

*BIBLE-CENTERED  
DEVOTIONS*



*FOR THE PERSON  
WHO WANTS TO KNOW  
MORE ABOUT GOD  
AND LIFE WITH GOD*



For the history of missionary work and the growth of the Christian Church (Jesus directs His Church from heaven), read the Acts of the Apostles (actually, the Acts of the Holy Spirit).

You should get more well acquainted with these basics and Jesus’ own advance descriptions of the End Times—before you study this subject in the picture language of Daniel and Revelation.

Of course, the Old Testament books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are rich with wisdom for Christian daily living, as are sections in the Gospels and Epistles also.

You can locate specific Bible passages when you learn to use a Bible Concordance. A Bible Atlas and Dictionary will help you become acquainted with Bible persons, Bible events, and Bible places.

These devotions have given you much to think about. Having a Christian friend (who knows the Bible well) to help you read and understand the rest of the Bible would be a blessing to you.

When and where would you like to begin?

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Originally composed for shut-in and handicapped persons by  
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**Bible devotion # 1:**  
**Who are you?**

The answer seems obvious—you are yourself, of course, and you know yourself quite well—but God knows you better than anyone else does.

Your mother knew you before you were born, and she could feel you growing for nine months; then she nursed and nurtured you for a dozen years, but then you grew away from her. Perhaps your father knew you pretty well as a teenager with all your thrills and fears. Or your spouse knew you better than anyone else on Earth has ever known you.

Yet God has known you better than all of these, for He has known you even before you were born, as He tells you, “Thus says the Lord who made you and formed you from the womb, who will help you...” (Isaiah 44:2).

Maybe your mother didn’t realize God was on duty, but He was! Maybe nobody but God was concerned about your soul, but He has been through all the years of your life, and He still is concerned for you, and right now you have His full and devoted attention. In His own wonderful way, He has always been working to bless and keep you.

You realize that every day you are coming closer to the end of your time on this Earth, and then you will meet God; it is a meeting you cannot avoid.

What will you say to God when you see Him face to face? It won’t be enough to say, “Here I am, God; You know me.” You must depend on more than God merely knowing you.

It is more important to know that He loves you—and because He knows and loves you, He has done something “out of this world” for you. He has loved you so much that He has given you a Savior from hell! He has given you His Son to see you safely through the terrors of death and of Judgment Day and to take you with Him into heaven!

Trust Jesus Christ, God’s own Son, for your salvation! Trust the Father, who has provided Jesus as your Savior! Trust God, who knows you and loves you! Come to God with your heart open to His love!

**“Just as I am; Thy love unknown  
Has broken every barrier down.  
Now to be Thine, Yea, Thine alone,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.”**

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This is what the LORD says--  
He who made you,  
who formed you in the womb,  
and who will help you:  
Do not be afraid.

Isaiah 44:2

## **Bible devotion # 14:**

### **“Where should I start?”**

If you don’t know where to start in your study of the Bible, it’s probably because the Bible still seems such a big and strange book. I understand.

But I can give you some helpful hints. If you want to know about the beginnings—how the world and universe got started, that’s in Genesis, the first book of the Old Testament. If you want to know about Jesus, read a Gospel account in the New Testament.

For the history of the wanderings of God’s people (starting with Abraham) the record begins in Genesis and goes through Deuteronomy. For their history in Palestine, read Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings/Chronicles. For the story behind the history, read the writings of the Prophets Ezra, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. The book of Psalms was the Prayer book and Hymn-book of the Israelites.

Perhaps you are interested in doctrine, the way God explains the meaning of the life and work of Jesus. The Apostle Paul found that many Christians needed more explanation about Justification (the way God settled accounts with humans), and that’s why God inspired him to write to Rome and congregations in Galatia (modern Turkey). Paul traveled through Galatia and Macedonia and Greece three times, for Christians there continued to need God’s own explanation of His ways.

God inspired other apostles, such as Peter and John and James to write to Christians on doctrinal matters as well as on Christian life and morals.

When his messengers asked Jesus to come and heal the servant, they tried to impress Jesus with the captain's fine character and good deeds, saying that he was worthy, that he loved his neighbors, and he had even financed the building costs for one of their churches.

The captain himself sent a different message, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy....I did not even think myself worthy to come to You." What a remarkable, humble attitude!

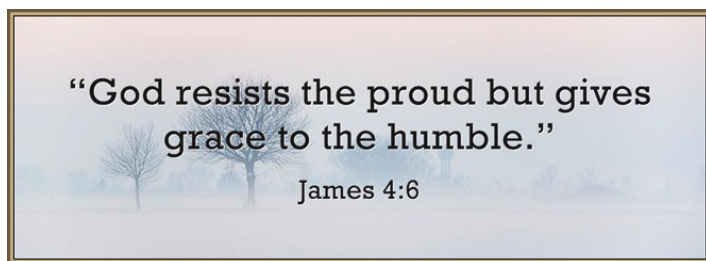
How did it come out for the captain? Jesus healed the servant and then made this comment to the crowd that followed Him, "I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel." That's the key!

Whereas we humans are impressed with the outward appearance, Jesus looked into his heart. There he honored Jesus as his Savior-God, ready and willing to bless him. The man KNEW it! He depended on it! And Jesus did not let him down!

I will trust God's wise words that "a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise" (Psalm 51:17).

Amen! And Hallelujah to Jesus!

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## **Bible devotion # 2: “I don’t know God very well.”**

Though God knows you, it is also true that most folks don't know God very well. The world is full of wrong ideas about God—false notions that are slanderous to Him and misleading to you.

Yet God has not been hiding Himself from you. You may have thought about God from time to time, and even as a youngster you wondered about His part in the Universe. When someone told you that the trillions of stars and millions of galaxies (and all that empty space between them!) all came from nothing, you could hardly believe it, for you knew that God created the Universe.

And when you were told that humans evolved from another species such as apes, and apes evolved from... (who knows what?), you didn't swallow it, because it didn't even make sense. You felt in your bones that God created you, just as He created your parents, grandparents, and forefathers all the way back to Adam and Eve.

God has given us much information about Creation—and it's all in His book of records, the Bible. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the Earth" (Genesis 1:1). In the Bible He tells us some utterly amazing things about Himself, about our world, and about us humans.

Let's "fast-forward" now to the future. Just as God created the Universe, He has plans for closing it down. "He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

That sounds pretty serious—because it IS serious. You are going to be judged by Jesus, and so am I and so is everybody else. I am ready for that, because I know Jesus personally; He has assured me that He has squared away all my transgressions, all my sins and iniquities. Satan's entire hellish work upon me and in me has been cancelled out by Jesus' blood and righteousness.

So on Judgment Day when Jesus asks, "By what right do you expect Me to take you into My home in heaven?" I am going to answer, "I expect You to take me into heaven with You, Jesus, because You promised that You would get me in, and I'm depending on You to keep Your pledge to me."

Dear reader, what will be your answer?

**"Just as I am, without one plea  
But that Thy blood was shed for me  
And that Thou bids't me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come; I come."**

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## **Bible devotion # 13:**

### **Have we mentioned attitude?**

Attitude is simple, and simply basic. It's the way we feel about ourselves in our relationships and the way we feel about others in our lives. Bad attitude is a huge hindrance to happiness, while a good attitude (like love) makes our personal world stay in orbit.

Though many folks have an attitude problem about Jesus and His place in their lives—He met others whom He describes like this: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn [over their sins], for they shall be comforted; Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:3-6).

He also told a story (Luke 18:9-14) to some who "trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others" when He pointed out the IRS officer who, in praying, "would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'"

Was this the kind of attitude that pleases God? Yes! says Jesus. "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified [by God], rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." So the tax collector received God's favor and mercy; for God picked him up when he put himself down.

In another story (Luke 7:1-10), we hear of an Army captain who felt desperate for one of his servants, who was "sick and ready to die."

to say: a genuine friend of Jesus keeps close to Him, depends on Him for salvation and safety, is bonded to Him in heart and soul, and really values what Jesus has to tell him.

You will want to learn everything Jesus has to tell you, so that you will know in advance what's allowable – and what's off limits in your prayers.

So what do you want to ask of God? Get started with prayers you already know are OK with Him:

- some thanks for His goodness in Jesus –
- some praise for His patience with you
- some appeal to His promises
- and then refer to the Lord's Prayer, of course, for guidance and as a pattern for your own prayers.

You will probably also want to ask Him to help you to bear up under the problems that have come upon you due to age and illness, and that He will bring your friends and family members to see Jesus as their Savior from sin, death, and hell.

You will thank Him that He will never leave you nor forsake you, and that you want to depend on Him to use His best judgment in everything, etc. (add whatever else is on your heart) as always, in Jesus' name. Amen!

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### **Bible devotion # 3: How do I get to heaven?**

Have you heard about the young man who set out to cross the Atlantic in a bathtub? Nobody could convince him to not try it, so he launched his tub. Before he had paddled twenty feet, a small wave sloshed over the rim, and down he went. Friends who knew better were on hand to save him.

This is picture language for folks who launch out into life in vessels that are no good at all for deep water. They think they will sail safely into heaven, floating along in their man-sized boats of supposed good works, of good-looking deeds, and of a shiny life. Though washtubs of human kindness are OK for small jobs, they are not ocean-going vessels.

What I am trying point out is that good deeds will not get anyone across the ocean of life and to the safe harbor on the far shore. It is a fatal mistake to become stubborn about this, for good deeds and kindnesses done to our fellowmen will survive no longer than a bathtub on the high seas.

Dear friend, do not make the fatal mistake of trusting human washbasins to make your soul clean enough for heaven. It won't work, as God warns: "The soul who sins shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20); and "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). The tub of life is riddled with the holes of disobedience, rotted with selfishness and stubbornness and anger and jealousy and pride and lust and other foolishness.

Dear friend, abandon the delusion of saving yourself, because you will sink like a rock and drown eternally!



Is there any way to rescue your soul from this disaster? Yes, for God is standing by and holding out His hands to you; He is your Rescuer. He is saving people all the time from the fatal mistake of entrusting their lives and souls to imperfect and flimsy deeds.

What will you do? Since you “have sinned and have come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23), you should also know and believe that God wants to rescue you; He is standing here now, holding out His hands to carry you to eternal safety. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Are you ready to abandon your sinking tub? Jesus is waiting to rescue you for eternal life, just as He has rescued millions of souls before you.

**“Just as I am, though tossed about  
With many a conflict, many a doubt,  
Fightings and fears within, without,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.”**

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*For  
God  
so loved the world,  
that He gave His only begotten Son,  
that  
whosoever  
believeth in  
Him should  
not perish,  
but have  
everlasting  
life.*  
JOHN 3:16

## **Bible devotion # 12:**

### **It’s all in who you know!**

Did you hear about the runaway lad who was looking for a new home? After a lot of wandering, he walked up to the most impressive mansion on Lake Shore Drive, rang the bell, and said to the gentleman who answered, “Here I am, your long-lost son!”

Of course, he was lying and got thrown out.

The next day another stranger arrived at the door, but his companion in uniform did all the talking: “Father, I am home on furlough, and I brought a friend.”

This time the answer came, “Welcome home, son! Come in; and what can we do for your friend?”

It’s all in who you know. When your Savior and dear Friend Jesus introduces you to His Father in heaven, His Father becomes gentle and generous to you—and that’s simply for Jesus’ sake.

Now, what can God do for you? He can (and will) do whatever is good (not harmful) for you and whatever is good for the blessing of others.

These are His core values. And, of course, you understand how the Father feels about strangers—unless his Son vouches for them. The Father in heaven has no truck with bogus “friends” of His Son who are really imposters or hypocrites.

So Jesus put it this way in order to encourage His friends to come with Him to the throne of grace: “If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you” (John 15:7). This is



But she had not known that Jesus would be in control of the end of the world, of the resurrection of all people, and of life everlasting.

Jesus said to her, “**I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me, though he may die** [before Judgment Day arrives], **he shall** [at that time] **live** [come back to life], **And whoever is alive** [when that Day comes] and believes in Me shall never die.” How can this be? Because Jesus is in charge of the resurrection, and He has the power to grant eternal life to you. “Do you believe this?”

“Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come [has been predicted and promised] into the world.”

Dear friend, this is the solution to death. Jesus is the answer. When you get raised from your grave on Judgment Day, you can be with God forever as one of His favored children. Believe it! Entrust yourself to Jesus! You will see how well He makes things turn out for those who depend on Him, now and forever.

So here you are, perhaps in a wheel chair and in a nursing home—but you are safe with your Savior in control of your life, both here and hereafter!

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#### **Bible devotion # 4: Tell me more about Jesus!**

Do you want to hear more about the love of God that desires to save you from hell? There's much more in the Bible about the redeeming love and work of Jesus, our Savior. This is the one truth that makes all the difference for your life and for eternity, and it is the central theme of the Bible. Perhaps by now you have memorized the way God puts it: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

What does this mean? It means that the Creator of the Universe, who has all power in heaven and on Earth, has put your salvation at the top of His priorities. We do not always realize what God has accomplished against our enemy Satan, who intends to drag souls down into hell in order to frustrate God's love for humans. Though we were born into this world as Satan's victims, God is able to handle Satan.

God did so by inventing His special way to get souls free from Satan's control, a way that is superior to human nature and human efforts.

God decided that somewhere, sometime, someone had to live the way humans should live, completely free of sin, genuinely obedient to Father-God, and totally loving to everyone else. Since no sinner could accomplish this, God took the job out of the hands of sinful humans and took it upon Himself.

In short, His Son was commissioned to get the job done, and He did it. That job brought Him to an earthly life of suffering and rejection by humans, but He never

slacked off or quit. Why? Because your salvation depends on Him, and He loves you too much to abandon you to Satan and hellfire.

How do you know that Jesus is your Substitute and your Redeemer? The Bible tells you so. “Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; ...He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:4-6).

As you get better acquainted with the Bible, you will find many more assurances of God’s saving love for you. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31).

**“Just as I am; Thy love unknown  
Has broken every barrier down.  
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!”**

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**Believe**

in the Lord Jesus,  
and you will be saved,  
you and your household.

Acts 16:31

## **Bible devotion # 11:**

### **“So here I am!”**

Here I am in a wheelchair; here I am in a nursing home. It’s not my home, and I am not with my spouse and children. My days of earning a living are over; I can’t sit at my own table with friends for a visit, and I can’t look out the window at my own yard and garden. I miss all that! Sometimes I think I’d just as soon be dead if I can’t have my life back!”

Well, you can’t have your old life back again, but God can give you a better one!

Let’s take a few minutes to hear what Jesus says about this, and let’s understand what He meant, because it’s your life, too, that He is talking about in John’s Gospel, chapter eleven, verses 17 through 27. **(Please read this Bible text now.)**

Martha started the conversation in sadness but finished it in happiness. She was sad because she missed her brother Lazarus, who had died and been buried three days earlier—which she says Jesus could have prevented because He could cure cancer, a stroke, diabetes, or whatever had killed Lazarus. She wanted her brother alive, not dead. So Jesus gave her some good news, saying to her, “Your brother will rise again.” He meant that dead people will not stay dead, but will be brought back from the dead to be judged by God—and He meant that He Himself was the only hope for Lazarus ever living again.

Martha clued in on that, for she believed God’s Word on the resurrection—that all people will have their bodies reunited with their souls to face God on Judgment Day.

So don't be afraid that God wants to take something away from you that you can't bear to lose. He wants only to give blessedness, and what He takes away is the poison, the pain, and the disaster of life apart from Him. Trust Him in this!

He invites you, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matthew 11:28-29)

Blessed is that person who answers, "Yes, Jesus, I am coming to You and I will serve You!"

Lutheran Christians who accept all the Bible as God's Word and confess Jesus as Lord and Savior are eager to help you share in the blessings God has waiting for you. Let us serve you, for Jesus' sake and your own eternal salvation!



**God's Word is our great heritage  
And shall be ours forever;  
To spread its light from age to age  
Shall be our chief endeavor;  
Through life it guides our way  
In death it is our stay.  
Lord, grant, while worlds endure  
We keep its teachings pure  
Throughout all generations! Amen!**

## **Bible devotion #5:**

### **Why is God concerned about me?**

This is a worthwhile question, and the answer is even more valuable.

Perhaps you asked your parents why they were so concerned about you when you were a baby—

"Dad, why did you take such good care of me when I was growing up?"

"Well, we did what we could for you because we loved you."

"But why did you and Mom love me?"

"Well, that's just how we felt about you; I can't explain it, but you were precious to us, and we enjoyed being able to hold you close; and we were so happy to see the first smile you smiled back to us. We were glad to have you as our child; life would not have been the same without you. You'll understand when you have your own child, and you'll love your own baby just as we have always loved you."

Now, did you ask why God is so concerned about you? Just because He loves you, as a good father loves his child. There is no logical reason for mother love or father love—it's just a great blessing; and God's love for you is the best and most wonderful love of all.

You have had God's love behind you and above you and below you and with you all of your life. Didn't you know that? If you didn't know it, you didn't learn to enjoy it—although God has always been concerned for you, just because He loves you.

So if you understand the love a parent has for its child, you have a good start in understanding how God feels about you. If you know what it is to love your spouse, you know enough about love to have a feeling for God's love to you.

God affirms His love to us in many Bible verses: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness I have drawn you" (Jeremiah 31:3).

"But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)" (Romans 5:8).

God wants you to trust Him, to learn that He will not deceive you, to learn that He is more dependable and loving than anyone else in the universe. Many have learned what our children know and love to sing--

**"Jesus loves me, This I know—  
For the Bible tells me so.  
Yes, Jesus loves me;  
The Bible tells me so!"**

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**Romans 5:8**  
  
**But God demonstrates His  
own love toward us, in that  
while we were still sinners,  
Christ died for us.**

## **Bible devotion # 10:**

### **Will I lose anything in coming to God?**

Some folks are afraid of having God in their lives, for fear that they will have to surrender too much. Dear reader, it's a lot like choosing between two loves. Satan with his deceit and lies draws you away from God and true happiness, luring you to a dirty life of lusts and sinfulness. The other is God's love, pure and holy, upright and full-hearted, a love that desires only your eternal welfare and blessing.

Can't you make the choice between the false lover and your true love? Joshua, that notable child of God, knew he had come to this point in his life when he said to his friends, "And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!" (Joshua 24:15)

Are you ready to put aside your devotion to this world's falsehoods, willing to sacrifice your pride, happy to discard anything and everything that does not belong to God's business, God's will, and God's love? Has God brought you to this place that you are willing to follow God's Word in all things?

The world, the Devil, and our own human nature (Scripture calls it "flesh") all conspire to have us turn our backs on Jesus, to get us as far away from God as we can get. But all the while, the goodness of God is pulling us like a magnet to come to Jesus, to live with Him under His loving care, and to enjoy all the blessings God has in store for us.

He assures me that He has been at work in my heart and life: “It is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13).

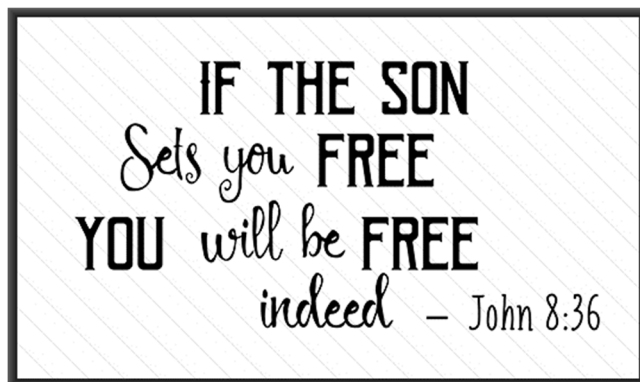
This teaching of Scripture is called “conversion” or “regeneration,” words that mean God has come into my heart, convinced me by His Word that Jesus is God’s gift to me, He is my Savior from Satan, and Jesus is my blessed assurance of God’s favor.

Because Jesus bore my punishment in His own body on the Cross of Calvary, I will not be punished and I am free from a guilty conscience.

Thanks be to God, I am free at last! Free at last!

**“And whosoever cometh,  
I will not cast him out.”  
O patient love of Jesus,  
That drives away our doubt,  
Which, tho’ we be unworthy  
Of love so great and free,  
Invites us very sinners  
To come, dear Lord, to Thee!**

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## **Bible devotion # 6: Why is it always about Jesus?**

Dear friend, we cannot discuss religion without bringing Jesus into the conversation. Why is Jesus always standing in the middle of God’s religion?

Because Jesus belongs there. It is His rightful place, for Jesus is God’s Son, and Father-God has very deep feelings about His Son. Jesus is not just another good fellow and a smart person, but the eternal Son of God. Jesus is not just another professor of religious ideas or a great Rabbi. The wonderful truth is that God’s own Son came down from His throne in heaven to give us His Father’s word on religion and Truth.

This was Jesus’ mission in life—“All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows...the Father except the Son, and he to whom the Son wills to reveal Him” (Matthew 11:27).

When you read your Bible, you are reading God’s Word, and the more you read it, the more you will see Jesus (God’s Son) as your Savior.

Here is how God in the Bible speaks to us about Jesus: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. ...Listen to Him!” (Matthew 3:17; 17:5)

“When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Galatians 4:4).

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).



Jesus emphasizes this very deliberately: “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life” (John 5:24).

“And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me....You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life, and these [Scriptures]...testify of Me” (John 5:39).

You will find, over and over—especially in the New Testament part of the Bible—that Jesus is the center of all God’s plans for you. “The Savior Jesus Christ gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people...” (Titus 2:14).

God has so much to tell you yet! Stay tuned!

**“Abiding steadfast, firm, and sure,  
The teachings of the Word endure.  
Blest he who trusts this steadfast Word;  
His anchor holds in Christ, the Lord. ”**

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*I am the Way  
the Truth  
and the Life*  
John 14:6

## **Bible devotion # 9:**

### **What is my status with God?**

If God has made an impression on your heart, and if He has convinced you that Jesus has redeemed you from being eternally lost, and that Father God welcomes you into His family due to Jesus’ living and dying for you, then you are ready to declare so before God and others by saying with confidence—

“I am sure that Jesus is my Lord and Savior, and I claim the gift of all His merits as my own. I am happy that He adopts me as one of His dear children. Through Jesus I am welcomed into the family of God’s children! I have God’s own word on it that He really wants me as His child: “God is not willing that any [including me] should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

“Depending on His love, I claim my place in God’s family: “If you [I] confess with your [my] mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your [my] heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you [I] will be saved. For with the heart one believes to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation” (Romans 10:9-10). My Father also assures me, “You are all [including me] the sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:26).

If anyone asks who or what got into my heart and brought me around from fearing God to admiring and loving Him, from worrying about dying to peaceful confidence that I am headed for heaven, from being Satan’s toy to being God’s child—I can give God’s own answer, because “this is the work of God of God, that you [including me] believe in Him whom He sent” (John 6:29).

Here we see the superiority of God's religion, in that He bypasses our good deeds as well as our sins and brings us His own, saving solution: "But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed...even the righteousness of God which is through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:21-24).

God has given you a Savior, and you are saved NOW and forever through Jesus!

Once a prison warden asked, "What must I do to be saved?" and the Apostle Paul directed him to the salvation provided by God in His own true religion: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:30-31).

That's God's religion, and it's my religion. The Lord urges you to depend on Jesus your Savior as your religion. God bless you in this true religion!

**"Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,  
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;  
Because Thy promise I believe,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come."**

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For it is by *Grace* you have  
been saved through *Faith*.  
And this is not from yourselves,  
It is the *Gift of God*.

*Ephesians 2:8*

## **Bible devotion # 7:**

### **Are you window-shopping for heaven?**

Many who are looking for God don't know where to look or how to find Him, because they look in the wrong places. They are like window-shoppers attracted to flashy advertising, or they spend their time looking for the "**50% OFF**" or other spectacular savings, as advertised everywhere.

Are you shopping for a special sale on heaven's blessings? Or are you one of the few who is truly concerned about value and quality, at whatever price? The best way to find quality is to seek the superior brand name, and don't get taken in by cheap, inferior merchandise.

You know I am talking about religion, not retail shopping. It is easy for church shoppers to be fooled by counterfeits, for much religious trash is peddled on TV and in magazines and church advertising. So how is a person going to know what IS truth and what is bogus?

You might begin by trusting somebody who loves you enough to help you read and understand the Bible. Reading the whole Bible seems a big job, but one way to simplify the job is to use a shortened version of the teachings of the Bible—such as our Lutheran Catechism.

This small book brings to you the main teachings of the Bible in an organized form so that you can learn what God wants you to know and believe about the problem of your sinfulness and about God's redemption of your soul from sin; about your Creator and Creation; about the life and work of Jesus your Savior and about the Holy Spirit, your Helper; about the holy Christian Church, the



resurrection of the dead, the Final Judgment, and eternal life.

As you study the Bible, you will also be brought the blessings of Christian prayer, perhaps even the blessings of Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar.

We can study the Bible together, if you wish, and God will help you stop window-shopping for heaven, for you will discover that Jesus has already brought to you the gift of redemption. Jesus had you in mind when He said, “Other sheep I have...them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice, and there will be one flock and one shepherd” (John 10:26). May God bless you in this way!

**“Come unto Me, you wand’rers,  
And I will give you rest.”  
O blessed voice of Jesus,  
That comes to hearts oppressed!  
It tells of benediction,  
Of pardon, grace, and peace,  
Of joy that has no ending,  
Of love that cannot cease.”**

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*Me* Sheep listen to my voice,  
I know them & they follow *Me*  
John 10:27

## **Bible devotion # 8: What is your religion?**

When a passing acquaintance asked me, “What church do you belong to?” I answered, “I could tell you that, but it’s more important that my religion is the same as God’s religion.”

Dear friend, isn’t it important for you also to have the same religion as God’s? True religion certainly must come from God. What good is a religion that God has not sponsored, a religion that He does not bless? (It would be a false religion.)

What, then, IS God’s religion?

The Bible gives us the answer, and in a few minutes we can learn much about God’s religion. In John 3:16 He tells us the grand plan of His religion: “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

“But what about good deeds?” someone may ask. Shouldn’t God pay attention to good deeds and decent living? Well, God is not impressed with the “goodness” of sinners.

Realizing the awful truth about our sinfulness is the first step of true religion: “Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:19-20).