

Choose Life

*What are the
most important
things you
would do if this were
your last day
on earth?*



Soul Hunger

Blaise Pascal, the 17th-century French mathematician and philosopher, said there's a God-shaped vacuum in every human heart. Centuries before Pascal, a man named Augustine searched to fill the aching void in his own life. After he found what he had been missing, he wrote a prayer in which he said to God, "You have made us for Yourself, and our heart is restless until we find our rest in You" (*Confessions*).

Those two thinkers have expressed what each one of us realizes in our quiet, reflective moments. Deep within us is a restless desire to know the One who made us. We want to discover the purpose He has for our existence in His vast universe. We long to find peace in a world that is being torn apart by feuding families, warring nations, militant religious groups, economic uncertainties, and self-destructive addictions.

At times, we may try to suppress that longing by filling our emptiness with a busy life, community service, career pursuits, romantic relationships, or covering up the ache with drugs or alcohol. Even though we may suppress or deny that longing within us, it will surface again and again.

These selections from *Our Daily Bread* will help point you to the only eternally satisfying answer to the longing of your heart. If you have enjoyed these articles and would like to receive the *Our Daily Bread* devotional, just complete the request form on this brochure and send it to us. Our materials are offered at no cost. We are supported by the freewill donations of our members and friends.

HE KNOWS YOUR NAME

READ:

Psalm 147:1-9

He heals the
brokenhearted . . .
He counts the number
of the stars; He calls
them all by name.
—Psalm 147:3-4

How many stars are there? Astronomers don't know. They simply assure us that the cosmos contains more stars than can be numbered. Billions for sure—probably trillions!

Figures like that are hard for us to grasp. Even a million is mind-boggling. If you were counting a million \$1 bills at the rate of 60 a minute for 8 hours a day, 5 days a week, it would take you nearly 7 weeks to complete the task. At the same rate, it would take over 133 years to count a billion dollars.

Scripture declares that God, the Maker of the sun and moon, “made the stars also” (Genesis

1:16). It likewise declares that He “brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, by the greatness of His might and the strength of His power; not one is missing” (Isaiah 40:26).

So if we ever wonder whether God is able to carry us with all our burdens, let us remember that He is the sovereign of the stars. Surely He who is the guide of the galaxies can deal with our situations.

If the skies are clear tonight, look heavenward and be thankful that the God who calls each star by name knows, loves, and cares for you. —Vernon Grounds

*I sing the wisdom that ordained
The sun to rule by day;
The moon shines full at His command,
And all the stars obey. —Watts*

**The One who upholds the universe
will never let you down.**

THE STAR IN THE WINDOW

READ:
Ephesians 2:1-10

**God so loved the
world that He gave
His only begotten
Son. —John 3:16**

During World War II, it was the custom in the United States for a family who had a son serving in the military to place a star in the front window of their home. But a gold star indicated that the son had died in support of his country's cause.

Years ago, Sir Harry Lauder told a touching story about this custom. He said that one night a man was walking down a New York City street accompanied by his 5-year-old son. The little fellow was interested in the brightly lighted windows of the houses and wanted to know why some houses had a star in the window. The

father explained that those families had a son fighting in the war. The child would clap his hands as he saw another star in the window and would cry out, "Look, Daddy, there's another family who gave a son for his country."

At last they came to an empty lot, and a break in the row of houses. Through the gap a star could be seen shining brightly in the sky. The little lad caught his breath, "Oh, Daddy," he cried, "Look at the star in the window of heaven! God must have given His Son too."

Yes, there is a star in God's window. Do you realize what He did for you? Out of His love for us, He gave His Son (Ephesians 2:4). Have you thanked Him?

—M. R. DeHaan

*For God so loved the world, He gave His only Son
To die on Calvary's tree, from sin to set me free;
Someday He's coming back, what glory that will be!
Wonderful His love to me. —Townsend*

**Many give their lives for their country,
but Jesus gave His life for the world.**

UNOPENED TOMORROWS

READ:

Matthew 6:25-34

**We walk by faith, not
by sight.**

—2 Corinthians 5:7

We often wish we could see what lies around the corner in life. Then we could prepare for it, control it, or avoid it.

A wise person has said, “Though we can’t see around corners, God can.” How much better and more reassuring that is!

Recently my 10-year-old granddaughter Emily and I were boiling eggs for breakfast. As we stared into the boiling water and wondered how long it would take to get the eggs just right, Emily said, “Pity we can’t open them up to see how they’re doing.” I agreed. But that would

have spoiled them, so we had to rely on guesswork, with no guarantee of results.

We began talking about other things we would like to see but can’t—like tomorrow. Too bad we can’t crack tomorrow open, we said, to see if it’s the way we would like it. But meddling with tomorrow before its time, like opening a partly cooked egg, would spoil both today and tomorrow.

Because Jesus has promised to care for us every day—and that includes tomorrow—we can live by faith one day at a time (Matthew 6:33-34).

Emily and I decided to leave tomorrow safely in God’s hands. Have you? —Joanie Yoder

*Though I know not what awaits me,
What the future has in store,
Yet I know the Lord is faithful,
For I’ve proved him oft before. —Anon.*

**You’re only cooking up trouble
when you stew about tomorrow.**

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW

READ:

2 Timothy 1:8-14

**I know whom I have
believed.**

—2 Timothy 1:12

Do you know an aglet from a tang? Would you recognize duff if you walked on it?

It's not essential to know these terms to make it through life successfully. If you didn't know that an aglet is "the covering on the end of a shoelace," that a tang is "the projecting prong on a tool," or that duff is "the decaying matter found on a forest floor," it's not all that important. You could always look it up.

We can be glad we don't have to know everything to get by in this world. We often can depend on someone else's knowledge.

For instance, I don't know how to fix the brakes of my car—but as long as someone else knows and can fix them, I'm okay.

There is a knowledge, however, for which we are individually responsible if we expect to enter heaven. I'm talking about knowing Christ personally. Learning about Him and entering into a personal relationship with Him is the only way to live wisely and be prepared to meet God. The apostle Paul had this in mind when he said, "I know whom I have believed" (2 Timothy 1:12).

Do you know the One who died for you and can forgive your sins? Unless you know Him, all other knowledge is insignificant. —Dave Branon

*Eternal life is knowing God
Through Jesus Christ His only Son;
Such knowledge is life's greatest quest—
Without it life has not begun. —D. DeHaan*

To know Christ is the greatest of all knowledge.

EMPTY PROOF

READ:

1 Corinthians 15:1-8

He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

—1 Corinthians 15:4

In the days after the French Revolution, a man tried to start a new religion that he believed was superior to Christianity. But he was disappointed at his lack of success. He revealed his frustration to a clergyman and asked what he could do.

The clergyman replied that it was no easy task to begin a new religion—so difficult that he had nothing to suggest. But after a moment's reflection, he said, "There's one plan that you might want to consider. Why don't you get yourself crucified and rise again the third day?"

The firm foundation of the Christian faith is an empty tomb. The New Testament declares

that the death of Jesus paid the penalty for our sin. But how can anyone know for sure that Christ's crucifixion was acceptable to God? It doesn't matter much what we think of the death of Jesus; what matters is what God thinks about it.

God's approval of Christ's sacrifice is proven by the resurrection. It stands as God's signed receipt that He is completely satisfied. Without the resurrection, Christianity has nothing much to offer the world. But the fact that Christ died and then rose from the grave "is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). —Haddon Robinson

*Some have said that Christianity is a relationship,
not a religion. Do you have that relationship?*

**Because of Christ's empty tomb,
we can be full of hope.**

YOUR LAST DAY

READ:

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.
—1 Thessalonians 5:6

What if you were told this morning that today was to be your last day on earth? How would you spend its fleeting hours? Whom would you insist on seeing? Would your behavior differ radically from what it usually is?

Someone has wisely said, “You should treat every day as if it’s your last one, because one of these days you’re going to be right.”

There’s no getting around it. Whether our earthly life ends by accident, illness, the ravages of age, or our Lord’s return, one of these days will be our last. That’s why we should guard so carefully the things we do and the words we say.

We ought to be tying up the loose ends of long-neglected matters by expressing our love and gratitude to others, by seeking reconciliation with an alienated friend, or by sharing the gospel with a neighbor.

Perhaps you’ve even been putting off accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior until some more convenient day. But that day may never come. Since your last day on earth can be so unexpected, heed Paul’s inspired words: “Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2). Are you living each day as if it were your last? —Vernon Grounds

*What are the five most important things you
would do if this were your last day on earth?
Would you seek out God?*

**What would you change
if this day were your last?**