

A selection of inspirational passages  
from the books of one of Christendom's  
favorite devotional writers.

# OSWALD CHAMBERS:

In our survey on devotional helps (p. 30), Oswald Chambers' *My Utmost for His Highest* emerged as the number one resource mentioned by readers. This classic has had enormous impact for decades.

Almost every Christian leader to whom I've mentioned Chambers in the past month has acknowledged having read and profited from *Utmost*, but few were aware that more than thirty volumes of his works are available, most of them in paperback. Having plunged this year into many of these books (available from Christian Literature Crusade, Ft. Washington, Pennsylvania), I am convinced that a vital resource is being greatly ignored by Christian

leaders. Chambers' books are actually shorthand transcripts taken by his wife and then edited by her after his death in 1917. You probably won't agree with every Chambers statement, but his books are as rich a resource for the devotional life as can be found, and a marvelous stimulus for powerful sermons. In fact, Richard Halverson, now chaplain of the U.S. Senate, said to me in a recent letter, "I have been reading Oswald Chambers almost every day since January 1, 1937."

After "feasting" for a period of many months on his books, I turned in preparation for this article to *Oswald Chambers, His Life and Work*, a collection of his

# INSIGHTS TO DEEPEN YOUR MINISTRY

HAROLD L. MYRA

letters compiled by his wife Gertrude ("Biddie"). Knowing Chambers' severe requirements for the spiritual life, I had some apprehensions. Would he, in real life, belie some of his own preaching? Might he be somewhat a spiritual prig himself? I was delighted to find that the man who emerges (no matter how much allowance is given for the fact his wife prepared the manuscript) is one whose life was filled with joyous and intense loyalty to Jesus Christ. He displayed a "boundless gift of humor" and "was never happier than when crawling round the nursery playing at being a lion or a tiger, led triumphantly by a small boy or girl whom he allowed to tease him unmercifully."

On first meeting him, a friend was shocked at what she considered "his undue levity. He was the most irreverent reverend I had ever met!"

Yet he had experienced great pain in his spiritual journey. As a boy in school, his real interest was in art. He had great hopes for professional accomplishment in this area, but doors did not open. He learned that God was not after Chambers the artist, but Chambers himself. When God's call came "with startling suddenness," the words were "I want you in my service—but I can do without you," a call worth pondering in relation to our own spiritual lives.

Chambers had no easy progress. God seemed to deliberately cut adrift some of his ships of natural ambition, reflected in a favorite quotation during those days of terrible struggle:

That life is not as idle ore  
But iron dug from central gloom,  
And heated hot with burning fears,  
and dipt in baths of hissing tears,  
And batter'd with the shocks of doom  
To shape and use.

He once wrote, "I shall never go into the ministry until God takes me by the scuff of the neck and throws me in." He saw his contribution for Christ in the arts rather than the ministry, writing in 1895:

"My life work as I see it, my eternal work, is, in the Almighty strength of God, to strike for the redemption of the aesthetic Kingdom of the soul of man—



*Harold L. Myra is publisher of LEADERSHIP and CHRISTIANITY TODAY.*

Music and Art and Poetry, or rather, the proving of Christ's redemption of it. . . . the spirit of Art is to a sad extent the spirit of immorality. Ruskin struck at the sin of it with the sledge hammer of a champion, and the Kingdom of Art trembled. That noble champion is growing old and feeble now. . . . an ambition, a longing, has seized me, seized me so powerfully that it has convinced me of the need. The Spirit of God seems to cry, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then, through all my weaknesses, my sinfulness, and my frailties, my soul cried, 'Here am I, send me.' Jesus Christ is my Saviour and my Master, *He* is the 'live coal from off the altar,' He has touched my soul, my eyes, my ears, my mouth, and I must go."

Here he was offering his considerable talents to Christ with an obviously intense dedication, but they were not to be used. He wrote in 1896:

"It seems tonight that the great Spirit of God is near . . . and the thought that is strongest in me is that of entering the ministry. How often have I hinted at it, how often have I stifled it back and down; but I cannot keep it hid any longer. It would be playing with the sacred touch of God to neglect or stifle this strange yet deep conviction that some time I must be a minister. This inward conviction, the decided thwarting all along the art line, nay, the repeated and pointed shutting of doors that seemed just opening, as well as the confident opinion of many friends—all leads me to consider most earnestly before God what is His will. I am going to leave the opening of the way in His hands, nor am I going to try and enter the ministry until it is so startlingly clear that not to go would be to disobey.

"Brighter, clearer, and more exquisite is the spiritual within becoming, and my whole being is ablaze and passionately on fire to preach Christ. All my art aims are swallowed up in this now. It is the almighty love of God that constrains me, and in the midst of a keen consciousness of complete unworthiness, my soul cries out within me, Here am I, send me. . . . Hudson Taylor said last night that Our Lord's words 'Have faith in God' really mean 'Have faith in the faithfulness of God,' not in your own faithfulness."

But Chambers' intense interest in art and literature, which continued throughout his ministry, was not to be wasted but used in a magnificent way, flavoring all his sermons with an unusual depth and realism. In a letter written in 1907, he reveals his love for communing with the great minds:

"My box has at last arrived. My books! I cannot tell you what they are to me—silent, wealthy, loyal lovers. I do thank God for my books with every fibre of my being . . . I see them all just at my elbow now—

Plato, Wordsworth, Myers, Bradley, Halyburton, St. Augustine, Browning, Tennyson, Amiel, and the others."

His sermons quote the finest Christian thinkers, but also writers from Ibsen to Balzac, all put through a thoroughly Christian perspective. A friend of Chambers wrote the following paragraphs about an encounter with him, which contains excellent counsel for any minister:

"For some time I had been in a puzzling cul de sac mentally; continually passing on to others the truth revealed to me, I realized that I lacked the ability to give form in my mind and expression in words to what I knew in my heart. Mr. Chambers asked me what I read. When I told him nothing but the Bible and books directly associated with it, he diagnosed the difficulty at once and said, 'The trouble is you have allowed part of your brain to stagnate for want of use.' Then and there he gave me a list of over fifty books, philosophical, psychological, theological, covering almost every phase of current thought. The outstanding result was a revolution which can only be described as a mental new birth, and I entered on a land of far distances, which by God's grace is still extending and expanding.

"He wrote me later: 'My strong advice to you is to

## Chambers was a unique blend of sophistication and burning holiness.

*soak, soak, soak* in philosophy and psychology until you know more of these subjects than ever you need consciously to think. It is ignorance of these subjects on the part of ministers and workers that has brought our evangelical theology to such a sorry plight. When people refer to a man as 'a man of one book,' meaning the Bible, he is generally found to be a man of multitudinous books, which simply isolates the one Book to its proper grandeur. The man who reads only the Bible does not, as a rule, know it or human life.' "

Chambers was a unique blend of sophistication and burning holiness that would take him on missions to America and Japan. He developed a Bible training college, which had an enormous impact on its students. During World War I he ministered through the YMCA in Egypt to the troops; it was there he died of appendicitis. But his books not only still live, they haven't the slightest "dated" feel about

\* \*



Drawing by Ross: © 1961.  
The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

"What I like about him is he never tells you to stay in line,  
he asks you to stay in line."

them. They plunge to the eternal depths and realities of God.

The following brief extracts from eight of Chambers' books are presented strictly as a taste, perhaps a week's devotional thoughts. Read them slowly. Each is a nugget to reflect on and explore. When you've finished, you'll have the wonderful knowledge that it will take a long time to get through all of his books—and that is very good news indeed!

---

Extracts from: **The Love of God**

---

A saint's life is in the hands of God as a bow and

arrow in the hands of an archer. God is aiming at something the saint cannot see; He stretches and strains, and every now and again the saint says: "I cannot stand any more." But God does not heed; He goes on stretching until His purpose is in sight, then He lets fly.

\* \*

Our Lord did not say to His disciples: "I have had a most successful time on earth. I have addressed thousands of people and been the means of their salvation; now you go and do the same kind of thing." He said: "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, *ye also ought to wash one another's*

\* \*



© Rob Portlock, 1981.

ROB PORTLOCK

---

feet." We try to get out of it by washing the feet of those who are not of our own set. We will wash the heathen's feet, the feet in the slums; but fancy washing my brother's feet! My wife's! My husband's! The feet of the minister of my church! Our Lord said "one another's feet."

\* \*

Think of it: thirty years at home with brothers and sisters who did not believe in Him! We fix on the three years which were extraordinary in Our Lord's life and forget altogether the earlier years at home, thirty years of submission. Perhaps something of the same kind is happening to you, and you say, "I don't know why I should have to submit to this." Are you any better than Jesus Christ? "As He is, so are we in this world." The explanation of it all is Our Lord's prayer: "that they may be one, even as We are one."

\* \*

We have an idea that we have to alter things; we have not. We have to remain true to God in the midst of things as they are. We have to live on this sordid earth amongst human beings who are exactly like ourselves, remembering that it is on this plane we have to work out the marvelous life God has put in us.

\* \*

Both nations and individuals have tried Christianity and abandoned it because it has been found too difficult; but no man has ever gone through the crisis of deliberately making Jesus Lord and found Him to be a failure.

\* \*

Sacrifice is not giving up things, but giving to God with joy the best we have. We have dragged down the idea of surrender and of sacrifice; we have taken the life out of the words and made them mean something sad and weary.

\* \*

Satan's kingdom is based on wisdom; along the lines he advocates lies success, and men recognize this. Jesus Christ is not on the line of success but on the spiritual line, the holy, practical line and no other.

\* \*

No matter what your circumstances may be, don't

try to shield yourself from things God is bringing into your life. We have the idea sometimes that we ought to shield ourselves from some of the circumstances God brings round us. Never! God engineers circumstances; we have to see that we face them abiding continually with Him in His temptations. They are *His* temptations, they are not temptations to us, but to the Son of God in us.

---

### Extracts from: **Studies in the Sermon on the Mount**

---

"Ye are the salt of the earth." Some modern teachers seem to think our Lord said, "Ye are the *sugar* of the earth," meaning that gentleness and winsomeness without curative-ness is the idea of the Christian. Our Lord's illustration of a Christian is salt, and salt is the most concentrated thing known.

If you get salt into a wound, it hurts; and when God's children are amongst those who are "raw" toward God, their presence hurts. The man who is wrong with God is like an open wound, and when "salt" gets in, it causes annoyance and distress and he is spiteful and bitter.

\* \*

Let people do what they like with your truth, but never explain it. Jesus never explained anything; we are always explaining, and we get into tangles by not leaving things alone. We need to pray St. Augustine's prayer, "O Lord, deliver me from this lust of always vindicating myself." Our Lord never told His disciples when they made mistakes; they made any number of blunders, but He went on quietly planting the truth and let mistakes correct themselves.

\* \*

A man who is continually criticised becomes good for nothing; the effect of criticism knocks all the gumption and power out of him. Criticism is deadly in its effect because it divides a man's powers and prevents his being a force for anything. That is never the work of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost alone is in the true position of a critic; He is able to show what is wrong without wounding and hurting.

The counsel of Jesus is to abstain from judging. This sounds strange at first, because the characteristic of the Holy Spirit in a Christian is to reveal the things that are wrong; but the strangeness is only on the surface. The Holy Spirit does reveal what is wrong in others, but His discernment is never for purposes of criticism, but for purposes of intercession.

"Judge not, that ye be not judged." If we let that maxim of our Lord's sink into our hearts, we will find how it hauls us up. "Judge not"—why, we are always at it! The average Christian is the most penetratingly critical individual; there is nothing of the likeness of Jesus Christ about him. A critical temper is a contradiction to all our Lord's teaching. Jesus says of criticism, "Apply it to yourself, never to anyone else."

\* \*

God never threatens; the devil never warns.

\* \*

The more facile the expression in words, the less likely is the truth to be carried out in life. There is a peril for the preacher that the listener has not; the peril of expressing a thing and letting the expression react in the exhaustion of never doing it. That is where fasting has to be exercised—fasting from eloquence, from fine literary finish, from all that natural culture makes us esteem. Fasting is much more than doing without food, that is the least part; it is fasting from everything that manifests self-indulgence.

\* \*

Always distinguish between those who object to your way of presenting the Gospel and those who object to the Gospel itself.

---

### Extracts from: *The Place of Help*

---

Satan's great aim is to deflect us from the centre. He will allow us to be devoted "to death" to any cause, any enterprise, to anything but the Lord Jesus. Because men and women devote themselves to martyrdom for a cause, they think they have struck the profoundest secret of religion; whereas they have but exhibited the heroic spirit that is in all human beings, and have not begun to touch the great fundamental secret of spiritual Christianity, which is whole-hearted, absolute consecration of myself to Jesus, not to His cause, not to His "league of pity," but to Himself personally.

\* \*

The stars do their work without fuss, and saints do their work without fuss. The people who are always desperately active are a nuisance; it is through the saints who are one with Him that God is doing things all the time. A sanctified saint is at leisure

## God never threatens; the devil never warns.

---

from himself and his own affairs, confident that God is bringing all things out well.

\* \*

A devotee to doctrines does not need to think; but a man who is devoted to Jesus Christ is obliged to think, and to think every day of his life.

\* \*

Jesus Christ was considered to be so shallow by the religious people of His day that they said He was a gluttonous man and winebibber. His was such a full-orbed natural life that no attention was paid to Him. He was easily ignored and made of no account. Men were blind to the real profundity of His life. It is easy to behave at a prayer meeting; it takes all the grace of God to behave at a marriage feast.

\* \*

The natural pagan, a man whose word is as good as his bond, a moral and upright man, is more delightful to meet than the Christian who has enough of the Spirit of God to spoil his sin, but not enough to deliver him from it.

\* \*

God disciplines us by disappointment. Life may have been going on like a torrent, then suddenly down comes a barrier of disappointment, until slowly we learn that the disappointment was His appointment. God hides His treasures in darkness, and many a radiant star that was not seen before comes out. In some lives you can see the treasure; there is a sweetness and beauty about them, "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," and you wonder where the winsome power of God came from. It came from the dark places where God revealed His sovereign will in unexpected issues. "Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress."

\* \*

We carry our religion as if it were a headache: there is neither joy nor power nor inspiration in it, none of the grandeur of the unsearchable riches of Christ about it, none of the passion of hilarious confidence in God.

---

Extracts from: **He Shall Glorify Me**

---

Oh, the foolish fever there is these days! Organizing this, organizing that; a fever of intense activity for God. What is wanted is the baptism with the Holy Ghost which will mean Our Lord's prayer in

John 17 is answered: "that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us."

\* \*

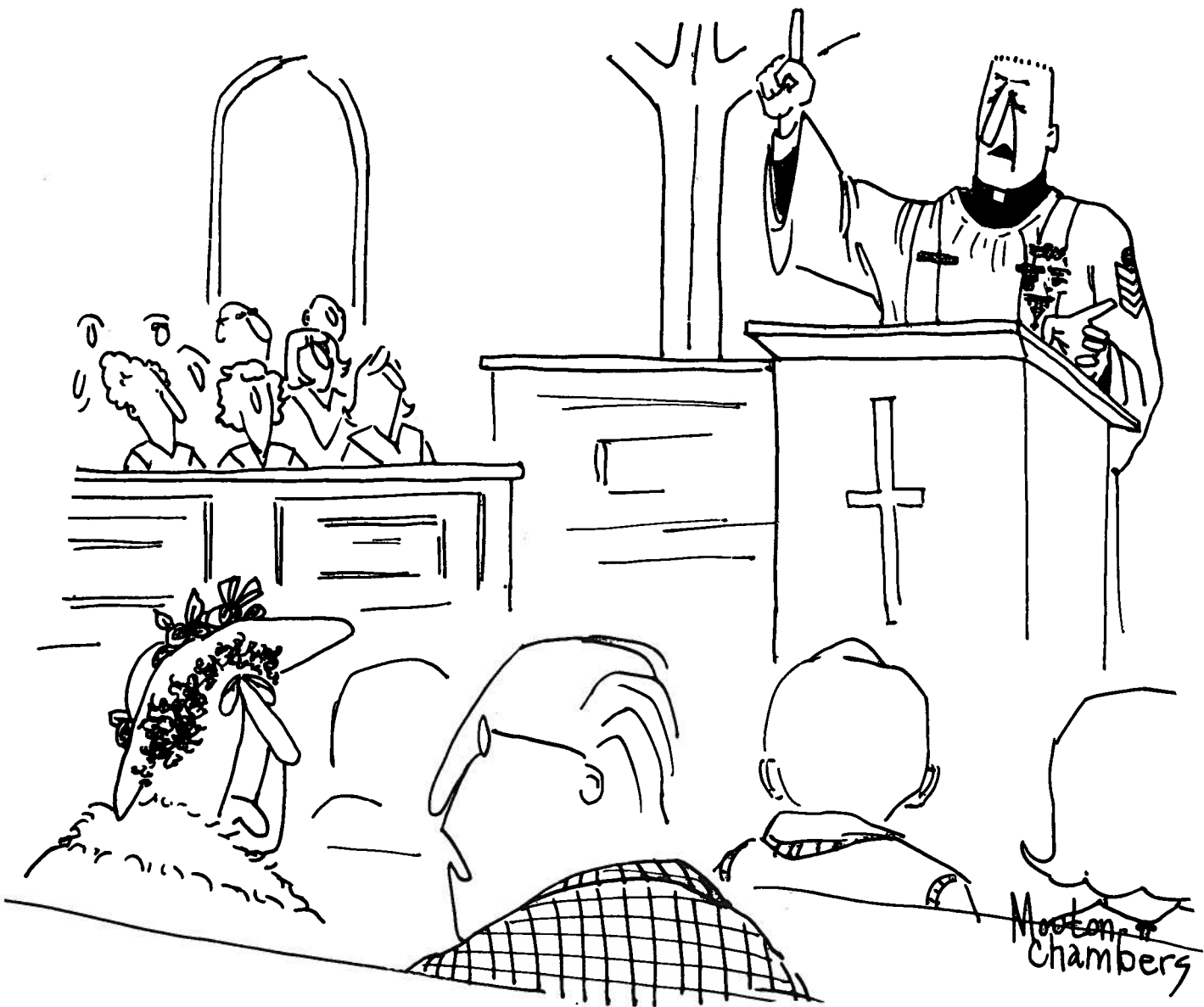
If you look at a sheep in the summer time you

\* \*



© Cartoons by Johns, 1981.

*"Wouldn't you be happier in some other denomination, Mr. Branston?"*



© LEADERSHIP, 1981. Caption, David McCasland. Artist, Mary Chambers.

*"Retired chaplain. Wait till he calls the choir to attention."*

\* \*

would say it was white; but see it against the background of startling virgin snow and it looks like a blot on the landscape. If we judge ourselves by one another, we do not feel condemned; but immediately Jesus Christ is in the background—His life, His language, His looks, His labours, we feel judged instantly.

\* \*

Anything that makes for the realization of individual relationships, individual well-being and de-

velopment—that is the thing we want to hear. When the voice of God comes, it disregards all that, and it produces terror. We don't want God to cause us to hear His voice; we want God to establish and deify the voices that characterize our individuality, our notions of what we ought to be. Wherever there is self-realization, the voice of God is a continual embarrassment.

\* \*

Darkness is not synonymous with sin; if there is

darkness spiritually, it is much more likely to be the shade of God's hand than darkness on account of sin; it may be the threshold of a new revelation coming through a big break in personal experience. Before the dawn there is desolation; but wait, the dawn will merge into glorious day: ". . . the light of dawn, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." If you are experiencing the darkness of desolation on individual lines, go through with it, and you will find yourself face to face with Jesus Christ as never before.

\* \*

Think of the worst man or woman you know; can you say to yourself, with any degree of joyful certainty, "That man, that woman—perfect in Christ Jesus"? You will soon see how much you believe in Christ Jesus and how much in common sense.

\* \*

Peter never dreamt he was going to see Jesus Christ give Himself up meekly to the power of the world, and he was brokenhearted and "followed Him afar off." To call Peter a coward for following Jesus afar off is an indication of how we talk without thinking. Peter and all the disciples were brokenhearted; everything they had hoped for with regard to Jesus Christ had failed. "We trusted in Him and were perfectly certain He would win through," and now their worst fears were realized, and "they forsook him and fled." Many a Christian since the day of Peter has suffered complete heartbreak not because he fears anything personally, but because it looks as if his Lord is being worsted.

Faith is confidence in God before you see God emerging; therefore the nature of faith is that it must be tried. To say, "Oh, yes, I believe God will triumph" may be so much credence smeared over with religious phraseology; but when you are up against things, it is quite another matter to say, "I believe God will win through."

\* \*

There is something so natural and yet so supernatural about Jesus. We never read that Jesus buttonholed anybody.

---

### Extracts from: **The Shadow of an Agony**

---

I may talk like an archangel and live like a pig; I may write magnificent stuff and have fine conceptions and people may be thrilled, but that does not

prove that I have touched reality.

\* \*

If we are enthusiastic saints, we must not be too much disturbed about the fellow who does not see. At any second he may turn the corner of an agony and say, "I thought those other fellows were mad, but now I am prepared to see as they do."

\* \*

We have been taken up with creeds and doctrines, and when a man is hit, we do not know what to give him; we have no Jesus Christ, we have only theology. For every man who can introduce another to Jesus Christ by the way he lives and by the atmosphere of his life, there are a thousand who can talk only jargon about Him.

\* \*

We can change the world without when we change the recording instrument within. Commit sin, and I defy you to see anything beautiful without; fall in love, and you will see beauty in everything.

\* \*

The characteristic of a man who begins to walk in the light is that he drags himself into the light all the time. He does not make excuses for things done in the dark; he brings everything to the light, and says, "This is to be condemned; this does not belong to Jesus Christ," and so keeps in the light. The popular view of a saint is an anemic young man with one foot in the grave, or an old woman, or an innocent, sweet young lady—anyone who has not enough original sin to be bad. The New Testament view of a saint is a more rugged type. You and I are a mixture of dust and Deity, and God takes that sordid human stuff and turns it into a saint by Regeneration. A saint does not mean a man who has not enough sin to be bad, but a man who has received from Jesus Christ a new heredity.

\* \*

There are some things a man is a criminal for knowing; he has no right to know them. The knowledge of evil, instead of instigating to action, paralyzes.

\* \*

God has no concern about our organizations. When their purpose is finished, He allows them to

be swept aside; if we are attached to the organization, we shall go with it. Organization is a great necessity, but not an end in itself; and to live for any organization is a spiritual disaster.

---

## Extracts from: *God's Workmanship*

---

There is only one crisis, and the majority of us

## KEEPING A PERSONAL JOURNAL

One of the first instructions God gave to Moses after the Exodus was to "write these things in a book." Recalling the mighty acts of God was an essential element for sustaining the people's vision of God. What about our own "holy histories?" An invaluable tool for the preservation of God's work and the application of his truth in our lives is a personal journal.

My own use of a personal journal evolved from keeping a notebook of insights gleaned from my personal Bible study. I prize those moments of illumination. The thrill of discovery is a gift from God. How is it that when a person prays for illumination and receives it, he or she can let that precious truth slip away like the tide erasing writing in the sand? Trust it to paper—not to memory.

Over a period of time, I began to include prayer requests and answers, problems and hurts, and hopes and plans for the future. Initially, writing came in surges, but over the last twelve years it has become more regular. Each person discovers a pace that fits.

### Personal Benefits

A journal gives us insight into our own growth. Our confidence as Christian leaders comes from knowing where we've been and where God is directing us. In his *Confessions*, St. Augustine wrote, "I want to call back to mind my past impurities and the carnal corruptions of my soul, not because I love them, but so that I may love you, my God . . . that the bitterness may be replaced by the sweetness of you." As we reflect on our spiritual pilgrimage, we gain understanding of the dynamics of spiritual life: the obstacles, the predictable crises, the doubts, and the means of grace to overcome these. The preservation of these insights and the memory of God's faithfulness promotes an attitude of praise and thanksgiving.

A journal helps us clarify our priorities. Life always seems at least a step or two ahead of us. It's easy to lose control. I often turn to my journal as the

key to unlock the shackles of the time trap. Reflection enables me to sort out what's important. The commitments that clamor and crowd in on me lose some of their urgency in the light of my basic goals and values. On the other hand, a clear perception of the important matters awakens a new resolve to get on with it.

A journal also helps in problem-solving. Conflicts and disappointments are part of leadership. The leader often is put in the lonely position of having nowhere to turn for guidance. Writing crystallizes issues. As the dust settles and specific details become clear, prayer and careful thought often open a way to reconciliation and progress.

### Ministry Benefits

A journal stimulates accountability. One of the unrelenting thorns of Christian leadership is the discrepancy between what we talk and how we walk. As we discipline ourselves to what the Puritans referred to as "the self-watch of the journal," we constantly reset our course to walk in the way of Christ.

A journal leads us toward authenticity, the ability and willingness to let others enter the home of our hearts. It means we set aside the privilege of the pedestal for the prize of being really known. Honesty in a journal generates the courage to be open and vulnerable in relationships. People can listen and respond best to the person who is a fellow traveler. Respect and a ready ear are given to the one who understands from his own experience the thickets and loose stones on the trail.

A journal sensitizes us to the hurts of others; it develops empathy. Somewhere I read the story of a ten-year-old boy who was asked by his mother, "What's empathy?" The little boy responded, "Empathy is your pain in my heart." Human struggle is democratic. The pain, doubt, frustration, and anxiety that we feel is common to all. This realization enables us to provide genuine support as we counsel and guide others to wholeness in Christ.

A fresh and vital ministry springs from creativity,

have never been through it. We are brought up to it, and kick back every time, until God by His engineering brings us right to the one issue, "Deny forever your right to yourself."

In talking to people, you will be amazed to find that they much more readily listen if you talk on the line of suffering, of the attacks of the devil; but get on the triumphant line of the Apostle Paul, talk about

another benefit of journal-keeping. Jesus was creative in his preaching, teaching, and healing. Trust passed through the prism of his life and burst into a spectrum of applications. As we learn to trust our insights, a creative power builds momentum; ideas begin to propel themselves into our consciousness. Frequently, the seeds of sermons or particular actions are planted when we break ground with a journal.

#### **Write It Down**

A favorite motto of my ministry is "Write it down." When someone tells me of answered prayer, an exciting evangelistic encounter, or an insight into Scripture, I urge them to write it down. As a result, many in our congregation, especially among the leaders, have begun keeping journals. A new appreciation has grown for the fact of God's activity in the details of our lives.

The journal is also a tool I've used in counseling. When people are unclear concerning God's will, or caught in a particular problem, I often encourage them to prayerfully talk it over with the Lord in a journal. This proved so helpful to one woman that she frequently counsels her friends to do the same. One day this woman learned that her nephew was distraught over the death of a teen-aged friend in a boating accident. As she consoled him, she suggested he talk it out with God on paper. He did, and it helped him immensely to recognize his grief and renew his faith in the Lord.

I suggested to a college student considering a call to the ministry that he begin to keep a journal. After more than a year of study, he commented to me recently, "You know, one of the best things I ever did was start my journal. As I read over it, I see God's hand pruning and shaping."

#### **Principles for Keeping a Journal**

There's no right or wrong way to keep a journal. The basic principle is: Does it help me better under-

stand the Lord, myself, and others? Here are seven principles that can set you on the road to developing your own style:

1. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide you. I always begin with prayer. Often the journal entry is entirely prayer. The Lord searches our hearts and directs us to the most important matters.

2. Work with feelings and perceptions. The journal should not be a chronicle of dates and events. The important thing is how you felt, what you perceived about a particular event.

3. Trust your own insights. If they are wrong, that will become apparent in the process of writing. A proper sense of independence and personal authority is healthy. After all, who, besides the Holy Spirit, is a better authority on yourself than you?

4. Anything goes. Be completely free in your journal. Write it for your eyes only, not to impress someone who may some day read it. It is private; no one is looking over your shoulder. You're free to go with God over the landscape of your soul: to trudge along, to skip, to run, to roll.

5. Be honest. Don't fool yourself with pious talk; if you feel lousy, say it. We are free to be honest because as has been said, "The One who knows me best, loves me most." In honesty, we will see both the light and dark sides of our souls. The point is to accept them and take God with us as we explore them.

6. There is a natural tendency to what I call "spiraling." This is my own term for going over the same ground again and again. The center of the spiral, the issue, may be the same, but our understanding of it is continually deepening and progressing like the widening loops of a spiral.

7. Discipline yourself to write positively. The aim of the journal is to generate the energy to be an overcomer. State the facts, record your negative feelings honestly, but then seek out the promise.

—Douglas J. Rumford, pastor  
The Presbyterian Church of Old Greenwich  
Connecticut

the super-conquering life, about God making all his Divine grace to abound, and they lose interest. "That is all in the clouds," a sheer indication that they have never begun to taste the unfathomable joy that is awaiting them if they will only take it.

\* \*

What men call the process, God calls the end. If you can stay in the midst of the turmoil unperplexed and calm because you see Jesus, that is God's purpose in your life. God's purpose for you is that you depend on Him and His power *now*; that you see Him walking on the waves—no shore in sight, no success, just the absolute certainty that it is all right because you see Him.

\* \*

We have to find out God's methods, not try to get God to approve our methods.

---

### Extracts from: **The Psychology of Redemption**

---

The Cross of Jesus Christ is not the cross of a martyr, but the door whereby God keeps open house for the universe.

\* \*

Will the Church that bows down and compromises succeed? Of course it will; it is the very thing that the natural man wants. This line of temptation as revealed by our Lord is the most appallingly subtle of all. The temptation to win and woo men is a line that commends itself to us naturally. But you cannot win and woo a mutiny; it is absolutely impossible. You cannot win and woo the man who, when he recognises the rule of God, detests it.

\* \*

Nothing blinds the mind to the claims of Jesus Christ more effectually than a good, clean-living, upright life based on self-realisation. For a thing to be Satanic does not mean that it is abominable and immoral. The satanically managed man is moral, up-

right, proud, and individual; he is absolutely self-governed and has no need of God.

\* \*

Joy is neither happiness nor brightness; joy is literally the nature of God in my blood, no matter what happens. The joy that Jesus exhibited in His life was in knowing that every power of His nature was in harmony with His Father's nature; therefore, He did with delight what God designed Him for as Son of Man. Anything that exactly fulfills the purpose of its creation experiences joy.

---

### Extracts from: **The Highest Good**

---

If we put our trust in men, we shall go under, because men are just like ourselves, and none of us in our wits before God would ever think of trusting ourselves; if we do, it is a sign that we are ignorant of ourselves.

\* \*

For thirty years Jesus did nothing; then for three years He stormed every time He went down to Jerusalem. Josephus says He tore through the Temple courts like a madman. We hear nothing about that Jesus Christ today. The meek and mild Being pictured today makes us lose altogether the meaning of the Cross. We have to find out why Jesus was beside Himself with rage and indignation at the Pharisees and not with those given over to carnal sins. Which state of society is going to stand a ripping and tearing Being like Jesus Christ who drags to the ground the highest respected pillars of its civilized society, and shows that their respectability and religiosity is built on a much more abominable pride than the harlot's or the publican's? The latter are disgusting and coarse, but these men have the very pride of the devil in their hearts.

\* \*

The remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear God, you fear nothing else; whereas if you do not fear God, you fear everything else. ■

❖❖❖

*Take away my capacity for pain  
and you rob me of the possibility for joy.  
Take away my ability to fail  
and I would not know the meaning of success.  
Let me be immune to rejection and heartbreak  
and I could not know the glory of living.*

—Ross W. Marrs