify ourselves instead of adding up what God *has done*,
is doing, and *can do* in our lives and thanking Him for that? There is
never a time when we don't need to worship God. If we think there
is, then we are listening to the wrong voice.

God Blesses Those Who Worship Him Together

Something powerful happens when we worship God with other
people. This doesn't diminish the worship that happens in our heart
between us and God alone, but we receive another powerful blessing
when we worship corporately with other believers in unity of spirit
and mind. And that blessing doesn't happen any other way.

Much is said in the Bible about the importance of worshipping
with other believers. "*Let them exalt Him also in the assembly of the*
people" (Psalm 107:32). "*My praise shall be of You in the great assem-*
bly; I will pay my vows before those who fear Him" (Psalm 22:25).

David told God that he did not want to be in "the assembly of
evildoers," but he wanted to be in the house of the Lord to "proclaim
with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all Your wondrous works.
LORD, *I have loved the habitation of Your house, and the place where*
Your glory dwells" (Psalm 26:5,7-8). "My foot stands in an even place;
in the congregations I will bless the LORD" (Psalm 26:12).

When we are in the house of the Lord proclaiming praise and
worship to Him, we are in His presence and our feet are on solid
ground. Loving the house of God doesn't mean we love a build-
ing, but that we love where God's presence is invited to dwell and
is exalted among the people with their praise and worship. God's
presence dwells where He is worshipped and invited. In God's house
we can sense the awesome power of His presence in response to our
worship. It affects us with strength, rejuvenation, a sense of clarity,

and purpose. We are able to better hear from God. There is great breakthrough that may not happen otherwise.

Praising Him corporately by lifting up our hands to Him in worship is an act of surrender and humility (Psalm 134:2). It's like saying "We give up." But we are not giving up on God. We are giving up trying to do things without Him. We are surrendering to Him.

When We Praise God, His Presence Dwells with Us

Our praise is the most immediate and certain way to experience God's presence. Even though God is everywhere, certain degrees and manifestations of His presence are only experienced by those who express their love for Him through praise and worship.

God dwells in the praises of His people. The Bible says, "*You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel*" (Psalm 22:3). But God doesn't just visit for the moments we are worshipping Him and then He is gone. He *stays dwelling with us*. Jesus said, "*God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth*" (John 4:24). When we express our love for God with our worship, we humbly recognize the truth of who He is and who we are in relation to Him, and we open up to a powerful fresh infusion of the presence of His Spirit that stays with us.

Our reverence for God demonstrates humility. A humble heart of worship and praise is beautiful to Him. "Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous! For praise from the upright is beautiful" (Psalm 33:1). The beauty of the Lord beautifies us when we worship Him. "The LORD takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation" (Psalm 149:4).

Worship beautifies us because as we look to God, His beauty reflects in us.

When you want to be closer to God, then "enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise" and "be thankful to Him, and bless His name" (Psalm 100:4). When you praise

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God, He will manifest His power and love to you. His power and
love do not fade, nor does His presence, but we cannot tap into it
as fully when we don't have praise and worship of Him in our heart.
That's why we don't just praise Him once and we're done. We do
not summon His presence like a genie. We praise Him continually.

When we praise Him lavishly, He lavishly gifts us with His presence.
In His presence we are changed.

Prayer of Love

LORD, I worship You for who You are and I praise You for all You have done in my life. Teach me how to worship You lavishly with all that is in me. Help me to glorify Your name in worship always (Psalm 86:12). Your name alone is exalted, and Your glory is "above the earth and heaven" (Psalm 148:13). Let Your high praise always be in my mouth and a two-edged sword in my hand (Psalm 149:6).

Help me to never number my assets as David did to give glory to anyone or anything other than You as the source of all my blessings. Show me any place in my life where I am doing that. I don't want leanness to creep into my soul. I only want the fullness of life and heart that You have for me. Thank You that You satisfy my hungry soul with Your goodness (Psalm 107:8-9). Thank You that "in the day when I cried out, You answered me, and made me bold with strength in my soul" (Psalm 138:3).

I come before You with thanksgiving and worship only You. "You are my God, and I will praise You" and exalt You above all else (Psalm 118:28). I give You all the glory due You because You are worthy of praise. I worship You in the beauty of Your holiness (Psalm 29:2). I proclaim that this is the day You have made and I will rejoice and be glad in it (Psalm 118:24). "Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let Your glory be above all the earth" (Psalm 57:11).

In Jesus' name I pray.

Word

Bless the LORD
and all that is within

PSALM

Because Your loving
my lips shall
Thus I will bless
I will lift up my

PSALM

The hour is coming, and now
will worship the Father
for the Father is seeking

JOHN

I will sing to the LORD
I will sing praise to my LORD
May my meditation
I will be glad

PSALM

It is good to give thanks
and to sing praises to the LORD
to declare Your loving-kindness
and Your faithfulness

PSALM

Words of Love

Who You are and I praise You
Teach me how to worship
me. Help me to glorify Your
name (Psalm 86:12). Your name alone
above the earth and heaven”
praise always be in my mouth
and (Psalm 149:6).

My assets as David did to give
greater than You as the source
of any place in my life where
cleanness to creep into my
life and heart that You have
satisfy my hungry soul with
Thank You that “in the day
of me, and made me bold with
(Psalm 138:3).

Thanksgiving and worship only
I will praise You” and exalt You
and give You all the glory due
praise. I worship You in the
(Psalm 29:2). I proclaim that this
I will rejoice and be glad in it
God, above the heavens; let
praise” (Psalm 57:11).

Words of Love

Bless the LORD, O my soul;
and all that is within me, bless His holy name!

PSALM 103:1

Because Your lovingkindness is better than life,
my lips shall praise You.

Thus I will bless You while I live;
I will lift up my hands in Your name.

PSALM 63:3-4

The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers
will worship the Father in spirit and truth;
for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

JOHN 4:23

I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.
May my meditation be sweet to Him;
I will be glad in the LORD.

PSALM 104:33-34

It is good to give thanks to the LORD,
and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High;
to declare Your lovingkindness in the morning,
and Your faithfulness every night.

PSALM 92:1-2

Look for Ways to Trust Him Completely

Love and trust go hand in hand.

We show our love for God every time we deliberately put our trust in Him. The reason we won't be disappointed in doing that is "because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (Romans 5:5).

God's love poured into us by the indwelling Holy Spirit is unfailing. That's because *He* is unfailing. His love is not a sometimes-maybe-possibly-perhaps-might-happen-comes-and-goes kind of thing. The Holy Spirit poured out in our heart is constant.

Because God shares Himself with us, we can certainly trust Him. Looking for ways to trust God completely doesn't mean we have to search hard to find anything in our lives that requires faith on our part. Everything we do of any worth requires trust in God. Too often we are tempted to give up—or give in—just when we should decide we are going to give God our complete trust.

You are going to have times in your life when **you have to trust** God in the situation you are in. You cannot do **anything to change**

it, but you can worry yourself sick over it, and that still won't change anything—except that you'll be sick. You must trust that God is the only source of miracle-working power you need.

My daughter-in-law, Paige, had Ewing's Sarcoma, a serious bone cancer, when she was eleven years old. She was in the hospital for nearly a year receiving chemotherapy and having multiple surgeries to replace parts of her damaged leg and knee bones. Because so many children her age died of this terrible disease, including kids she knew in the hospital, it was a miracle she survived. And there were no reliable statistics on what the chances were she would ever be able to have children. There were no guarantees from any doctor about this.

After she and our son were married, we all prayed and prayed that she would be able to become pregnant, and in two years in a story that is only hers to tell, she did. After she was expecting, we started worrying whether everything would turn out well for her and the baby. That kind of worry was beyond what we could handle, and so in prayer we came to the conclusion that Paige's recovery and life were already miracles, her pregnancy was a miracle, and God doesn't do partial miracles. He does complete miracles. No matter what we feared, we were going to keep praying and trusting Him all the way through the delivery that Paige and baby would be perfectly healthy and have no complications. And that is exactly what happened. Mother and daughter came through with no problems, and we had peace throughout the process.

We all have opportunities like this where we can make a decision *to trust God* completely in a potentially worrisome situation, but we must also ask Him to show us how to approach each concern in prayer. In other words, we don't walk out into the middle of oncoming traffic or jump off a building trusting that He will protect us. Jesus Himself didn't do that. We don't dictate the outcome to God. We ask Him how we are to pray and then trust Him to answer in His way and time.

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There are many ways to decide you are going to trust God in the situation at hand. Below are just a few of them.

Trust God to Deliver You from Danger

God gives us a secret place to dwell that keeps us hidden from danger. *"He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust'"* (Psalm 91:1-2). We can hide ourselves in the Lord and trust Him to protect us.

The key here is dwelling every day with the Lord and staying under the umbrella of His protection by living His way. It pleases Him when we diligently obey Him and deliberately trust Him to protect us.

Even in difficult times, God will preserve you because you make Him your dwelling place.

Can you think of times in your life when angels must have stepped in to protect you? I remember many times like that. One such time was during the first winter after we moved from California to Tennessee. Back then I thought "ice storm" was a metaphor for an especially cold rain. One day I was venturing out for needed groceries. I had not yet learned that when the weatherman predicts an ice storm, you get groceries beforehand for seven to ten days. Four days after the storm things looked melted enough to me, so I ventured forth. As I was driving I did not see a large patch of black ice. I had never even heard of "black ice" before that day, or if I had I probably thought it was some kind of frozen Halloween party drink. I was from California, after all.

As I drove slowly down a small incline, I intended to stop at the intersection where I had the red light. But much to my shock, and certainly the shock of all the other drivers around, instead of stopping I slid right into the intersection and spun out in the busy traffic that was moving in both directions on the cross street in front of me. I had never experienced the sensation of being completely out

of control in a car before. Any number of cars could have hit me, but one particular car headed right toward me. That person obviously could not stop either because black ice covered the intersection. I braced for impact and prayed, "Jesus, help me"—the shortest prayer I knew—and the other driver and I totally missed each other.

I'm sure that driver was as surprised as I was that we didn't crash. It was truly as if an angel stuck out his hand and kept us apart like an invisible air bag. I could feel the air between us—or lack thereof—that jostled our cars. There was no other explanation for it.

In the Bible, it sounds as though we must have at least two angels who are assigned to protect us because the word for "angel" is plural. It says of God that "*He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone*" (Psalm 91:11-12). Jesus often referred to multiple angels when He was on earth. I figure that between me and the other driver, we had at least four angels. I don't know if the other driver was a believer in the Lord or had been a praying person, but I would think he would have become one in that moment. My concept of "fervent prayer" was clarified in that instant as well.

The point is, God knows how to protect us from danger and can do so when we make Him our refuge.

Trust God to Take Away Your Fear

The Bible says you don't have to live in fear. Not living in fear doesn't mean being stupidly fearless. There are things you should be afraid of, but you don't have to be controlled by fear or make it a way of life.

For example, you *should* be afraid to leave the door to your house open all night because of what could happen to you and your family. But you could also trust God that if you accidentally left the door open, He would answer your ongoing prayers for protection and give you grace for that mistake.

The Bible says, "You shall not be afraid of the *terror* by night, nor of the *arrow* that flies by day, nor of the *pestilence* that walks in

darkness, nor of the *destruction* (Psalm 91:5-6). But how do we not be afraid of all around us? The threats of weapons against others, of forces of nature—they are all those possible threats to our lives.

David trusted God to help him with his troubled mind, soul, and body. *His heart have enlarged*; bring me out of the lion's den. Can it be that some of our hearts are troubled? Can they bring them on, have a lot of stress in their lives? Stress is a form of fear.

My husband and I had a son, Sammy, who did not handle stress very well. A traumatic thing in his life, and at the time the thunder sounded, he was shaking alone might make him feel better.

Yet if someone left the gate open and down the driveway, he would come out, block, exploring this fascination. Thank God that in His mercy, He was able to get ahold of him before he could get away.

Sammy was afraid of snakes, but fearless concerning snakes. He was never in any danger. He remained unconvinced of the danger of the yard in a heartbeat, even though he knew that would eat him for lunch. He even saw him before they ran. He saw people who might steal him.

Sammy developed a heart condition. His dogs have in later years. His heart was twelve years old. By that time, he was against his esophagus, causing

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darkness, nor of the *destruction* that lays waste at noonday" (Psalm 91:5-6). But how do we not be afraid when those kinds of threats are all around us? The threats of terrorizing acts, of crazy people using weapons against others, of diseases and plagues, and of destructive forces of nature—they are always on our mind. How do we handle those possible threats to our safety?

David trusted God to hear his prayers and give him relief for his troubled mind, soul, and body. He said to God, "*The troubles of my heart have enlarged; bring me out of my distresses!*" (Psalm 25:17). Can it be that some of our heart problems, and the conditions that bring them on, have a lot to do with the way we handle stress in our lives? Stress is a form of fear.

My husband and I had a tiny, long-haired Chihuahua named Sammy who did not handle stress well. Thunder was the most traumatic thing in his life, and at the mere flash of lightning, even before the thunder sounded, he would shake so violently I thought his shaking alone might make his heart stop.

Yet if someone left the gate open in the backyard, he would run out and down the driveway, across the street, and travel block after block, exploring this fascinating world and never looking back. Thank God that in His mercy we, or a nice neighbor, were always able to get ahold of him before disaster happened.

Sammy was afraid of something he didn't need to be afraid of, but fearless concerning something that was extremely dangerous. He was never in any danger from the storm, even though he remained unconvinced of that. But he would leave the safety of his yard in a heartbeat, even though there were animals out in the world that would eat him for lunch and people in big cars who would not even see him before they ran over him, not to mention unethical people who might steal him.

Sammy developed a heart condition that many of these types of dogs have in later years. His heart kept enlarging until he was about twelve years old. By that time his heart was so big it was pressing against his esophagus, causing him to choke. We gave him special

supplements and medicines from the veterinarian, but we could only slow down the progress of his enlarging heart. We could not stop it.

Every thunderstorm brought more and more terror to him, even though there was no way we would ever allow him to be hurt by it. I held him through many storms, but he could not be consoled. The noise was overwhelmingly frightening for him, and he never stopped shaking violently. The doctor gave us medicine to calm him, but he became too weak to take it.

One night when Sammy was old, I tried to hold him through a thunderstorm, but it went on for hours and he was so sick I knew that to give him a tranquilizer would surely kill him. I had to be up early and trying to calm him did nothing, so I let him stay in our large closet where he liked to go during storms because there are no windows and he couldn't see the lightning or hear the thunder as well. The closet was connected to the bathroom, where I left his bowl of water because he panted so hard and long that I knew he would be thirsty once the thunder stopped.

When my husband and I woke up in the morning, we found that Sammy had died in his sleep during the night in the same position he always liked to curl up in during storms—in the farthest corner where he could get away from the door and hide under some clothes that hung down to the floor. We were so sad that we cried for months over his loss. He had been a loving and faithful friend and family member, and quite a threatening chief of our security detail.

I wonder how many of us shorten our lives a little every day, like Sammy, as we run headlong into what we need to fear most, but are terrified to the point of incapacitation over what we don't need to fear at all. We take on stress in our lives that we don't need instead of taking our stress to the Lord and releasing it into His hands. And how many times do we move without hesitation into something dangerous for us without checking even once to see what God thinks about it?

We knew our precious I storm, but he could never u too. How many of us take wants us to trust Him to p medicine is bad, or that peo their fears, or that people sh they are taking. I am saying we must trust Him enough one small step at a time.

The Bible says, "A thous sand at your right hand; bu *you have made the LORD, wh dwelling place*, no evil shall near your dwelling" (Psalm

The key to finding freedom place.

If you make God the O and you take all your cares ar every day, and seek Him cor of shelter in Him. The close the more you move into a p umbrella of His protection.

Trust God to Hea

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We knew our precious little Sammy was in no danger from the storm, but he could never understand that. Some of us are like that too. How many of us take medicine to calm our fears when God wants us to trust Him to protect us? I am not saying that taking medicine is bad, or that people should never take medicine to calm their fears, or that people should immediately get off the medicine they are taking. I am saying that God wants to calm our fears, and we must trust Him enough to let Him do that—even if it begins one small step at a time.

The Bible says, “A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you... *Because you have made the LORD, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling*” (Psalm 91:7,9-10).

The key to finding freedom from fear is making God your dwelling place.

If you make God the One in whom you put your total trust—and you take all your cares and needs to Him, walk closely with Him every day, and seek Him constantly—then He will give you a place of shelter in Him. The closer you draw to Him and His kingdom, the more you move into a place of safety from the storm under the umbrella of His protection.

Trust God to Hear and Answer Your Prayers

Every time you pray you demonstrate your love for God by declaring your humble dependence on Him.

Jesus said, “When you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, *pray to your Father who is in the secret place*, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly” (Matthew 6:6).

As we wait on God for His answer to our prayers, He takes us out of our shaky situation and establishes us on a rock. He puts a song of praise in our heart, and when people see that, they are drawn to

Him because of it. David said, "*I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry. He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps.* He has put a new song in my mouth—praise to our God; many will see it and fear, and will trust in the LORD" (Psalm 40:1-3).

Waiting on the Lord after we have prayed is another way we show love for God.

In adoption some places take away the old birth certificate and give the orphan a new one with their new father's and mother's names on it. God does that for us too. When you are born again, your name is written in the book of life in heaven. God becomes your heavenly Father. You have a new life. A new identity. You are not the same old you. So don't keep thinking of yourself as having the same old identity.

When we don't understand that with God a process is going on as we pray, then we don't have patience to wait for the process. We jump to conclusions about whether God is answering our prayers or not. That shows a lack of trust in His ability to do a new thing in us.

I am not the same person who never got her prayers answered; I am a new creation in Christ. I'm not the same person who made stupid choices; I am a person who has the Spirit of wisdom in me. I am not the same person who had everything go wrong in her life; I am a new person who serves the God who makes all things right.

Trust God that He can change anything—including you.

Waiting on God means we are putting our total faith in Him. It means when we pray we are trusting that He hears us and will answer in His way and time. It means we are looking to Him and not losing heart. The Bible says, "I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. *Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the LORD!*" (Psalm 27:13-14).

When you are tormented with doubt about whether God is who He says He is, or if He really cares about you, or will He really hear

your prayers, or does He love you? If it reveals a lack of trust in Him, wait on Him at all times, He gives you strength to wait on Him in the process.

The Bible says that it is because we love Him when you pray. "*Because he loves me, I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has loved Me. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will deliver him and bring him out of trouble; I will deliver him and bring him out of trouble.*"

God doesn't say we will need Him to lift us up and protect us, but because we love Him.

You express your love for God by trusting Him. Thinking you don't need Him shows a lack of trust. It does not please Him. You show your own weakness and dependence on Him when you don't want to even try to do it yourself. Declaring your dependence upon Him straightens your priorities straight and makes them all about Him, but also to you.

Loving and trusting God means we are in a crisis, but as a way of life.

When something bad happens, don't lose your hope in God to bring good out of it. Look to Him. Do what He says. The outcome appears to be. Don't doubt God's Word. Say, "Lord, I trust You. Everything in it—good or bad—will work out for the glory of each situation that is committed to You."

When we put our expectations in Him, we can always depend on, and wait on Him for help, we shall be transformed.

And in the process of expressing our love for Him, we are transformed.

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your prayers, or does He love you enough to rescue and protect you, it reveals a lack of trust in Him. But when you decide to trust Him at all times, He gives you strength in your heart and the ability to wait on Him in the process.

The Bible says that it is *because* you love God that He hears you when you pray. “*Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him*” (Psalm 91:14-15).

God doesn't say we will never have problems. He says He will be with us to lift us up and protect us when we go through difficulties *because we love Him*.

You express your love for God when you trust Him in all things. Thinking you don't need Him except in an emergency or crisis does not please Him. You show love for God when you recognize your own weakness and dependence upon Him. It tells God that you don't want to even try to make it through a day without Him. Declaring your dependence upon God, and your love for Him, sets your priorities straight and makes them clear—not only to God, but also to you.

Loving and trusting God means not just praying when you are in a crisis, but as a way of life.

When something bad happens, deliberately tell yourself to put your hope in God to bring good out of it. Take your eyes off of your situation and look to Him. Don't give up hope, no matter what the outcome appears to be. Don't let the enemy's taunts cause you to doubt God's Word. Say, “Lord, I surrender my life to You today and everything in it—good or bad—knowing You will bring good out of each situation that is committed to You.”

When we put our expectation in God knowing He is the *only one* we can always depend on, and when we completely trust in Him and wait on Him for help, we show our love for Him.

And in the process of expressing our love for God, we are transformed.

Prayer of Love

LORD, I put my trust in You. I quiet my soul and wait for You to be my defense, and I will not allow myself to be moved or shaken (Psalm 62:1-2). Reveal any place in my heart where I am afraid to do that fully. Help me to put You first in everything I do—day and night. I pray to You as David did, “Give heed to the voice of my cry, my King and my God, for to You I will pray. My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning I will direct it to You, and I will look up” (Psalm 5:2-3). Thank You that You hear my prayers and will answer.

Help me to always look to You and not focus on my problems. Teach me to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). My soul waits on You for answers to my prayers, because You are my help and shield (Psalm 33:20). I know that You will strengthen my heart when I put my hope in You (Psalm 31:24). I know there is peace to be found in any trial when I invite Your presence into it. Enable me to keep praying and seeking that peace in You until I have found it.

Lord, I thank You that Your thoughts toward me “are more than can be numbered” (Psalm 40:5). I am constantly grateful that You love me. “Show me Your ways, O LORD; teach me Your paths...on You I wait all the day” (Psalm 25:4-5). I lift my eyes to You for You are my help, and I know that You will not allow me to fall (Psalm 121:1,3). Enable me to put my complete trust in You at all times no matter what is happening.

In Jesus’ name I pray.

Words

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Words of Love

You will keep him in perfect peace,
whose mind is stayed on You,
because he trusts in You.

ISAIAH 26:3

Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways acknowledge Him,
and He shall direct your paths.

PROVERBS 3:5-6

Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer;
and attend to the voice of my supplications.
In the day of my trouble I will call upon You,
for You will answer me.

PSALM 86:6-7

My soul, wait silently for God alone,
for my expectation is from Him.
He only is my rock and my salvation;
He is my defense; I shall not be moved.

PSALM 62:5-6

Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him
for the help of His countenance.

PSALM 42:5

Lean on His Wisdom Enthusiastically

God is a good God who loves us. We must never allow the bad things that happen in life to cause us to doubt that and undermine our faith in Him and His infinite wisdom.

When we go through difficult times, if we stay humble before God and wait on Him to reveal His purpose and plan in our situation, it shows we are trusting in His goodness and relying on His infinite wisdom. But when we find ourselves in the middle of something serious in our life and don't lean on Him, too often that's because we don't comprehend how solid and reliable the wisdom of God is.

His wisdom is perfect and worthy of our full trust. That's because God's Spirit of wisdom is in us and is perfect and unfailing. We must learn to trust Him more than we do.

We must embrace God's wisdom and lean on it in every situation, no matter what is happening or how bad things get.

Trust God to Always Do the Right Thing

From the story of Job it's clear we cannot always understand what God allows or is doing in our life—at least not by our own

human thinking. But He is sovereign, all-knowing, and all-powerful, so we can trust Him to do the right thing all the time.

Some people may see the book of Job as only about God's judgment, but it's about His mercy. God's mercy and love for Job is evident in His preservation and restoration of Job's life. You may think, as I have, *I would rather not go through what Job did and just forego the later blessings*. I wouldn't want to lose my children even if I were to have more later. But this story is not about whether we would be willing to have all our children killed and lose everything. It's about whether we would still trust in God and His infinite wisdom if our worst fears came upon us.

It has been my experience, and from my knowledge of God's Word, that we will have suffering in our lifetime, and it's far better to trust in the wisdom of God in these times than to blame Him for whatever we have to endure.

God's love can be found in our suffering as well as our blessings. "You have heard of *the perseverance of Job* and seen the end intended by the Lord—that *the Lord is very compassionate and merciful*" (James 5:11). God was not beating up on Job. His love for Job never wavered, just as His love for *us* never wavers. We must cling to this truth, especially when we are in the deepest pain of our life.

Job's friends—Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar—told Job he was suffering because he had sinned. They said people who sin are punished, so obviously Job was being punished. They thought a person's material blessings were evidence of God's favor, and punishment was only in *this* life and not beyond their earthly lives. Job's response to his three friends was anger at them for accusing him instead of comforting him.

Job had not sinned. God said so.

God called Job "a blameless and upright man" (Job 1:8). This proves that we should all be careful about any rush to judgment over the reason for another believer's suffering.

Another person—Elihu—told Job that God was greater than man, and man did not have the right to question Him or require

Him to explain His actions and listen, God would speak in his suffering without requiring us to have a humble attitude toward Him.

Job *did* have a humble attitude.

The truth is, even good people have an *advocate* and an *adversary*.

Jesus is our *advocate*.

Satan is our *adversary*.

We battle our adversary because of sin.

Job's suffering was Satan's doing. Satan first destroyed Job's possessions, but Job *still worshipped God*. "Job arose and he fell to the ground and worshipped" (Job 1:20-21). Job was born from my mother's womb, and he gave, and the LORD has taken away" (Job 1:20-21).

In all that happened to Job, Job *worshipped Him!*

Then Satan attacked Job, but Job *continued to worship God*. In the end, Job *worshipped God*.

Job's wife advised, "Do you still worship God and die?" (Job 2:9). But the foolish woman speaks. *Shall we not accept adversity?* (Job 2:10).

Job's wife lacked understanding, so instead of comforting him, she suspected him. But Job did not curse the day he was born. Instead, he cursed the day he was born.

Job said, "Why is light given to the bitter of soul, who long for death?" (Job 3:20).

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in his suffering without requiring an explanation, and he needed to
have a humble attitude toward God in the situation.

Job *did* have a humble attitude toward God. God said that.

The truth is, even good people are tested. We each have an *advocate*
and an *adversary*.

Jesus is our *advocate*.

Satan is our *adversary*.

We battle our adversary by standing with our advocate in prayer.

Job's suffering was Satan's idea. God allowed it (Job 2:3-6). Satan
first destroyed Job's possessions and then killed his children, but *Job*
still worshipped God. "Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head;
and *he fell to the ground and worshiped*. And he said: 'Naked I came
from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD
gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the
LORD'" (Job 1:20-21).

In all that happened Job did not sin. He never faulted God. *He*
worshipped Him!

Then Satan attacked Job's body with painful boils. *But Job con-*
tinued to worship God. In the midst of his agony, Job did not blame
God.

Job's wife advised, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse
God and die!" (Job 2:9). But he said to her, "You speak as one of
the foolish women speaks. *Shall we indeed accept good from God, and*
shall we not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips"
(Job 2:10).

Job's wife lacked understanding or faith in God to bring restora-
tion, so instead of comforting her husband she *taunted and disre-*
spected him. But Job did not curse God as Satan *predicted he would*.
Instead, he cursed the day he was born and *longed for death*.

Job said, "Why is light given to him who is in *misery*, and *life to*
the bitter of soul, who long for death, but it does *not come?*" (Job

3:20-21). He wondered why God didn't allow him to die as a way to end his agony.

Then Job said words we all pray we will never have cause to say. "My sighing comes before I eat, and my groanings pour out like water. *For the thing I greatly feared has come upon me, and what I dreaded has happened to me*" (Job 3:24-25).

The truth for us is that even if our own greatest fear comes upon us, and the very thing we dread happens, God will still make a way through it and bring restoration to us. The key is to trust and not blame God or become angry at Him. If we trust God in His wisdom to always do the right thing, we will be touched by His healing and restorative hand.

When God finally answered Job out of a whirlwind, He did not explain Job's suffering except to say that Job was not meant to know why. He was to understand that God cared about Job and his life, and that the suffering God allowed brought Job to the end of himself so he could find everything in the Lord.

God reprimanded Job's friends, saying they didn't speak the right thing to Job and they had to repent for that. He said to Eliphaz, "My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has" (Job 42:7). God accepted Job's faithfulness and instructed him to pray for Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar (Job 42:8).

It was when Job had *prayed for his faithless friends* that God restored all he had lost—sons and daughters, grandchildren, and possessions. "The LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before" (Job 42:10). Job had to pray for those who had given bad counsel and caused him more grief.

Job proved that he would not turn away from God in a time of adversity, as Satan said he would, but Job's suffering was directly from the devil. Before you let yourself be worried about the devil's power to destroy, remember that Jesus defeated Satan and all the powers of hell. At the mention of Jesus' name, and the proclamation that you

are now in Christ, the enemy's attack is defeated.

When the suffering of Job was over, his acquaintances came and rejoiced with him. The Lord blessed the latter end of Job's life, and he had seven sons and three daughters. He had lost before (Job 42:10), but he had a wonderful and abundant life ahead of him.

The love of God is powerful. Job thought his life was over, but God had abundant life ahead of him. He did not turn away from God.

Could you or I have all of our possessions, and still have total love and trust in God's mercy, and infinite wisdom and knowledge founded on His love for us through anything if we love Him, love Him and not ourselves? We do not have the wisdom of the world.

Reverence for God

There are two different ways of looking at the world and the wisdom of the world between the two perfectly different worlds.

God's wisdom is the wisdom of Jesus' suffering. The wisdom of the world seems foolish to unbaptized people. It is saved by what Jesus accomplished. The power of God (1 Corinthians 1:24) is the wisdom of the wise" but we do not know Him (1 Corinthians 1:25).

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When the suffering was over, all of Job's brothers, sisters, and acquaintances came and ate with him in his house and comforted him. The Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning, and he had seven sons and three daughters, exactly what he had lost before (Job 42:10-13). Job lived 140 years and saw his children and grandchildren for four generations (42:16). God gave Job a wonderful and abundant life of total restoration.

The love of God is powerfully shown in Job's amazing story. Job thought his life was over and he looked forward to dying, but God had abundant life ahead for him. Job's love of God caused him to not turn away from God but toward Him, trusting in His wisdom.

Could you or I have trusted God after losing all of our children, all of our possessions, and our health? Yes, we could, but only if we had total love and trust for God's unfailing love, compassionate mercy, and infinite wisdom. If God in His wisdom, understanding, and knowledge founded the earth and the heavens, He can sustain us through anything if we continue to worship Him and not fault Him, love Him and not blame Him, and lean on His wisdom and not the wisdom of the world (see Proverbs 3:19-20).

Reverence for God Is Where Our Wisdom Begins

There are two different kinds of wisdom. There is the *wisdom of the world* and the *wisdom of God*. We need to keep the distinction between the two perfectly clear in our mind at all times.

God's wisdom is the opposite of the world's. For example, the message of Jesus' suffering on the cross and His miraculous resurrection seems foolish to unbelievers, but to those of us who have been saved by what Jesus accomplished on the cross, we see it as the very power of God (1 Corinthians 1:18). God says that He "will destroy the wisdom of the wise" because the wisdom of *this world does not* know Him (1 Corinthians 1:19-21). Jesus is both *the power of God*

and the wisdom of God, and that is why the world does not recognize Him. Earthly wisdom will come to nothing, but godly wisdom lasts forever.

We cannot depend on earthly wisdom. Paul said, "Your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:5).

When we depend on God's wisdom and not the world's, we cannot go wrong. Every time we seek God and ask His Spirit of wisdom to guide us, we are on solid ground. We can say, "I will bless the LORD who has given me counsel; my heart also instructs me in the night seasons. I have set the LORD always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved" (Psalm 16:7-8).

The Bible says, "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments*" (Psalm 111:10). Having reverence for God is the first step in receiving the wisdom of God, which is imparted to you by His indwelling Holy Spirit. That doesn't mean you know everything God knows. It means you will have godly wisdom you would not have without Him. It means you will have the wisdom to trust in God's infinite wisdom in your life.

True wisdom comes from God. The Bible says, "*Length of days is in her right hand, in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who retain her*" (Proverbs 3:16-18). The wisdom God gives us brings long life, abundance, contentment, strength, peace, and happiness.

When we have godly wisdom, we walk safely, sleep soundly, and live unafraid. We have confidence knowing God will keep us from harm if we are wise enough to seek Him for everything, wise enough to hear His voice of wisdom speaking to our soul, wise enough to do the right thing. "Keep sound wisdom and discretion... *then you will walk safely in your way, and your foot will not stumble.* When you

lie down, *you will not be afraid, and your sleep will be sweet*" (Proverbs 3:24-25).

That same chapter says we have to "*be afraid of sudden death*" when it comes; *for the LORD will catch the foot from being caught*" (verse 26). Whatever happens to people who lean on Him, they made an important choice.

What a comfort that is when we face terror or attacks of evil people. We can lean on His wisdom and strength. When we live in the fear of the LORD, what life would be without Him? We don't have to live in fear of anything.

God wants you to seek Him. He wants you to see the wisdom of His commandment just as you would see the wisdom of His love. He wants you to "*incline your ear to His voice*" and gain His understanding, for only by knowing the LORD, and finding the knowledge of His love, can we be wise.

This means we need to trust in Him so that there is nothing in our hands. When we have so much love, we are not hesitant to do anything that will bring us closer to Him. We are beginning to get it. We are beginning to see that the fear of the LORD is all about trusting in His unfailing wisdom and love. He transforms us into a wise person.

It is why the world does not recognize wisdom. Paul said, "Your faith comes to nothing, but godly wisdom"

by wisdom. Paul said, "Your faith is in the power of God"

wisdom and not the world's, we can seek God and ask His Spirit of wisdom. We can say, "I will bless the LORD always before me; because He has moved" (Psalm 16:7-8).

The Lord is the beginning of wisdom; those who do His commandments will prosper for God is the first step in receiving wisdom imparted to you by His indwelling Spirit. You know everything God knows. Without wisdom you would not have without the wisdom to trust in God's infinite

good. The Bible says, "*Length of days and riches and honor. Her ways are peace. She is a tree of life to those who retain her*" (Proverbs 3:18). It gives us long life, abundance, and happiness.

When we walk safely, sleep soundly, and know God will keep us from stumbling, we seek Him for everything, wise enough to speak to our soul, wise enough to use wisdom and discretion... *then you will not stumble. When you*

lie down, *you will not be afraid*; yes, you will lie down and *your sleep will be sweet*" (Proverbs 3:21,23-24).

That same chapter says that when we walk with wisdom, we don't have to "*be afraid of sudden terror*, nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes; *for the LORD will be your confidence, and will keep your foot from being caught*" (verses 25-26). How often have we seen disaster happen to people who did not seek wisdom from God before they made an important decision? That doesn't have to happen.

What a comfort that is—not having to be afraid of sudden terror or attacks of evil people—because God will protect us when we lean on His wisdom and we trust the Spirit of wisdom within us. When we live in the fear of the Lord, reverencing Him and fearing what life would be without Him, we dwell safely and securely without having to live in fear of evil (see Proverbs 1:33).

God wants you to seek wisdom, understanding, and discernment just as you would search for a great treasure (see Proverbs 2:1). He wants you to "*incline your ear to wisdom*, and apply your heart to understanding," for only "then will you understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God" (Proverbs 2:2,5).

This means we need to be enthusiastically sold out to the Lord so that there is nothing in us not dedicated to and owned by Him. When we have so much love and reverence for God that we are hesitant to do anything that would cause Him any displeasure, then we are beginning to get it. We are beginning to understand what the fear of the Lord is all about. It's loving and reverencing Him by leaning on His unfailing wisdom—both *toward* us and *in* us—and He transforms us into a wise person who makes wise decisions.

Prayer of Love

LORD, I love that Your wisdom is eternal, true, and always perfect. Help me to seek out and depend on Your wisdom every day. Holy Spirit of wisdom, fill me afresh with Your wisdom so that I can always hear Your wise counsel spoken to my heart. I depend on Your counsel at all times. Teach me to value every day with You so that I may gain a heart of wisdom (Psalm 90:12).

I know that You bless the nation who proclaims You are Lord and who seeks Your wisdom—the people You have chosen for Your own inheritance (Psalm 33:11-12). Thank You that Your counsel stands forever (Psalm 33:11). I am grieved at how my nation has rejected Your godly wisdom. Bring us back to You, I pray. Only in You can we ever find the wisdom to make right decisions. I know that man, in the arrogance of his own wisdom, comes to destruction. But when we trust in *Your* wisdom, we can see our life change for the better.

I praise and worship You. And I thank You that reverencing You is where Your wisdom in me begins. Help me to always love and value You far above all else. I seek Your wisdom above earthly wisdom, for I know that those who do that are blessed. I don't want to be like those who "hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD" for they could not enjoy Your presence and did not get their prayers answered (Proverbs 1:28-29). As for me, I lean totally, enthusiastically, and unwaveringly on Your wisdom because I love and trust You. Make me to be a wise person.

In Jesus' name I pray.

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You forever (Psalm 33:11). I am
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His presence and did not get their
(Psalm 1:28-29). As for me, I lean
unwaveringly on Your wisdom.
Make me to be a wise person.

Words of Love

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,
but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

PROVERBS 1:7

When wisdom enters your heart,
and knowledge is pleasant to your soul,
discretion will preserve you; understanding will keep you,
to deliver you from the way of evil.

PROVERBS 2:10-12

The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom,
and his tongue talks of justice.
The law of his God is in his heart;
none of his steps shall slide.

PSALM 37:30-31

The LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth
come knowledge and understanding;
He stores up sound wisdom for the upright;
He is a shield to those who walk uprightly.

PROVERBS 2:6-7

Wisdom is better than rubies, and all the things
one may desire cannot be compared with her.

PROVERBS 8:11