

THE ENCOURAGER

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF HUDSON CHRISTIAN CHURCH



Image courtesy CrossWalk.com

The First and Last Thoughts of the Day

The way we begin and end our day is crucial to spiritual health. If we begin the day directing our hearts towards Heaven and seeking the Lord's help, much help will be given, and we will walk more closely with Jesus throughout the day. If we close our day, not with anxious thoughts, but by meditating on the peace of Christ, then our sleep will be spiritually restful. We can find that even our dreams help us grow in Christ when our mind has been set on the right track before we close our eyes.

But it is hard to maintain that routine! Distracting demands grab our attention from morning to night. Even when we try to steer our minds into the paths of God, we find willful resistance and discover our very flesh is against us. This is where devotionals can be so helpful. By reading the spiritual thoughts of someone else, we can hold our mind's attention long enough on the Lord to slow our thoughts, deepen our appetite, and help launch us into our own time of prayer, scripture, or meditation.

This year, I am going to be reading through Spurgeon's Morning and Evening Devotional, and I have set an alarm on my phone to remind me to read it when I wake up and when I lay down for bed. I like this devotional because it has a separate reading for the beginning and end of the day. I also love the way Spurgeon weaves biblical teaching with strong emotion and beautiful words so that his writing is as much prayer and worship as it is teaching and encouragement. You can find this devotional at <https://spurgeonsmorningandevening.com> and sign up for email delivery or just read it online.

Below is the Wednesday evening reading as a sample.

- Pastor Brandon Current

"Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment."—Isaiah 41:1

All things on earth need to be renewed. No created thing continueth by itself. "Thou renewest the face of the year," was the Psalmist's utterance.

Even the trees, which wear not themselves with care, nor shorten their lives with labour, must drink of the rain of heaven and suck from the hidden treasures of the soil. The cedars of Lebanon, which God has planted, only live because day by day they are full of sap fresh drawn from the earth.

Neither can man's life be sustained without renewal from God. As it is necessary to repair the waste of the body by the frequent meal, so we must repair the waste of the soul by feeding upon the Book of God, or by listening to the preached Word, or by the soul-fattening table of the ordinances.

How depressed are our graces when means are neglected! What poor starvelings some saints are who live without the diligent use of the Word of God and secret prayer! If our piety can live without God it is not of divine creating; it is but a dream; for if God had begotten it, it would wait upon him as the flowers wait upon the dew.

Without constant restoration we are not ready for the perpetual assaults of hell, or the stern afflictions of heaven, or even for the strifes within. When the whirlwind shall be loosed, woe to the tree that hath not sucked up fresh sap, and grasped the rock with many intertwined roots.

When tempests arise, woe to the mariners that have not strengthened their mast, nor cast their anchor, nor sought the haven. If we suffer the good to grow weaker, the evil will surely gather strength and struggle desperately for the mastery over us; and so, perhaps, a painful desolation, and a lamentable disgrace may follow.

Let us draw near to the footstool of divine mercy in humble entreaty, and we shall realize the fulfilment of the promise, "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength."

-C.H. Spurgeon

Tell Me The Story... Standing on the Promises

219

STANDING ON THE PROMISES.

219

R. K. C.

"For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us."—2 Cor. 1:20.

R. K. SELSO CARTER.

1. Standing on the prom-is-es of Christ my King, Thro' e-ter-nal a-ges let his prais-es ring;

2. Standing on the prom-is-es that can-not fail, When the howling storms of doubt and fear as sail,

3. Standing on the prom-is-es I now can see Per-fect, pres-ent cleans-ing in the blood for me;

4. Standing on the prom-is-es of Christ the Lord, Bound to him e-ter-nal-ly by love's strong cord,

5. Standing on the prom-is-es I can not fall, List-n'ing ev-'ry mo-ment to the Spir-it's call,

Glo-ry in the high-est, I will shout and sing,

By the liv-ing Word of God I shall pre-vail,

Stand-ing in the lib-er-ty where Christ makes free, Standing on the prom-is-es of God.

O-ver-com-ing dai-ly with the Spir-it's sword,

Rest-ing in my Sav-iour, as my all in all,

CHORUS.

Stand-ing, Stand-ing, Standing on the prom-is-es of God (my Saviour,)

Standing on the promise, Standing on the promise,

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Image courtesy of Hymnary.org

Russell Kelso Carter (1849-1928) was a star athlete of a military academy and an excellent student academically, who went on to be a successful teacher and coach. He then spent several years as an ordained Methodist minister, after which he went to medical school. He spent the last of his professional years as a doctor of medicine. Carter was also a musician and songwriter. In 1886, he co-edited *Songs of Perfect Love* with John Sweney (1837-1899), who wrote the music for such beloved songs as *Beulah Land* and *Fill Me Now*. This hymnbook included Carter's most famous hymn, *Standing on the Promises*.



Photo courtesy wordwisehymns.com

Although Carter was a professed Christian most of his life, it wasn't until a crisis with his natural heart that he began to understand the reality and power of Bible promises. At age 30, his health was in critical condition and the physicians could do no more for him. Carter turned to God for help and healing.

He knelt and made a promise that healing or no, his life was finally and forever, fully consecrated to the service of the Lord. It was from that moment that the written Word of God became alive to Carter. He began to stand upon the promises of healing, determining to believe no matter what his physical condition, no matter how he felt. Over the course of the next several months his strength returned, and his heart was completely healed! Carter lived another healthy 49 years.

The hymn Carter had written several years before his healing miracle became more than words and music to him. *Standing on the Promises* became an integral part of his life.

Wednesday Night Bible Study

Prayer begins at 5:30 p.m.
Bible Study class starts as 6:00 p.m.

Bill Brown is leading a Bible study on several interesting topics this winter. Our study time together will uncover God’s guidance about God’s Blessings, Living with the “Thorn” in your life, the Holy Spirit, and more!

Please come see what God has to say about it in his Word!

Our mid-week Bible studies are one of our primary avenues of discipleship here at HCC. I hope you all will arrange your schedules to not miss out on this opportunity for God to shape our hearts!

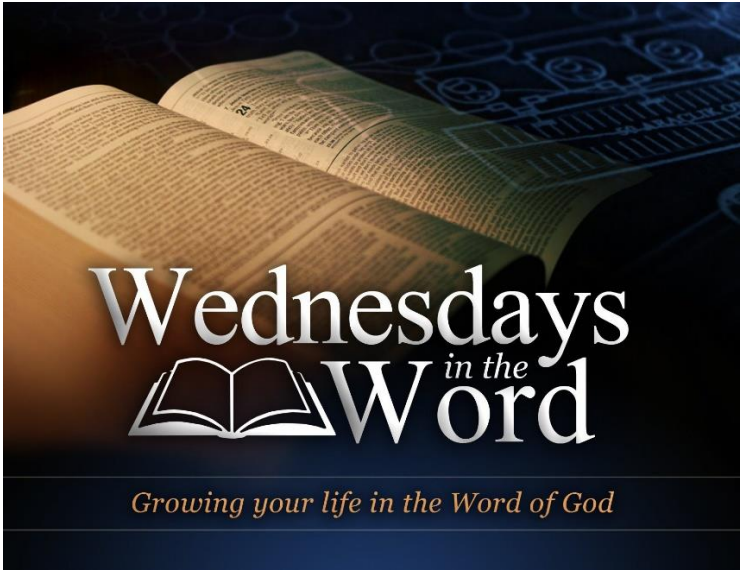


Photo courtesy of Zion.org

Prayer Coordinator
Linda Kearfott

Prayer Requests

Linda Kearfott is the HCC Prayer Coordinator!
If you have a prayer request to share or an update, please speak with Linda, write your request on the prayer card in the pew pocket and place it in the offering plate, or contact her at the following number or email.

Linda Kearfott
(309) 232-4528
linda.kearfott@yahoo.com



Image courtesy trinitywesternuniversity

The Potter's Kids

The Potter's Kids is the fun place to be on Wednesday nights at HCC from 6-7 p.m.!

All children are welcome to join us as we study the Ten Commandments. We'll see glimpses of God in His laws, as well as very good rules to live by.





Photo courtesy of SMC.com

Join the Adult Sunday School Class at 11:00 a.m. downstairs to discover what the Bible teaches about:

**Praying For Others: Go to God on behalf of Others – Matthew 6:11b; John 17:11-16;
John 17:17-19; John 17:20-23**

“No man can do me a truer kindness in this world than to pray for me.” – Charles Spurgeon

- ◆ In what ways do you pray for the protection of others?
- ◆ What has God used in your life to help you grow spiritually?
- ◆ Unity in the church – its positive effect in the community

**A Prayer of Confession: God forgives when we come to Him in repentance – Matthew 6:12-13;
Psalm 51:1-7; Psalm 51:10-12**

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” – 1John 1:9

- ◆ What are the benefits of forgiving others?
- ◆ What are the benefits of confessing specific sins?
- ◆ God, create in me a clean heart...
- ◆ What role does confession play in being faithful?

**A Prayer of Thanksgiving: Express gratitude and trust in the One who hears our prayers –
Psalm 138:1-8**

- ◆ How has God displayed love as truth in your life recently?
- ◆ How does physical or emotional fatigue affect us spiritually?
- ◆ How does a thankful spirit give you courage as you face challenges in life?
- ◆ Developing a pattern of thanking and praising God

**Isaiah’s Prophecy: Asking God for a sign
Isaiah 7:10-14; 9:6-7; 11:1-5**

- ◆ The sign of Immanuel
- ◆ Assyria – the Lord’s Instrument

January 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
January Birthdays Maury Whalen 1/7 Chuck Whitacre 1/9 Charlie Lobdell 1/14		1 New Year's Day	2 10:00 a.m. Ladies' Prayer and Fellowship No Wednesday Evening Activities	3	4	5
6 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. Coffee/Donuts Sunday School 11:00 a.m. 1st Sunday Fellowship Potluck 11:45	7	8	9 10:00 a.m. Ladies' Prayer and Fellowship 5:30 p.m. Adult Prayer 6:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study Potter's Kids	10 Food Pantry Preparation Day 5:30 p.m. Deacons/Elders Meeting followed By Spiritual Focus Meeting	11	12 10:00 Food Pantry Distribution Day
13 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. Coffee/Donuts 11:00 a.m. Sunday School	14	15 9:00 a.m. Ladies Aid	16 10:00 a.m. Ladies' Prayer and Fellowship 5:30 p.m. Adult Prayer 6:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study Potter's Kids	17	18	19
20 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. Coffee/Donuts 11:00 a.m. Sunday School	21	22	23 10:00 a.m. Ladies' Prayer and Fellowship 5:30 p.m. Adult Prayer 6:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study Potter's Kids	24	25	26
27 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. Coffee/Donuts 11:00 a.m. Sunday School	28	29	30 10:00 a.m. Ladies' Prayer and Fellowship 5:30 p.m. Adult Prayer 6:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study Potter's Kids	31		



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