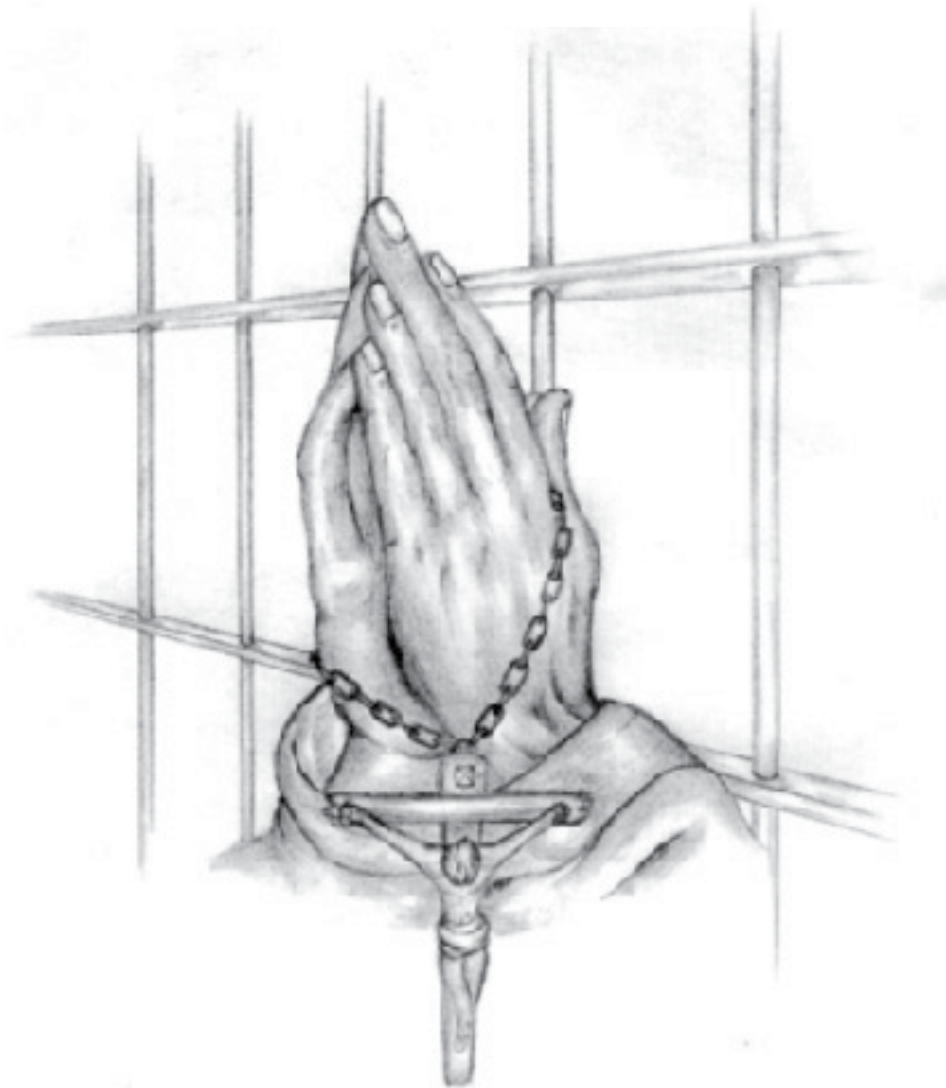


# “Now What?”

2015 Lenten Devotionals



BY WILLIAM TERTRENIER

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Dear Friends,

You know that Jesus is your Lord and Savior. You know that your sins are forgiven and you are loved. Now what? That is the question we asked this issue's writers to consider. When we were able to consider together in writers' workshops, we talked about the various things people do when they enter into relationship with God. Sometimes we make promises to God – and often don't do such a good job at keeping those promises. We strive to obey God's commandments to love one another, to learn, study, worship and pray in community. We work to include and invite others into the joy of the relationship and through it all, we work hard not to be judgmental of those with whom we disagree. As we talked and studied together, we came to the conclusion that it is good that the relationship with God is God-driven, and not about us, and that we live in the truth of forgiveness and second chances.

May your Lenten journey be enriched by the meditations contained in this little book. As usual, the writers took the theme beyond the academic and into their very hearts and souls – to be shared with you. You'll read about the power of love and forgiveness and how the hardest of all endeavors is to love and forgive oneself. You'll read testimonies about the power of prayer. You will celebrate with the writers as they rejoice in loving and trusting friendships with those around them. You will catch a glimpse of how response to redemption is a life of action, using one's energies and talents in love and service, regardless of the venue. And then you will share the prayer of the one who writes, "I am a who-so-ever..."

May God bless the "who-so-evers" of this world, for at one time or another they are us.

As always, you may copy this book or download it from our website. Just please give the writers and PCA credit for the work.

Blessings on your Lenten walk,  
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# Daily Meditation



Wednesday February 18, 2015

**Matthew 11:29** [Jesus said] **“Take my yoke upon you, also learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”**

A yoke is a working harness for two animals to work together, side by side so that when I take Jesus’ yoke upon me, I am not alone. Jesus is beside me in the other yoke, beside me, with me, working together in the field of life. Jesus is always present, always there to work with me, to teach, guide and deliver me.

*Prayer: Jesus, help me to be mindful I am not alone. You are always present in my life beside me. Amen.*

Thursday February 19, 2015

**Ephesians 4:32** **Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.**

This verse speaks of forgiveness and forgiving each other for our wrongdoings. This is NOT easy for any of us to do, especially if we are a victim of someone else’s wrongdoing. But we must give this our best effort so we can move on with our lives. By not forgiving this can cause us misery and anxiety in our own lives. True, we as humans can find it difficult to forget but we must strive to forgive as this is a commandment. I believe forgiveness can give the victim and offender a more positive outlook on life.

*Prayer: O Lord, please give me the virtue of true forgiveness. Help me to live the commandment you give us in your prayer. Amen*

## Friday February 20, 2015

**Mark 5:18-19** As Jesus was getting in the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."

That verse says to me, tell your people that the Lord Jesus can and will do for all who believe and repent and be baptized with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus' mercy, grace and faithfulness are much more than we can think. If we could love Jesus as much as Jesus loves us through the Father, this world would be a better place.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, through your son, Jesus Christ, we can receive the forgiveness that the never ending love of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit will give freely! Amen.*

## Saturday February 21, 2015

**Ephesians 2:8** "And it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and even that is not of yourselves, but the gift of God."

**Psalm 26:1-2** "Do me justice, O God! For I walked in integrity and I have trusted in you without wavering. Search me, O God, and test me; examine my heart and my mind."

There's a huge difference between being self-centered and having self love. To love others, we must first learn to love ourselves. For a long time I've struggled with what God's will for me really is. It seemed distant and ephemeral. Recently, it came to me that God's will is to not say or do that which I know is wrong – the rest of it will take care of itself.

*Prayer: Lord, help us to love ourselves as you love us. For in this human life, self-acceptance unlocks the door to you! Without that, we are closed off from the sunlight of the spirit. Amen.*

## Monday February 23, 2015

**Matthew 7:12** [Jesus said] **“So in everything do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”**

Do unto others? Wow, that’s a concept left behind as we commit our crimes; selfish becomes the addict or thief. To love one another as God loves us is not a common practice in prison. What if we choose to love; where could the limits go? Heavenward for sure. Today to walk my path of faith I consider the victims of my crime, I think of all who cross my path before I think of myself. The blessing that comes with total love for God and for all those who God loves and for me, one of God’s chosen; child of God. Forgiveness, judgment free; yes wow, what a concept!

*Prayer: Today Father God I choose love over hate! I choose to forgive and now I live judgment free because you have made us all new in your light. Thank you Jesus. It’s in your way we live and in your name we pray. Amen.*

## Tuesday February 24, 2015

**Mark 14:29** Peter declared, **“Even if all fall away I will not.”**

Peter was in denial when he spoke this. He and I aren’t so far apart when it comes to having trust in Jesus and what can manifest from having a relationship with him. There have been many times when I have turned my back on Jesus because I was not fully in a relationship with him. I’ve always known who he was and what he could do for me; I was the one who was untrusting of him. Coming to prison I learned to pray. I was not sure if my voice would be heard. When I was ready to fall away from the start of my relationship with Jesus he showed me what he could do for me and my relationship with him. He saved me many times and has gotten me out of trouble in more ways than one. I know that nothing will happen when I want it to but when God wants it to. His will be done not mine. Jesus is always with me. I will always be thankful.

*Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, continue to guide me in the right path as I continue to look for you. Amen.*

## Wednesday February 25, 2015

**1 John 2:3-6 We know we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.**

Now that I have accepted you into my heart,  
Where do I go? Where do I start?  
I will start by everyday striving to live more like you.  
Letting others see your love shine through.  
I will hold out my hand  
To help the weak stand.  
I will tell my story, always giving you all the glory.  
I will sing your praises, telling others how amazing your grace is.  
I will treat others how you have treated me.  
All while thanking you on bended knee.

*Prayer: Thank you Lord Jesus for coming into my heart. Please help me to share your word and help others to accept you into their hearts. Amen.*

## Thursday February 26, 2015

**1 Corinthians 14:26 What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.**

I want to make my body and all its physical action edify God; to offer up my actions to glorify God. But in the end the cleanliness of my mind is required. Right action is good, but right mind, right thoughts, and a right heart are what are required. Thoughts lead the body. The body does not lead the mind. When the Christ mind is achieved the body is no longer a slave but comes willingly. To know Christ is to know love. The body becomes a willing slave to this love and obeys.

*Prayer: Lord, thank you for my blessings and for my life. Thank you for the breath in my lungs. Amen*

## Friday February 27, 2015

**1 John 1:7** But if we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus his son purifies us from all sin.

As I walk in the light I hope and pray that I will be the light for everyone to see and that they know I have been washed in the blood of Jesus.

*Prayer: I pray for the people who are not walking in the light; that they will walk in the light and let the blood of Jesus purify them. Also I pray for my family that they see the light and for my dad as he is driving truck. I hope he knows that Jesus is holding onto the steering wheel. Amen.*

## Saturday February 28, 2015

**Micah 6:8** He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

What next? Now that I'm head over heels in love with my savior Jesus Christ what can I do? What will life be like? I can complicate the simplest of tasks so I endeavor to keep life in Christ deep yet simple. I want to be his representative. He's the boss, my CEO, my supervisor and my desire is to be him to the people; to love mercy, to do justice, to walk humbly with my God. What does that mean? I aim to be merciful, not to judge and to boast only of him, not me. Anything I become is because of him. I'm able because he's able. I'm humble because he's humble. To be humble isn't to be a pansy but bold about him. What next? It's all about him. I'm the vessel. God's the potter and I'm the clay.

*Prayer: Lord, give us a zeal and a passion for your work. Help us to be about kingdom business wherever we are. No one is useless. No place is a desert. Praise you in Jesus' name, Amen.*

## Monday March 2, 2015

**1 John 4:10-12** This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

I ask for Jesus' eyes. I ask for the father of lights to transport my idea of love through eternity where it all began – and where it will never end. To be able to see a broken soul is more costly than any amount of gold; to search out the lost, the despised and the undeserving according to this world. No, the homeless teen who threw away his dream will never see the face of God walking down the street – but he will recognize God in the hand that reaches out for him, taking him and the lost children in, that our own actions have dismissed. Lord, you go back for them – you send me back for them. You give me the gift of love so freely – I shake the bitter parts of me so your spirit can gently but powerfully plow through me.

*Prayer: Dear Jesus, you call the who-so-evers. I am a who-so-ever but your love has healed the leper in me. May I be your precious hands and feet. Throw dirt in my eyes and give me your vision. I was blind but now I see. Amen.*

## Tuesday March 3, 2015

**Numbers 11:1** And the people grumbled and deplored their hardships, which was evil in the ears of the Lord, and when the Lord heard it, his anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burned among them and devoured those in the outlying parts of the camp.

As I read this passage today during my devotional time I felt a “thud” in my spirit. How often do I grumble and complain, especially inwardly, about my present situation? My own sin has put me in this wilderness. The Lord has rescued me from my bondage and is bringing me to his promised land. He always and continually meets all of my needs, even needs I am not aware of. He is so good!

*Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, help me to not forget how serious you view complaining because it curses me and keeps me wandering in circles. Instead let me be led by your joy and appreciate what your death on the cross purchased for me. Help me to always be grateful and speak of praiseworthy things. In your name, Amen.*



## Wednesday March 4, 2015

**1 John 4:4 You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.**

I think I was born again from the womb. My mom is a real prayer warrior. I was raised a Christian and walked away, came back and after some years made a choice to live for God because I wanted to, not because it was the Christian thing to do. Not long ago, I read a book called *Relentless Passion* by Jeff Mann and his love for the Lord broke my heart and I realized I'd never told my Lord, my savior who gave his precious life for me, "I love you." It changed me. It softened my heart and I learned to praise him and love him. He's blessed me beyond measure. I believe his word. He is faithful and just to forgive us. I'd been going through a trial for a long time and when doubt and fear tried to creep in, when I tried to think on the problem and not the solution (God's word) I stood on the verse above. God blessed me in a miraculous way, not only showing me mercy but a beautiful show of hope to those who witnessed his faithful love! Miracles do still happen today. He changed my sentence from life without parole to 40 years. Glory be to God, hot dog and Amen!

*Prayer: Father, in Jesus' name, I give you all the glory and all the praise. I thank you for your loving mercy. God granted me favor and a second chance. I ask you to teach me to love you the way you deserve to be loved and help me to walk in love with others. I don't want to get ahead of you, father. I want to work out your plan for my life and I thank you for showing me what I can do for you. Help me to be still and listen to your voice. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

## Thursday March 5, 2015

**Mark 11:25-26** And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.

This scripture really touches my heart and mind. I had trouble forgiving people my whole life, especially myself. As I grew older I worked on that part of my spiritual walk in life. I had a brother and sister murdered who I was very close with, they were both my best friends. Now I'm close with their children. This is where I struggle the most with forgiveness. I wanted to take matters into my own hands and do justice for my family by harming the people who murdered my brother and sister. My mother said, "My girl, have pity on them, forgive them, pray for them." I tell you that was easier said than done. I was free for 3 years 27 days and never did state time but I went to Rapid City one day and my car was stolen so I reported it and found that I had a parole warrant and that landed me in prison. I believe now that God put me here at the right time. He brought to light the bad relationship I was in and how to completely forgive the people who murdered my siblings. He also put people on my path that are helping me through this. Since being here I've realized a lot and I'm continuing to grow in my relationship with God. I've also realized how good God really is. I did lose two aunties and a grandma since being here. That's been a test for me. I think it taught me how to use God and lean on him. Since being here the girl who was involved in my sister's murder passed away. I cried and I'm not quite sure why. I still don't understand my feelings.

*Prayer: Lord, thank you for the opportunity to get to know you a lot better than I ever did. Thank you for the women I've met that help me to get through my hard times through you. Thank you for dying for me and for forgiveness. It's awesome. You're awesome. Amen.*

## Friday March 6, 2015

**Colossians 3:2** Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things.

To me this verse helps bring to many other commands that as born again believers we must do because if we set our minds on things above then we have our minds on God. In so doing then we won't think of earthly desires or as some call them "desires of the flesh". In this state then we can see and learn what God wants and won't fall back into sin.

*Prayer: Dear Father, I pray that we set our minds on you and follow your commands. Amen.*

## Saturday March 7, 2015

**Matthew 5:16** [Jesus said] **“In the same way let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”**

**Hebrews: 13:15-16** **Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise - the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.**

When I first came to prison, I felt lost. But I knew what I wanted and that was to build a relationship with God. I had gone to all the Bible studies offered, attended all the religious activities in hopes of doing this. I still had felt like I wasn't getting it. I had been praying to God for help, if he would send someone to help. To my surprise he did. I am currently still studying and building that much appreciated foundation that I need and want. I am now trying to have an inquiring heart by regular prayerful study of God's word. I try to combine my thoughts, desires, emotions and goals in life with what God approves of. Then I will be able to share my new life with others through my walk. I know I will have more trials and tribulations but with God's help I will make it. My journey is beginning and I see a bright future.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I pray to you that you will continue to help all of us and guide us to do your will. And that I remember that I am only human. All the praise and glory goes to you. In your son Jesus Christ I pray. Amen.*

## Monday March 9, 2015

**Colossians 3:16** **Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.**

I like this verse because I like to write music and it gives me joy to do something I love and something I love to write about. It's my way of talking to God and I know it's what I'm meant to do in this life. I hope I can help others in what I write to show that all Christians suffer, for Jesus suffered.

*Prayer: I thank you Lord for blessing me with the ability to praise you in song and share my blessings with others. Amen.*

## Tuesday March 10, 2015

**Isaiah 43:1b-3a** “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

You have accepted Jesus – “Now what?” Now don’t think that Jesus will leave you just because he is planted in your life. Don’t be so afraid that you think Jesus is falling off on you that you fall off on him. Keep praising, keep worshipping, and know that everything will follow through for you, so says the Lord our God.

*Prayer: Lord our Father in heaven, thank you for your many blessings, your grace and your mercy. Amen*

## Wednesday March 11, 2015

**1 John 3:1** Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God.

**Matthew 19:14** But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them; for to such as these belongs the kingdom of heaven.”

These verses clearly tell me that it was because of God’s great love for us that he bestowed it upon us to be called children of God. And it was through the gift of his son Jesus that he showed us how much he loved us. Because he gave his only begotten son as a sacrifice for my sins, to die on the cross of Calvary so that I could receive his gift of eternal life and be an heir or a child of God. God as Jesus said, “For of such is the kingdom of heaven made up – children of God.”

*Prayer: Thank you Father for bestowing your great love upon us, for sending us your son to redeem us from our sins and for giving us the gift of eternal life thus making us heirs and children of God. Amen.*

## Thursday March 12, 2015

**Micah 6:8 “...Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God.”**

“Now what?” “Pray like it depends on God, work like it depends on you.” Those are the words of the book I am studying – that teaches us circle prayers. When I have needs, I’ve prayed like it depends on God about those things. I have, for 2 months, every morning, risen at 4:00 a.m. and prayed my circle prayers. Last week I did the “work” – I filed a complaint on the parole board to establish a law that will ensure fair and impartial parole hearings for all inmates. It was the right thing to do. Today I was blasted in the newspaper for it. Now what? Did my circle prayers not work? One of my prayers was for protection from slander. I don’t feel protected...so now what? Well, I keep praying my circle prayers, believe God will honor the integrity in which I decided to stand on and trust that in the big picture change will happen. Better government will be the end result. Dream big, pray big, pray hard, don’t give up – that’s what now. Continue to stand (Psalm 73:17-20). God sees the end when I can’t. Pray like it depends on God and work like it depends on you.

*Prayer: Lord, you are more important than anything else in life, you are all the strength I need, and you are as fair as you are merciful. Please draw near to me as I draw near to you. Keep me strong in heart and full of hope with your vision for the future. Amen.*

## Friday March 13, 2015

**Romans 12:1 Therefore I urge you brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.**

Having been in prison we inmates have different chances to present our ideas about giving our heart to Christ, and my greatest moment was meeting him (Christ) in April of 1996 and giving my heart, mind, and soul over to him and all of the 30 others that I have been a recruiter for.

*Prayer: God in heaven, please bless us in all that we do in your name. Have mercy on us. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

## Saturday March 14, 2015

**Romans 8:31** What should we say then, in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?

It is good to know that God is on our side and that he'll be there as I walk this path that has twists and turns and steep hills, weeds and thorns. Since becoming a child of God I look forward to when my path leads me straight in the kingdom of heaven. I also look forward to all the family, friends and new sisters that I've gotten to know on my way. I thank God and praise him for all he's given me. Now I know there will be only flowers and blue skies.

*Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you for this time to be with your angel; bless her, keep her safe and thank you for your strength to get me there. Amen.*

## Monday March 16, 2015

**Jeremiah 29:11** "For I know the plans I have for you," declared the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Now that I have a relationship with God there is work to do. I am being molded into his creation. Before I was of this world, now I know he has great things for me to do in his kingdom. What an honor that is. Now I feel loved, cared for and like my life has purpose. I will strive today and always to glorify his name and help make heaven more crowded. That is just a part of my mission. I don't know what the other part is but I trust in God and know he will show me his plan in his time. Thanks be to God.

*Prayer: Dear God, thank you for your love and care and for giving me a purpose in this life. Help me to always bring glory to your name. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

## Tuesday March 17, 2015

**Matthew 25:36** 'I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

**Matthew 16:25** [Jesus said] "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it."

Many know and quote Matthew 25 and Hebrews 13, telling us to visit prisoners or remembering those in prison. As a person in prison hears these words, we put "ME" in place of prisoner and as for myself I try to turn it around a bit since I am in prison I need to witness to those in my midst. I reflect on Matthew 16:25. For this, this is what I need to tell those I'm witnessing to. We all may feel like we've lost our life (soul) when those gates shut with a BANG as we entered prison. For many this was the point when Jesus was made known to them. And I know for sure without a doubt this (coming to know Jesus) was the luckiest time in my life so losing one's freedom, eternal life can be had. Praise God.

*Prayer: My prayer for all who are looking for something yet not known to them; Jesus is looking for you. Amen.*

## Wednesday March 18, 2015

**1 Timothy 2:15** Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

This verse has become very important to me. It tells me that I must study to know his word to me; that his word (scripture) is both a love letter and an instruction manual for living life right. I wrecked my life and am paying the price, 55 years in prison. After reading scripture again I could easily see that had I done what God had instructed in his word for me, I would not be here. Daily devotion and study is important for keeping my life on the right path.

*Prayer: I thank and praise you God for showing me the right way to live in your scripture and displaying it and your love through Jesus the Christ. Amen.*

## Thursday March 19, 2015

**Psalms 88:1-2** O Lord, the God who saves me, day and night I cry out before you. May my prayer come before you; turn your ear to my cry.

The first time I read this I was at a very low point. Since the age of 13 I've been in and out of foster homes, group homes, and juvenile hall. Then I came to prison. I have spent the majority of my life alone. So reading this psalm put words into what I was feeling. Reading this chapter showed me I'm not alone. So now that I have God in my life I'll never be alone again. I'll always have a friend. Now I have to continue to be loyal, committed and faithful to him so I don't lose my friend. I know that he'll always hear my cry for help, be my ear, my shoulder, and reason to hang on until tomorrow.

*Prayer: Dear God, I pray for the world and that you open everyone's heart to love. Amen.*

## Friday March 20, 2015

**Hebrews 1:14** Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

**Hebrews 13:2** Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.

Driving down the highway my dad picks him up. I'm scared of him, not talking to him and basically yelling at my dad. My dad turns and looks at me, stops the car and makes me get out and walk for about 5 minutes. It's cold and snowing. I have no hat and no gloves. When my dad lets me back into the car where it's warm, I look at the man with new eyes. "I'm sorry for being mean," I say to them both. When we get to where we are going my dad takes the man to the bus station and gets him a ticket home. I give him my stuffed bunny, not realizing that my dad had a tag sewn on the bottom of one of the legs with our address on it. Three years go by when my bunny shows back up with a picture of a little girl and the man who, on his way home we had stopped to help.

*Prayer: Thank you for teaching me a lesson of love through my dad. Amen.*

## Saturday March 21, 2015

**Matthew 11:28-30** Come to me all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

There have been times when the guilt and shame I have felt for my past sins and mistakes have weighed me down so that I thought I could not get up. Then in that still small voice he calls and says, "Let me take that guilt and shame because I have forgiven you for all your past sins and mistakes. Take my yoke and you will know true love." Now as I look to him, my one true love, my heart is bursting to overflowing with his love. He helps me forgive myself when at times I can't. He gives me peace when the world is shouting in my ears and reminding me of my past. He gives me rest when there is chaos all around me.

*Prayer: Thank you Lord for your love that you have given to me. May I always look to you for rest and peace in this world. Amen.*



## Monday March 23, 2015

**John 3:16** 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.

In 2003 I had a dream about Jesus standing in front of me and my family with an ice cream bucket. Behind him was a black divider that had silver stars and a crescent moon on it. Jesus looked toward us and said, "Whoever's name I pick has to follow me. Are you ready?" When he picked the paper out, he said my name. Then he turned around and started walking away. I started following him but before I made it to the divider I woke up from my dream. That's when I knew I had to change my life and give it to him the way he gave up his life so I could live a better life in his word.

*Prayer: My Father I come to you and ask that you watch over everything and everybody you give life to and watch over my family and my special friend who is having a hard time at this point. Let her know life is not that bad. I pray for all the ladies and officers here that we all have humbleness towards each other. Amen.*

## Tuesday March 24, 2014

**Matthew 7:1-2** [Jesus said] "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

**Romans 2:1** You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.

I have promised God that I would focus my time on him if he helped me. I then in turn now need to work on how I judge others. I don't want to judge people because in the Bible it says, judge not or you will be judged in the same measure you judge. I tend to be heartless and uncaring, judging people before I even have the chance to meet them. I never want anyone to judge me on anything in my life because when it comes down to it, I need to change in the future.

*Prayer: Dear God, help me not to pass judgment on others. Help me to understand that judgment is not the way to help someone. I don't need to tear anyone down in my life. Amen*

## Wednesday March 25, 2015

**Jeremiah 29:11-14** “For I know the plans I have for you says the lord; plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the Lord, “and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all of the nations and places I have banished you,” declares the Lord, “and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.”

I came to prison when I was 17 in 2002 right after I had given birth to my daughter. I came without knowing when I would go home or if my grandparents were able to make it with a newborn on their hands. Instead of lecturing me or resenting me, my grandparents only told me to turn to God and he would bring me home. The card they sent had this scripture on the front. I have never forgotten it.

*Prayer: God, you know our comings and our goings. You know our past and our future. Help us as we navigate an uncertain present and remind us of our certain and eternal hope in you. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

## Thursday March 26, 2015

**2 Corinthians 2:14** But thanks be to God who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him.

I have walked down a lonely path in my life and I have promised God a lot of things in my life if he would help me find who I was in him. But I kept failing...but he showed me that if I just keep my head up and my faith high, things would work out and he would be there no matter what the trials were, he would be there.

*Prayer: Lord, teach me to lead people to you. Amen*

## Friday March 27, 2015

**John 15:18-19 [Jesus said] "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you."**

When I was first incarcerated I believed that there was no way God could love me because of the crime I had committed and ultimately I hated myself and was outnumbered and judged to be the terrible person I thought I was. God brought a dear Christian sister with a similar crime into my life. She encouraged me to go to church and told me that God loved me. I was saved within weeks of this meeting. Now what? I was loyal to my church, attending every service and Bible study while the rest of my time I was surrounded by more and more judgment and hatred both internally and externally. I felt lost and alone. This happened for what felt like an eternity. But God's love appeared and enveloped me one particular evening at Bible study. As we read John 15, I truly felt a part of something larger than myself. When I heard verses 18-19, my loneliness and self-hatred were removed, knowing that Jesus, too, was hated as I was and had hurt as I was hurting. In that, I found strength wherever I was, knowing that he genuinely loved me.

*Prayer: I pray that Jesus will touch every lonely heart of those who feel unworthy of the love of Christ. I pray Lord that you will give them the strength and other glorious gifts you have for every one of us. Amen.*

## Saturday March 28, 2015

**James 1:22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.**

**James 3:13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.**

To me "Now what?" means that it's important and wonderful to hear the word, i.e. to read it, to hear it, even to memorize it and to attend church. I do most of that. My "Now what?" is to be a doer of the word. I have been a hearer of the word and now I need to practice or implement what I have heard. Love my fellow man, pray for my enemy, forgive others, not be angry, and be willing, able and prepared to tell others why I am a follower of Christ. Since I claim to know God's ways I need to prove it or demonstrate it by the way I live, behave, talk, and think! I like the phrase; pray right, think right, do right. I want to not just know some of what the Bible says, I want to live it and practice it. Really I want to become Christ-like, to have the mind of Christ in terms of love, giving, self-sacrifice etc.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I come to you in Jesus name. Please forgive me for my sins and selfishness. Please empower me to do thy will and be a witness for you in my life, thoughts, and deeds. I love you. Thank you for everything. Amen.*

## Monday March 30, 2015

**Isaiah 43:25-26** I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more. Review the past for me, let us argue the matter together, and state the case for your innocence.

I guess I'm not exactly sure why but these two verses are my favorites to date and have been for some time now. I feel that maybe they show the true forgiveness and love of God and his willingness to stand beside us and listen to us and love us no matter what we have done and is willing to be our spokesman. With the love of God all things are possible, including forgiveness – "Now what?" - shine the light of Jesus in all that you do and all that you say.

*Prayer: Thank you precious Father in heaven for allowing us to become aware of your Holy Spirit in our lives, and please help me and us to shine the light of Jesus for all to see. In Jesus name, Amen.*

## Tuesday March 31, 2015

**Romans 6:10-11, 15-16** For the death that he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life that he lives, he lives to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. ...What then? Shall we sin because we are under grace? May it never be! Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey - either to sin resulting in death, or to obedience resulting in righteousness?

As followers of Christ, we have died to our old worldly ways and have been reborn in Christ. Therefore, we must not squander grace nor take for granted the price it took to pay for our sins. We must never turn back to the sin we were saved from. Now we must move forward, rejoicing in each new day and the trials we face along life's road. As we know from James 1:2, "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance." The love and faith we show is a guiding light to others who have also lost their way. We are here to disciple them and lead them on the narrow path with us. May our faith and obedience be a lamp unto their feet.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for the very life you give me daily. Thank you for the loving friends and family you surround me with. Father, give me the wisdom and courage to spread your Word and your love to those who so desperately need it. Father, you have planted the seed of your Holy Spirit in my heart, allow it to grow and be visible to all whom I meet. Bless those who do your work and bring your Word to men like me. We thank you for all that you do. In the name of your son, Jesus Christ, Amen.*

## Wednesday April 1, 2015

**Proverbs 3:24** When you lie down you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.

To me this reminds me each night that I have no reason to be frightened of anything be it death or Satan. Knowing that the Lord is watching over me gives me a great sense of security and hope. I look at this every evening before bed and it helps me to fall asleep in peace without the fear of death in my sleep. Each night I pray for a peaceful, full night of sleep and since I have started doing so it has worked.

*Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for another blessed day. May my sleep be filled with dreams of peace and love. Thank you Lord. Amen.*

## Thursday April 2, 2015

**Psalms 27:13-14** I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.

Whether you're not quite sure yet, just starting out, or a long time follower of Christ – you can always ask, "Now what?" The day I picked up the submission form for the 2015 Lenten devotional was the same day I found out my 20 year old son passed away. Looked at the topic – "Now what?" Exactly! My friends ask me how I'm doing. I assure them that God is my refuge and Jesus is my rock. Without God and Jesus in my life, I wouldn't have made it. It's hard losing a loved one, especially when you believe that you shouldn't outlive your children. God has a plan and it's not up to me to question it, but to know that he is sovereign in ALL he does. Just as Jesus healed the blind man in John 9:36b, he tells us, "...but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life." Currently, I help those who God leads to me or those he leads me to. I am strong and waiting for the Lord.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, please help us to live each day for you. Grant us the knowledge, wisdom and understanding along with the strength and courage, patience and perseverance to do your will now and always. In Jesus' holy and precious name, Amen.*

## Friday April 3, 2015

**2 Corinthians 4:11** For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body.

**2 Corinthians 5:5** Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God who has given us the spirit as a deposit guaranteeing what is to come.

"Now what?" WOW!! Five years ago I was one of the walking dead. Then Jesus called for me. I answered him through prayer. I said, "Jesus just kill me." The next day I was arrested, charged and, over time, convicted and sentenced to the department of corrections. Death had come for the old me. So I called out to my Savior. He redeemed me to his truth, that our Father God loves us all and wants us to know of and live in his peaceful light, the light which promises me that my life still has purpose. All for his glory did I receive the gift of his spirit with tears of joy, knowing the one true God calls himself my father. I will sing for his glory. I will praise him for his glory. I will share his light with others for his glory. I will shout victory for his glory.

*Prayer: Dear God, I've been through so much and know I'm not the only one carrying your light and spirit for all to see. You are the father and one true God. We are your obedient children. Thank you for your blessings. Glory be to God and our kingdom to come. Amen.*

## Saturday April 4, 2015

**Psalms 45:9** Daughters of kings are among your honored women; at your right hand is the royal bride in gold of Ophir.

Here are ladies of honor – the whole chapter speaks of God's greatness and how amazing he is but verse 9 stuck out to me. Now that I have rededicated my life to God I will be a lady of honor; always honoring God first so that he can truly transform my life. I used to be a prostitute but now I have hope that my life has changed and my thoughts have changed because God loves me and I love him.

*Prayer: Father God, in the name of Jesus, thank you for giving me a life that will honor you, a new life. Amen.*

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St. Dysmas, Springfield, SD  
The Living Stone Prison Church, Springfield, SD  
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