



Our Awesome God

Lenten Study

Day 1

Read: Psalm 19:1-14

Introduction

Many years ago, I took a class called “The Bible as History.” It was of value to me because it got me into the Bible in a deeper way than ever before. Since then, I have learned that, indeed, the Bible is history but not in the usual sense. It is the early history of the nation of Israel, but that history is not focused on them as a nation as much as it is focused on that nation’s relationship with God. The main characters in the Bible are not the leaders of Israel: not Moses or Jacob or an Old Testament prophet, or even the apostles of the New Testament. The main character in the Bible is God. The main focus of the Bible in both the Old and New Testaments is to describe who God is and how God behaves in and with the created universe He has made. When we read the Bible with that focus, we become almost instantly aware of how awesome is this God who created it, who sustains it, who bestows His incredible grace and love upon it and who, in the end, gives His life to redeem it from the destruction wreaked upon it by human sin.

In these forty daily meditations for Lent, we will look at some of the things this Awesome God has done and some of the ways this Awesome God has behaved with His people. The hope and prayer that we bring to this study is not that we will see what God has done and how God has behaved in the Biblical narrative, but that we will begin to see what God is doing and how God is still behaving with us, His people, in our lives and in our time.

R&D As you consider the awesome nature of God, what characteristics of God first come into your mind?

Prayer: Come, Lord Jesus, be my guest this Lent. And open my eyes so I may see you ever more clearly in the world about us and in my own life.

Day 2

Read: Exodus 3:1-16

Our Awesome God, the Great I Am

One of the increasingly popular pastimes of families in our generation is to research their family genealogy. In former times, and in some few instances even today, kings and queens and emperors were put on thrones and royal families were recognized and honored simply because of their family heritage. Even in Biblical times, as the two lists of “begats” in the first chapter of Matthew and in the third chapter of Luke illustrate, coming out of the proper spiritual heritage was deemed important.

It was, in fact, with this in mind that Moses asked God a question. God had secured Moses’ attention in the burning bush that was not consumed. Then God called Moses to be His instrument to deliver God’s people from their bondage in Egypt. The task terrified Moses and he tried to think of every reason he could to keep from accepting it. Then, all else having finally failed, Moses

asked God on whose authority he was to do this. What is Your name? “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of our fathers has sent me to you’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name,’ What shall I say to them” (v.13)? God answers Moses with a stroke of absolute and awesome power. “God said to Moses, ‘I Am who I am.’” (v.14) God, unlike any other creature in the universe, has no genealogy or any family heritage to give Him authority and status. God is being. He is existence. Were there nothing else, God would be. His is the ultimate authority and power from whom all other authority and power flows. He is the self-existent one from whom all other existence flows. He is, “the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end” (Revelation 1:8). Indeed, He is our awesome I AM God.

R&D One theologian speaks of God as “the ground of our being.” Write a phrase or a sentence that describes what these words suggest to you about God.

Prayer: O Eternal God, in this transitory and changing life, guide me to that solid anchor which is Your great I Am, and open up my mind and heart that I may know Your presence which never fails and never ends.

Day 3

Read: Psalm 50:1-15

Our Awesome Self-Sufficient God

Many of us spend most of our lives trying to find ways to provide what we think we need for our families and ourselves, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Much of the happiness and contentment we will find in our lives depends on our being able to recognize our deepest needs and finding ways to satisfy them.

The writer of the 50th Psalm looks at that very issue and applies it to God. Does God need anything? Following the ancient heathen cultures, the Hebrews of the 6th or 7th centuries B.C. worshipped God by offering burnt sacrifices to Him. A family or a tribe would sacrifice an animal, sometimes as large as a bull or as small as a bird, in the hope that this gift would gain them favor with God, or at least stave off the wrath that they believed might come from God.

It is against that background that the Psalm writer asks the question, “Does God need our sacrifices? Indeed, does God need anything from us?” The answer is a resounding “no.” “Every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the air and all that moves in the fields is mine” (vv.10, 11).

God needs nothing from us, whether, as in ancient days, it was the offering of bulls and birds as sacrifice or, as in our own day, it is the offering of financial gifts, small or large, or churches and memorials built in His name. God needs nothing from us, but what God wants from us is a sacrifice of thanksgiving and vows of obedience in the hearts of His people and dependence on Him in times of trouble (vv.14, 15). When we offer such sacrifices as these to God, the other gifts that follow have substance and meaning. Without this primary sacrifice, our other offerings are no more than burnt sacrifices in the wilderness. Our Awesome God is Self-Sufficient.

R&D Describe your sense of the connection between your financial and material gifts to the church and your gifts of thanksgiving and vows of obedience to God?

Prayer: *O Almighty God, all that is, including me, belongs to You. Accept, I beseech You, my thanks for all Your great blessings to me and help me to perfect my thanksgiving by leading me to give ever more completely my vows of obedience to You, O Lord, my God.*

Day 4

Read: Psalm 90:1-10

Our Awesome God Is Eternal

This past week my wife and I lost two of our very good friends in Christ. They were both in their older years and were taken from us by death. Our friends were both committed Christians, so we do not mourn for them. They have inherited eternal life as a gift from God. But we mourn for ourselves who have suffered the loss of their company. And, sometimes, in the midst of these experiences of death and the impermanence and frailties of this life, we wonder if there is anything that does not die, anything that does not end.

The writer of the 90th Psalm thought there was. In all that is transitory, there is something, not something, but Someone, who is eternal. He cries out, “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hast formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God” (v.2). In the midst of all that changes and dies, all that goes away and is lost, there is God who has been before anything existed and who will be forever.

What the Psalmist cannot say, because he cannot know it as we are able to know it, is that because the life of God is eternal so also can our lives be eternal. The Psalmist couldn’t know this as we do because Jesus Christ, the giver and mediator of the gift of eternal life, was not, by God’s plan, to come into the world until six or seven hundred years after the psalmist wrote.

The gifts that God showers on us in this life are almost beyond our comprehension. But the greatest gift God gives is to invite us to share in His eternal nature, in His everlasting life. Our Awesome God is eternal. By His gift of His son, Jesus Christ, so can we be eternal when we believe.

R&D *Using six to ten single words, describe what you think eternal life might be like.*

Prayer: *O Eternal God, the Ruler over death and all that is impermanent in life, strengthen me to overcome the little frailties of my life and, in the end, bring me to share in Your victory over death, through Jesus Christ Your Son and my Lord.*

Day 5

Read: Psalm 139:1-18

Our Awesome God Is Always There

As a young boy, I was probably about as typical as young boys come. Being brought up in a fairly strict family, I toed the line most of the time. But I also had my moments when, given the opportunity to stray, I got into my share of trouble. During those years, my mother seemed to have an uncanny ability to know when I had wandered off the straight and narrow and, more times than I can now remember, called me to account for it. In my later years, I would learn that my mother had no special powers except the ability and interest to stay in tune with my changing moods and to recognize and interpret my behavior shifts. I also came to understand that when she called me to task it was because she loved me.

The Psalmist, in a great song of praise and supplication, describes God as always present in all places and in all times in His creation. He sings, “Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, and whither shall I flee from thy presence” (v.7)? Unlike my mother, God’s all seeing power and His omnipresence are real. And unlike any attitude toward my mother, the psalmist rejoices that God knows him so well and is always with him no matter where he goes. Such a God, he says, when I pay attention to him as he pays attention to me, leads me to a better life. The psalmist implores God to, “search me, O God, and know my heart...lead me in the way everlasting” (vv.23-24).

Indeed, our God knows you and me intimately and is with each of us always and everywhere. And because He loves each of us, when we look for Him always and everywhere, He will lead us in the way everlasting. Our Awesome God is always there.

R&D On a scale of 1 to 10, rate your sense of comfort (1) or distress (10) in knowing that God is always with you no matter where you go or what you do? What caused you to choose the rating that you did?

Prayer: My Lord, You know my goings out and my comings in. Forgive me, I pray You, when I go astray and multiply in me those times when, led by You, I do what is pleasing in Your sight.

Day 6

Read: 1 Kings 8:22-27

Our Awesome God is Transcendent

On a summer trip in southern Arizona, my wife and I stopped at a drug store in a small town to buy some film. I carry a small pocket cross with me and I when I took some change out of my pocket to pay for the film, the store owner noticed it and commented on it. It led to a brief time of sharing our common faith in Christ. As I left the store, his parting words were, “What a great idea, having God in your pocket!”

I didn’t think much of it then, but I have thought of his words many times since. God is not in my pocket. What is in my pocket is a silver cross to remind me of the God who is not in my pocket.

In a far more majestic setting, Solomon had a similar circumstance. Under his leadership, Israel had built a magnificent Temple in Jerusalem. It was to be the place where the elaborately decorated box called the Ark of the Covenant containing the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments could be kept. More than that, it would be the holiest of holy places where the nation of Israel would come to worship God. Many were saying that this building would be “an exalted house, a place for God to dwell forever” (v.13).

But Solomon understood God better than that. In one of the most beautiful passages in the entire Old Testament, Solomon prays his dedication prayer in these words: “But will God indeed dwell on earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain thee; much less this House which I have built” (v.27).

God has no boundaries. God has no limits. God is transcendent. He is apart from, independent from, not limited by, His creation. Our churches, like Solomon’s Temple, are not Houses of God where God dwells but Houses of Worship where we can gather to praise and worship our awesome, transcendent God who cannot be contained by any place or any time or even by a cross in my pocket.

R&D Solomon described God as “One wholly other and apart.” How do you think any of us can bring the presence of such a God into our own lives?

Prayer: *O God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe, You are a God of might and power beyond my ability to comprehend. Yet, as mighty and as far away as You are, You are also as near to me as the air I breathe. Thank You, Lord, for being my God in whom I also can find power and might to live in Your name.*

Day 7

Read: Psalm 46:1-11

Our Awesome God Is Immanent

Have you ever noticed, especially in the Old Testament, how often God seems to speak to His people directly and clearly? And have you ever wondered, as I have, how God does that? God is in direct communication with His creation all the time. We often don't hear or see His messages because we tend, ourselves, not to be in communication with God very often. But God never stops communicating with us.

One way God speaks is in answer to our prayers. When the people of Israel were in trouble and distress and they cried out to the Lord, He answered their prayer. They saw and heard the answer because they believed that God would answer, and they looked all around them for the evidence of His answer. Another way God speaks is through people He has chosen to speak for Him: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses, Samuel, and the prophets, among others.

There is also another way He communicates. It is written that “the dwelling place of God is with men and He will be their God and they will be his people...” The writer of this Psalm puts it this way: “The Lord of Hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge” (v.7). While, as we said in our last study, God is transcendent, outside and apart from His creation, God is also immanent, inside and with all that He has made, including you and me.

God still chooses people to be His spokesmen in this and every generation. But mostly, in my experience, God speaks to us from within. Perhaps it is a passing thought that we think is random and comes out of nowhere. Sometimes it is a small twinge of conscience or a sudden insight about something that we just didn't expect.

The Psalmist knew about this fact and counsels, “Be still then and know that I am God” (v.10). And in the stillness, the voice of God may emerge from within you, and you may be able to hear it. Our Awesome God is immanent, in and around everything He has made, including you and including me.

R&D *Have you ever experienced the voice of God speaking to you from within you? Describe that experience and recall what you did in response to it.*

Prayer: *Speak to me, O Lord, in ways that I can hear. Fill my heart and my conscience and let me hear Your voice guiding, empowering and leading me to You.*

Day 8

Read: Genesis 1:1—2:3

Our Awesome God Is the Creator

The first chapter of Genesis is one of the most penetrating essays ever written. It also centers on one of the most fascinating questions ever asked, the subject of how the universe came to

be. The ancient Hebrews, very early in their recorded history, pondered that very question. They looked around at the earth and the sky and the stars of the heavens. They looked at themselves as living beings and they asked, "How did all this come to be?" Much more significantly, they asked, "Who did it?"

For generations, stories were told that tried to answer those questions. Inadequate explanations were discarded and, over the generations, we believe, prompted by God Himself, they began to understand that all this did not come about by chance or by some random cosmic explosion or by many competing gods making parts of it. The people saw that the universe was created by one single great design and in such great detail that it fit together in perfect harmony, each part compatible with every other part. Then, with superlative insight and inspiration, they wrote, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (v.1).

They were only really interested in one thing. They were inspired to know that when the universe came to be, an all-powerful, all-intelligent, all-understanding, and all-creative God made it, and that He made it perfectly and that He made it out of nothing. No explanation of the origin of creation is more truthful than that. Our Awesome God is a Creator God.

R&D For what reason or reasons do you think God created the universe and all of us who live in it?

Prayer: Oh God, the Creator of all that is, You made all things out of nothing. Yet, You know me and You love me. Blessed be Your name forever and ever.

Day 9

Read: Deuteronomy 5:1-22

Our Awesome God Is a Law Giver

A very significant debate about the legality of displaying representations of the Ten Commandments on public property has been swirling about our courthouses in recent years. In one sense, it is a tempest in a teapot because God's laws do not become null and void by the action of a court or a legislature, or even by an action of the United States Supreme Court. In addition, the very best display of the Ten Commandments is the visible behavior of those of us who correctly understand that these are, indeed, God's laws.

Some have tried to minimize their impact by complaining that the commandments are too negative and are just a series of "thou shalt nots." Others, by their attitude towards them, have mentally changed them into the "The Ten Suggestions."

Do what you will. Call them what you will. Ignore them if you must. But you do so at your own peril.

Why did God deliver the Ten Commandments in the first place? The writer of the Book of Exodus describes His reason clearly. God saw His people on the Exodus and recognized that they were not doing well. They were contentious, unhappy, and quarrelsome. They were unhappy because, much of the time, they were living their lives without boundaries. Having created life and knowing what style of life would bring His people the fulfillment and contentment He intended for them to have, God said, "Let me tell you how you can live this life best! Live up to these standards and you will live well." And he gave them, and us, ten rules that would lead us to a good life.

Is there punishment when people fail to meet these ten standards? The major punishment is what we inflict on ourselves. The clear witness of human history is that in violating these

standards in attitude and deed, we mess up our lives, leave them in disarray, and sometimes seriously damage ourselves. It is never wise to try to put something as important as a life together without paying any attention to the directions of the Maker. Our Awesome God is a Law Giver.

R&D *In what ways, if at all, do you believe we are punished when we violate God's laws?*

Prayer: *O Lord, our Righteous One, write the precepts of Your law on my heart, open my ears to hear them and strengthen my will to follow them where they lead, for Your name's sake.*

Day 10

Read: Exodus 20:1-17

Our Awesome God Is a Law Giver (2)

The Ten Commandments are recorded in two places in the Old Testament, once in today's reading in Exodus and once in Deuteronomy. Their inclusion in two different Books suggests how important the Israelites believed them to be. They understood, sometimes better than we do that, in these ten standards, God was describing how this life can be lived best. With that in mind, I wonder if we might translate them for our own time and our own lives.

1. Give your ultimate allegiance and worship to one God only, the God who made you and all that is around you.
2. Make a god of nothing else in your life, whether some spiritual being you imagine or some material thing like money or success or popularity or power, the possessing of which may become more of a priority for your life than your relationship with the real God.
3. Do not use the name of God to promote any purpose that is not His, especially by using God's name to support what is only your own personal agenda.
4. Set aside a time to intentionally invite God into your life by acts of worship, especially in the presence of other people in the church. Provide both opportunity and encouragement to others around you to do the same.
5. Hold in honor the heritage given you by your family, especially by your parents. Where that heritage has been imperfect, forgive the imperfections, correct them in yourself and hand them on, corrected, to your own children.
6. Human life is sacred because it is God's creation. Live so as not to destroy or hurt that life by word or by deed, whether it is yours or that of others.
7. Understand that your sexuality is a sacred trust from God to be used exclusively in the bonded relationship of marriage. Honor the exclusive vows of marriage, yours and those of others, without compromise of any kind.
8. Recognize the property of others as their possession and not yours, and honor their moral right to keep it and to keep it safe.
9. Honor other people, whoever and wherever they may be. Whether in casual conversation or in formal statement, always speak the truth about yourself and about others, especially when an exaggeration or an untruth might be to your advantage.
10. Do not look with envy or desire at what others may have, but learn to appreciate what is yours and be content with what you have and can truly earn.

Our Awesome God, the Lawgiver, says, "Live in these ways and you will live well."

R&D *Which of these commandments is the most difficult one for you to live up to? Why?*

Prayer: *Be Thou my Anchor and my Rock, O Lord, and teach me to love Your law as the only true path that leads to freedom and peace.*

Day 11

Read: Hebrews 13:1-8

Our Awesome God Is Changeless

It is often said that the only certain things in life are death and taxes. If anything else could be said to be a constant in life in the 21st century, it is that change is inevitable. The world of 50 years ago would not recognize the world in which we live today. Much of the change has come in the fields of science, technology, and medicine. And, while we are sometimes not certain how best to use some of these advances, most of us see these changes as a good thing.

We find it a great deal more difficult to live with changes in social mores and personal and corporate morals. It seems that the more freedom we have been given by technology, the more freedom we demand in our morality.

The early Christians in the first century had a similar problem. Some new Christians were reared in the Old Testament morality of the law and some were brought up in the often selfish and sensual morality of the pagan mystery religions. Both were being introduced to a new and better way. But for them, it required a radical and rapid change in their religious and spiritual values and beliefs. The writer of the Hebrews saw this confusion and tried to give them some good advice. There are some values, he says, that are changeless. Among them are “brotherly love,” “hospitality to strangers,” “compassion for prisoners and for those who are ill treated by society,” “fidelity in marriage,” and “freedom from the love of money.” It is a list that has universal moral appeal no matter the rate of change or the day and time.

Then the writer goes to the very heart of the matter. What is the most permanent anchor in the midst of change? In a loud voice, the writer proclaims that we can depend on this; “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever” (v.8). Jesus will always be the plumb line against which moral change will be measured. He is the eternal changeless standard. The way he lived is the eternal changeless example. What he taught is the eternal changeless truth. In the midst of a sea of change, Jesus Christ is the eternal anchor to keep us steady and on course. For our age as well as his, the writer of the Hebrews got it just right: Our Awesome God is eternal. Our Awesome God is changeless.

R&D In the sea of change in the moral values of our society, what criteria do you use to help determine whether a change is morally good or morally bad?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, the same today, yesterday and forever, be my anchor in the sea of change that swirls around me. Let me more clearly see your eternal ways, your eternal values and guide me, day by day, to live into them in your name.*

Day 12

Read: Isaiah 46:3-11

Our Awesome God Is Sovereign

Our local newspaper runs an occasional feature called “Mirror-Image.” The paper shows a picture of the face of a well-known figure in the political or entertainment arena and matches it with the face of a presumed look-alike in the world of sports. I am always surprised by how much

interest there is in people wanting to look like someone else. Perhaps it is because some of us would like to be someone else instead of ourselves as we are. Or perhaps some simply want to bask in the imagined reflected glory of a look-alike celebrity.

At a much different level, some people play at a similar, but much more significant, game. Consciously or otherwise, we try to create God as a mirror-image of ourselves. Or, more specifically, we determine in our own minds what we would like God to be like and choose to listen only to those things that confirm our description. The classic stereotypical example is a so-called fire and brimstone preacher who preaches on little else but a god of judgment. But the problem is more subtle than that. If we believe that stricter discipline is the answer to most problems, in our minds our god can easily become principally a disciplinarian. If we believe that we all are free to live whatever lifestyle we choose or are most comfortable in, with few, if any, moral boundaries, then in our minds, our god can easily become a god of limitless tolerance.

The temptation to make God into a god of our own liking is not new. The Israelites faced these same temptations. Seeing the gods of gold or bronze made by their pagan neighbors, they wanted to do the same thing. They wanted to craft a God in their own image and worship it.

So, through His prophet, Isaiah, God decided to make it clear to them, “Remember this and consider it...I am God and there is no other; I am God and there is none like me” (v.5). God has no look alikes. We may try to create God in our own image, to our own likeness, but that is not God. He is not our creation. We are His creation. Our God is sovereign. As with the ancient Israelites, our task is not to describe Him as we would like Him to be, but to learn of Him and worship Him as He is. Our Awesome God is a Sovereign God.

R&D In what ways do you see people attempting to make God into something of their own liking? In what ways do you sometimes do the same?

Prayer: O Sovereign God, there is none like You. You made me in Your own image so I might have a relationship with You. Deliver me, I pray, when I am tempted to return the favor and create You in my image in order to make You into what I want You to be.

Day 13

Read: Leviticus 19:1-18

Our Awesome God Is Holy

Can you remember the last time you heard a Scripture reading in church on Sunday morning from the Book of Leviticus? Much of Leviticus describes the ritual and ceremonial laws created by the priestly order of the Levites. Those laws were essential to bond together a primitive people on their Exodus to freedom and to remind them of the God who delivered them from bondage in Egypt. But that doesn't make for very interesting reading today.

Occasionally, however, there is a gem in that book. In today's reading, God asserts that He is Holy and, by implication, that He expects His people to be holy as well. The *Funk and Wagnall's Dictionary* defines *holy* as “morally excellent,” “of the highest spiritual purity.” We might further define it as “undefiled,” “free of uncleanness,” “pure of heart and intention,” “uncontaminated and unspoiled.” Our God is all these things. He is the purest of the pure in the face of whom all other purity fades. In our impurity, the only response we can make to such a God is to bow down before Him in worship.

But God is not satisfied to declare His holiness alone. He calls us to live a holy life as well (v.2). The passage lists a series of things every one of us can do to live a more holy life. Revere

your parents (v.3). Keep a Sabbath for worship (v.3). Give to the poor (vv.9-10). Do not steal from anyone, cheat anyone, or lie to anyone (v.11). Do not oppress or rob your “neighbor” (v.12) (In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus says that our neighbor is *everyone*). Deal honestly and fairly with everyone, but especially with those who work for you (v.13). Be partial neither to the poor nor to the powerful, but be partial to what is morally right (v.15). Cleanse your heart of hatred for brother or neighbor before it becomes a sin in you (v.17). Leave behind the need for revenge and grudge-bearing for that will destroy your soul (v.18).

It is clear that perfect holiness is beyond us. It is also clear that living holier lives through our behavior toward God and other people is not beyond us. Leviticus gives us a list that is daunting but doable. And why should we try to live by such behavior? Because God is a Holy God and He calls us to it. That is reason enough. Our Awesome God is a Holy God.

R&D Review the characteristics of the holy life listed in this passage and determine which ones you live up least, and make a commitment to work to improve your life in one or more of these ways during the remainder of Lent.

Prayer: *“Holy God, holy and mighty, holy immortal One, have mercy upon me.”*

Day 14

Read: Psalm 119:25-40

Our Awesome God Is Just

A number of years ago, I needed to have my knee joints replaced. The surgery was wonderfully successful and I thank God and good medicine for my new artificial, but now pain-free, knees. Early in the recovery process, however, I needed to walk but I couldn't put any weight on my new joints. So I was provided with a walker, then crutches, and then a cane to hold me up until my recovery was complete. Sometimes we need help in doing what we need and want to do.

Early in their relationship, God gave His people, Israel, the law so they could develop into the ethical, moral, and spiritual people He had called them to be. He gave them the law and required that they keep it. For some, it was received as an unwelcome bondage restricting their freedom. But others saw it for what it was, a series of standards the keeping of which would lead them to a better, happier, more God-centered life.

One such person was the writer of the 119th Psalm. He laments that his life outside the law was like living in the dust, a life that melted away in sorrow (vv.25-28). Then he pleads for guidance that he might be led away from “false ways” (v.29). “Behold, I long for thy precepts; in thy righteousness give me life” (v.40).

We are not saved by the law, but by God's grace in Jesus Christ. But, as Paul later would put it, “The law was our schoolmaster until Christ came” (Galatians 3:24). We are not saved by the law because we cannot keep the law perfectly. But, while we live and strive to grow in our faith, God's moral law can be our teacher and our guide. In this life, we need all the help we can get. Keeping the law makes us better people than we might otherwise choose to be. God understood this long ago. Our Awesome God is a Just God.

R&D List the ways that you find God's laws helpful to you and influential in your life and behavior.

Prayer: *O Lord our God, Your law is a holy law designed to change the heart. As I strive to grow in my faith in Your son, Jesus, put Your law before me to light my path along the way.*

Day 15

Read: John 16:29—17:5

Our Awesome God Is the Only True God

“Accept no substitutes! Don’t be fooled by look-alikes! Buy only the authentic thing!” So screams the ad on television for a product that has become the object of a variety of knock-offs and fraudulent substitutes. Most of us like such an ad because, for most things, we don’t want a substitute. We want the real thing.

From the beginning of human life and in every nation and culture on earth, human beings have always needed to worship something. That universal need to worship something is one of the most persuasive arguments that God really does exist. Were there no God to worship, there would be no innate desire in us to worship. But, as human history amply illustrates, not all gods are equal. There can be only one true God and all other gods are but the creation of our longings, our fears, and/or our imaginations.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus is described as coming to the end of his ministry. The cross looms large on his horizon. He comforts his disciples to fortify them for this ordeal (16:29ff). Then he turns to his Father and, giving Him the glory, identifies Him as the only True God (17:3). Many gods there may be in the minds and imaginations of men. Many gods there may be in the cultures of the world. Many are the things that even in our own lives you and I strive for and try to possess that might become like gods to us.

But only one God has the gift of eternal life. Only one God is glorified by the Son. He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only God, the true God before whom all other gods created in the minds and by the hands of men will fade to nothingness. Our Awesome God is the only True God to whom the whole creation will, someday, bow down.

R&D Review the things on which you spend most of your time and energy. Identify any that you suspect might potentially be false gods that are vying for your attention and worship.

Prayer: Turn my heart, O Lord, from all false gods that crave for my attention and worship, and establish me in my worship of You, the one and only True God.

Day 16

Read: Deuteronomy 7:6-11

Our Awesome God Is Faithful

One foundation block on which civilized life stands is in the promises we make to each other. Friendships are built because people promise to be there for each other. Marriages are consummated because two people promise to love and honor each other “till death us do part.” In simpler times, most business was conducted on the basis of a handshake and a promise. To be sure, not all promises are easy to keep. People and circumstances change, and promises we formerly made require a measure of faithfulness that many find hard to muster.

God had just such a problem with the Israelites. He had created this nation to be His people through whom He would reveal Himself to the world and, in time, reconcile the world to Himself. But the people of Israel changed and began to chase after the pagan gods of their neighbors. And, having been given the Ten Commandments, by which they were led out of the wilderness to the land that God had promised to them, they ignored His laws and became the makers of their own laws.

If ever there was just cause for a divorce, a breaking of the relationship, this was a time when God had all the evidence on His side.

So, what does God do in this dilemma? God speaks to the Israelites and says, “The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his own possession” (v.6). “Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love for those who keep His commandments” (v.9). God will be faithful even when His people are not faithful. God will keep His side of the covenant even when His people do not keep their side. God will keep His promises even when His people break theirs. And that God who was faithful to these people 1200 years ago is the same God who continues to be faithful to His people today.

To be sure, God grieves over our sinfulness. God’s heart sometimes breaks over our disregard for Him. But God will not abandon us, not now, not ever. God is in our lives for the long run. The only question is when we, His people, will turn to Him to ease His grief and sooth His heart and put a smile on His face. Our Awesome God is a Faithful God.

R&D List the ways in which you sense God expresses His faith in you.

Prayer: O Lord, my God, I thank You for being faithful when I am not, for being near when I am far from You. Increase my faithfulness that, more and more, I may become worthy of Your faith in me.

Day 17

Read: John 1:1-11

Our Awesome God Is Light

Many years ago, my family and I visited Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico. The paths inside the Caverns were all brightly lit and at a certain place deep in the Caverns the ranger stopped us to try an experiment. Each person was to hold hands with the person next to them and no one was to move. Then, for just a few seconds, the lights were turned off. I have never been in such absolute darkness before or since. The darkness was awesomely frightening.

In John’s Gospel, Jesus is described as “the true light that was coming into the world” (v.9). Later, also recorded in John’s Gospel, Jesus would speak of himself saying, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). The image is rich and profoundly revealing when we begin to picture some of the properties of light.

Light illumines our way so we can move safely and without falling. Light enhances the beauty of many wonderful things. Light exposes the dirt and grime that is in and around us and provokes us to wipe it away. Light, used creatively, warms the atmosphere of an otherwise cold house or cold room. Light, focused on a painting or inside a curio cabinet, brings out the sparkling beauty and exquisite detail of objects never seen in the shadows.

Well, let’s try a little experiment of our own. Replace the word “light” with the name of Jesus. Jesus illumines our way. Jesus enhances beauty around us. Jesus exposes the dirt. Jesus warms the atmosphere. Jesus brings out the sparkle and detail of our life. Does that help you see or feel Jesus present in your life any more distinctly? It does for me and for many other Christians that I know. Our Awesome God is Light.

R&D Think of all the properties of light that you can and substitute the name of Jesus for each one. Does that bring Jesus any closer to you?

Prayer: *O Lord Jesus, you are the true light that lightens every man. Lighten my life with the warm glow of your presence and, in your light, let me see the path I need to walk as your disciple.*

Day 18

Read: Psalm 107:1-9

Our Awesome God Is Unfailing Love

Parents often say that when their children were teenagers the children didn't think the parents knew very much. Yet, by their mid-twenties, these same children were amazed at how much their parents had learned in that interval. One curse of immaturity is that, in the midst of it, we think we know everything or, at least, everything we think is worth knowing. In such a state, it is almost inevitable that we will question any authority over us.

Spiritual immaturity, that state that does not seem to have any age limits, carries a similar liability. In our limited knowledge and experience, we question why God permits certain things to happen. Or we sometimes wonder, when tragedy strikes, if God is present at all.

We can have nothing but the deepest sympathy for those who have been the victims of unexplainable tragedies and heart-breaks. No one who hasn't been there can possibly understand the pain of those times. In such times, we sometimes wonder, has God not noticed? In such times does God abandon us to stand or fall in our own strength?

The writer of the Psalms gives thanks to God, "for his steadfast love endures forever" (v.1). I don't always know why unexpected things happen. But, with the Psalm writer, I do know this: When there is trouble, when there is tragedy, when there is pain, God, who, in Jesus, knows a great deal about trouble and tragedy and pain himself, is there with us, crying with and for us, suffering with us and for us as only a loving God can do. Why doesn't He prevent all this? I don't know. But, as Philip Yancey in a film series titled *Wrestling with Angels* says, "the significant spiritual question in tragedy is not 'why did this happen?' but with God's help, 'what am I going to do about it?'"

I also know this. When I believe with the Psalmist that God's love is always there, steadfast and strong, my troubles and pains may not disappear but, with God, I am able to carry them. Our Awesome God is a God of Unfailing Love.

R&D *In times of heart-break and tragedy, with what do you console yourself and others around you?*

Prayer: *Lord God of infinite knowledge, there is so much in this life that I do not understand. I give You thanks that when I don't understand, You do, and when I must cope with things that are too much for me, You are there to hold me up in Your never-failing arms.*

Day 19

Read: Psalm 103:1-14

Our Awesome God Is Merciful

In the wonderful Shakespearean play, *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia pleads for her father in these words: "The quality of mercy is not strained; it droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath; it is twice blessed; it blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

One of the often argued religious topics is the debate whether God is primarily a god of justice or a god of mercy. On the one hand, we argue that God is perfect and His creation was made perfect. In that perfection, all things that were made were made to work in harmony with

each other. This Creator God cannot tolerate the imperfections and disharmony that stem from human disobedience and human sin. God's justice must be served or God would become little more than an overly indulgent parent and we would become little more than spoiled children doing whatever we wanted. God loves us far more than that and, for our own sake, as well as His, He requires us to be held accountable.

Psalm 103, in vivid language, proclaims another aspect of God. "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and of great kindness" (v.8). Many years later, in his great Sermon on the Mount, Jesus called all men to emulate God's mercy saying, "Be merciful even as your Father in heaven is merciful" (Luke 6:36).

So what are we to make of this paradox? I believe we are led to this: God is a god both of justice and of mercy. God's justice requires our penitence. God's mercy forgives our faults and gives us a fresh start. To be convicted and made to feel guilty by God's justice is to underestimate God. To accept God's forgiveness without penitence and a desire to change is to live in hypocrisy. To acknowledge our fault, to confess our shortcomings, to make a commitment to change, and to fully accept God's complete and total forgiveness is to live in God's grace. It is to be renewed in God's love always. Our Awesome God is a Merciful God.

R&D Recall the last time you made a searching inventory of your life and made confession to God for your fault. Consider using the Lenten Season as a time to make such an inventory again. Then give thanks that we have a merciful God who accepts our penitence and forgives.

Prayer: O Merciful Lord, I measure myself against Your law and know that I have sinned against You and my neighbor. Accept my penitence, forgive my fault and, in Your great mercy, renew a right spirit within me.

Day 20

Read: Psalm 111:1-10

Our Awesome God Is Gracious

Many years ago, our youngest daughter was pregnant with her second child. It turned out to be a difficult pregnancy, and she was confined to bed for the last two and a half months. In spite of wonderful support from her husband and both families and fine medical advice, there was a great deal of worry. Under these circumstances, it was not uncommon for children to be stillborn or, because the birth might come too early, for the child to be born with serious problems. Everyone's anxiety on the day of the birth was quickly dispelled, however, when a beautiful baby, a girl, was delivered in perfect condition. The parents had chosen a name for her but within minutes after this baby was placed in her mother's arms, these parents changed the baby's name. To honor God's answer to their prayers, they decided to name her *Grace*.

Psalm 111 begins, "Praise the Lord. I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation" (v.1). The Psalmist continues to list the many things that come to us from the grace of God for which we need to be thankful. To that list, most of us who are at all aware of God in our lives, could add a multitude of other blessings.

God is the giver of great gifts: life, breath, the good earth in which to live out our lives and many other gifts that come to us day by day. It is in the nature of God to be a gift-giver. Following His example, we first offer Him our thanksgiving and then become gift-givers as well. We may not choose to change the names of any of our children, but we can choose what the Psalmist chose:

“Praise the Lord. I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart.” Our Awesome God is a God of grace.

R&D Make a list of all the things you are thankful for today. Keep this list nearby as a reminder of God’s grace.

Prayer: Accept, O Lord, my prayer of grateful praise for the many blessings You have showered upon me. Mature my thanksgivings so my thanksgivings may lead me to become a better gift-giver myself.

Day 21

Read: John 3:16; 1 John 4:7-12

Our Awesome God Demonstrates Love

Among our circle of acquaintances, there is an unusual woman. Born into a family of girls, she had grown up with her sister doing all the things that girls find delightful fun. They both married fine young men. It was soon after, that disappointment and despair overtook one of the girls. The younger sister discovered that she was not able to bear children because of a physical abnormality. It was then that the older sister demonstrated love in a most unusual way. She offered and became the surrogate to carry a child formed of her sister’s egg and the husband’s sperm and gave to them a beautiful and healthy child.

What is love? How do we know it when it enters our lives? How do we know that the feelings that we have for another person are love? Where is the model? Where is the pattern? Is it not when love is given at a cost to self, when it is a gift from which there is no expectation of return, when it is unconditional!

The impulse within us to love is given to us as we are made in the image of our Creator God. The model for love comes from Him as well when we consider His actions towards people and towards us individually. The example for the way that we are to demonstrate love comes from Him also as we see His goodness in the world through the actions of Jesus. “For God so loved the world that He gave....” “See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God.” “He who loves is born of God and knows God.”

Where does this truth bring us as we consider our own love for other people? To consider the good of another before we think of our own good is a gift of God. It comes to us as we make our Awesome God the center of our lives and allow His love to flow through us to others.

R&D How does your love measure up to the love of Christ? How can you be more loving?

Prayer: Holy Father, we bring all of our love relationships before You for Your guidance and blessing. Help us to give up the impulse to control the lives of others and, with Your help, to encourage them to be themselves. Grant us the desire to love others as You love them.

Day 22

Read: John 3:16; 1 John 3:16; 4:13-19

Our Awesome God Is the Source of Love

Someone once asked, “On which side of Easter are you living?” The question means “With what attitude are you living your life?”

Are we forever beset by the darkness in the world, which screams out at us from the daily news on television, and in the newspaper? Are we fearful of each dip in the economy, afraid we won't have enough on which to live? Do we worry about our health, each ache and pain magnifying itself into some terrible disease? Do we worry about getting older and the physical death that ultimately awaits each one of us?

Or do we greet each day as an adventure, looking for new things to do, new people to meet, new places to go? Do we have an outlook on life which tells us that the future is waiting for us with open arms? When we think of our own physical death are we able to rest assured because we believe in a risen Jesus Christ?

What is it that determines our choice of how we live? It has been said by many that love is the greatest force in the world. Could it be that our choice concerning the way we live is determined by the amount of love in our lives? If we have been the beneficiaries of a home where love was displayed by parents and siblings, we are most blessed. If we have had friends who have loved us and let us know of their feelings, we are most blessed. If we have married and forged a marriage relationship where love abounds, then we are most blessed. If we have had children, whom we have loved, and who have overtly and obviously returned that love, then we are most blessed.

And if we look into the deepest level of our being and wonder, if even for a moment, about the source of love, the answer becomes abundantly clear: "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). Our God is the infinite, unlimited and immeasurable source of love. It is from Him that all love flows. He created us to love. He sustains us to love. It is His love that flows to us through others. It is His love that gives meaning to our lives. It is His love that becomes the mission of our lives.

R&D Think about all of the ways that God has shown His love for you. How have you shown your love for Him and for others in concrete ways?

Prayer: "Father, we love You, we praise You, we adore You, glorify Your name in all the world." We thank You, Father, for Your heart of love. We thank You for all the love in our lives that has its ultimate source in You. Help us to be unselfish and to show Your love to all we know.

Day 23

Read: John 10:7-15; Psalm 23

Our Awesome God Is the Good Shepherd

An indelible early childhood memory revolves around a lamb. The family had spent the day at my grandfather's farm and I had devoted most of that day playing with a frisky lamb. At the end of the day, my grandfather said, "She can have the lamb if she wants it." To which my father replied, "No, I don't want it on the farm. Sheep are troublesome animals and take too much care."

I was very disappointed but, as an adult, I learned the truth of my father's words. In later years, my brother raised sheep also, and well I remember his constant care of them. During the lambing season he and his wife took turns sleeping in the sheep barn at night so that when the lambs were born, they would not freeze to death in the bitter cold Minnesota weather.

And yet a third memory picture presents itself to me. In Israel, I stood looking out my hotel window over the Kidron Valley and each morning I would see a modern-day shepherd bringing his flock to graze. He would lead them from one place to another, standing guard over them.

Jesus said, “I AM the good shepherd,” equating his relationship with us to that of a shepherd with his sheep. Jesus’ role is that of a protector, a provider of all things needed for the abundant life. With an understanding of the recalcitrant nature of the human spirit that wants to love God but also wants to be in control, Jesus said that we are the sheep.

Each of us desires the abundant life that Jesus offers. We may wander from the shepherd, following our own wishes and desires without regard for him. Or we may choose to follow the shepherd. When we do, we reap all the benefits that relationship offers and grow in His protecting, providing, self-sacrificial love.

For me the choice is clear. I choose to follow the Good Shepherd and to live the abundant life my Awesome God has planned for me.

R&D “Perverse and foolish oft I strayed and yet in love he sought me and on his shoulders gently laid and home rejoicing brought me.” When and how have I experienced the searching and protecting love of God?

Prayer: Gracious and life-giving Father, I thank You for Your watchful, generous love. Thank You for all of the times in the past You have watched over me and shown me the way. Grant me the grace, Father, to always follow Your leading.

Day 24

Read: John 14:1-11; 17:3

Our Awesome God Is the Way, the Truth, and the Life

One of my dearest friends died recently—suddenly and without warning. Her husband of 56 years, her children, and her grandchildren were devastated. But buoyed by the care and concern of other family members and friends, they moved through the days to the day of the funeral.

The service was perfectly “Shirley,” my friend. The music, which had been an important part of her life, was moving and remindful of ministries in which she had been involved. This wonderful, reassuring passage on the ultimate gift of our lasting, enduring, permanent relationship with Jesus Christ was read. And the homily, which in part eulogized Shirley’s life, summarized who she was better and more forcefully than any other words could have. The preacher said, “Shirley was a believer.”

She believed that Jesus had a place for her, that there would be no separation from Him but an ever-deepening relationship.

She believed Jesus when he said he was the WAY. He said to his friends, “And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” She was his friend.

She believed him when he said he was TRUTH. The foundation stone of her life were his words, his actions, his teaching, and her personal encounters with him. In every encounter with Jesus, she found him to embody truth.

She believed him when he said he was LIFE. Christ’s life existed in her in this life. We saw it in her relationship with her husband, her family and her friends. Often, I heard him speaking through her in our many and long conversations. And there is no doubt she believed that her life with Christ was permanent, in this physical life and in the life beyond.

She was a believer!

What more can we ask for ourselves! To believe that our Awesome God wants us now and will be with us in the life after this life is almost impossible to grasp. But the fact is that He is

present now! The fact is that He will be with us in our dying and in the life everlasting. We can be believers!

R&D *“God beyond our dreams, You have stirred in us a memory, You have placed Your powerful spirit in the hearts of humankind. All around us we have known You, all creation lives to hold you. In our living and our dying we are bringing You to birth.” (Bernadette Farrell). What is your response to Farrell’s words?*

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, I believe that you are the way, truth and life. Deepen within me the faith that turns to you in every facet of my life. Help me to exhibit the joy that comes from the knowledge that you live in me.*

Day 25

Read: John 15:1-11

Our Awesome God Is the True Vine

As I look around the walls of the study that my husband and I share, his many framed diplomas and ordination certificates that hang on the wall capture my attention. I have none of those things myself, except for a college diploma that hardly counts in the grand scheme of things.

Does this fact mean that I am of less value than my husband? In the human realm that places value on place and position and power and prestige, the answer might be “yes.” But from our Awesome God, the answer to that question is a resounding “no.” The Triune God finds our worth in quite a different place. Our value is found in fruit bearing through Jesus Christ.

Jesus describes himself as the TRUE VINE. He is the genuine, complete and final vine, and he calls each of us into union with himself. We are to be the branches that bear fruit on his vine.

We are called to a dependency upon Christ. For the human “I’d rather do it my own way” self, being dependent on Christ requires an act of will, demands a constant shift of orientation to replace self as the center of our lives. Jesus tells us plainly that we cannot bear fruit for God by ourselves.

When we make the central shift from self to Jesus Christ, some marvelous things are promised. We discover that our prayers offered in his name are granted. We find that abiding in him and becoming obedient to him brings not constraint but freedom into our lives. We become fruit bearers and discover that the things we do for Christ change those around us. The fruit that we bear because we abide in Christ has a positive influence for good in all with whom we come into contact.

Abiding in him, we ourselves are changed more and more. His joy crowds out fear, anxiety, anger, pride, the whole panoply of self-doubting and degrading emotions that at times threaten to overwhelm us. But when we open ourselves, unite ourselves to him as a branch to a vine, it is his life that flows through us. We become completely ourselves, the people our Awesome God created us to be, persons of great worth.

R&D *Fruit bearing is our service to God through Christ. As you consider your own fruit bearing, what can you point to that is tangible and concrete in what you have done and said?*

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, I commit my life and my will to you yet again. I thank you for the privilege of being united to you, the honor of being a fruit bearing branch. Grant that all I do and say in your service may bring honor to the Father.*

Day 26

Read: John 4:16-26

Our Awesome God Is Spirit

It is all too easy to believe that the world of the physical, that which we can see and touch, is all there is to life. We enjoy the physical world. It can satisfy all our senses but one. We taste good food and fine wine, and they are good. We feel the loving touch of another's hand and it is good. We hear glorious music and it is good. We see the beauty of the physical world in forests and sea and sky, and it is good. We smell the glorious odors of the jasmine in spring and the roses in summer and they are good. This physical world in which we live is a place of marvels.

But for us as human beings, there is yet another sense, a sense that transcends all others and makes us more than mere physical beings. It is that sense that St. Augustine described as "having a God-shaped hole within us." We cannot be satisfied and content with the physical world alone, for the Creator God who is spirit made us for Himself. He gave us the ability to think and the capacity to feel emotion and the longing to reach beyond this physical world to the God who made us. He made us spiritual beings who find our ultimate satisfaction in relationship with Him.

Jesus met a woman of Samaria, not a very moral woman and not a person accepted in her society. She lived in and for the physical world. Yet even she had a sense that there was more to life. She spoke to Jesus of spiritual things. Jesus responded to her probing words with two revelations. "God is Spirit," he said. We cannot know Him unless He reveals Himself to us. And then Jesus said, "I who speak to you am he." I am Messiah.

"True worship is when the spirit, the immortal and invisible part of man, speaks to and meets with God, himself immortal and invisible" (William Barclay).

It is this special gift, the sense of the spiritual, which allows us to know our Awesome God who is spirit. This knowledge brings into our physical world love and light and joy and peace.

R&D *"Just a closer walk with thee, Grant it Jesus is my plea, Daily walking close to thee, Let it be, dear Lord, let it be." What part do you play in your never-ending dialogue with God? How can you sharpen your sense of His presence?*

Prayer: *Lord God, I know that on those days when the world seems dark, when nothing is going right and I cannot cope with my life, it is because I am neglecting You. Help me to sharpen my sense of the spiritual, to be ready to accept more of Your presence and to become ever closer to You.*

Day 27

Read: Mark 2:1-12

Our Awesome God Forgives

One of the most awesome traits of God is His willingness to forgive. Out of His love for us, He will forgive anything and everything when we say that we are sorry and resolve to change. The release that such forgiveness gives is an enabling power that changes our lives. Seeing the faith demonstrated by the paralytic and his friends, Jesus not only forgave the paralytic's sin but also changed his life by healing his paralysis.

Jesus demonstrated forgiveness in his own life. When men had done their worst to Jesus, denied him, imprisoned him, tortured him and finally condemned him to die the most painful of deaths, still Jesus said, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”

There are few things sadder in life than persons who focus on their own guilt, who blame themselves for everything that goes wrong in life, who cannot get beyond past misdeeds and mistakes. People who focus on past misdeeds and errors find little joy in life and little power to change and live effectively.

Equally to be pitied are those unforgiving persons who are weighed down by past grievances, full of anger over the real or perceived hurt done to them by another person. The grudge festers and builds and contaminates every waking moment, affecting all those people say and do. Their anger is visited not only on the person they feel has hurt them, but also on everyone with whom they come in contact. People who focus on the real or imagined wrongs done to them find no joy in life and no power to live effectively.

When I was a young woman, someone hurt me badly. I could have felt the hurt was entirely my fault, or that because I hadn’t done certain things differently, I suffered the hurt. Or I could have become angry and given hurt back, carried a grudge and repeatedly made the person pay. But something very wonderful happened to me. Because I had been released from the burden of my own sin, because God had been gracious to me, I was able to forgive the other. My Awesome God’s power to forgive me translated itself into the gift of my being able to forgive another.

R&D What do the words “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us” mean to you? How do you put them into action in my life?

Prayer: Great and gracious Father, how thankful I am that when I give myself to You, You bless me. Thank You for forgiving my sin. Strengthen me to resist the temptations that come to me. Thank You for the grace to forgive others.

Day 28

Read: John 15:12-17

Our Awesome God Gives a New Commandment, Part 1

In contrast to the many demands others seem to place upon us, Jesus has but one command for his followers: “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

It is both a very old and a very new commandment. It is both the simplest and the most complex commandment to understand. It is both the most difficult and the easiest commandment to keep.

The commandment is old. In the summary of the law written down some seven hundred years earlier and known by all devout Jews, God commanded, “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:17). The commandment is new, for Jesus put a radically new twist on the commandment with the words, “as I have loved you.”

The commandment is simple for it speaks directly about the quality of our dealings with people around us, requiring us to treat each person with love. The command is complex for it taps down into that deep inner reservoir that contains all of our likes and dislikes, our biases and our prejudices, our suspicions and our fears about other people.

The commandment is difficult to keep. We judge people and put them in categories, acceptable or unacceptable, friend or foe. We all do this because, having defined people and “put them in a box,” we are made more comfortable with ourselves. Jesus asks us to love people,

whoever they are, as they are. Yet the commandment is easy to keep for we do not use sentimentality, nor our weak human love. Instead we consciously tap into the love of Jesus Christ for us and extend that to each person we meet.

R&D *“Beloved, let us love one another for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God” (1 John 4:7). How do you display the love of Jesus to those around you, in your family, in your work, in your church? How do you see the love of Jesus shown by others in those same places?*

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, I thank you for your new commandment, for in it you assure us of your love for me. Help me to see each person I meet as one who is loved by you, and to accord him or her the worth and respect and love that you require.*

Day 29

Read: 1 John 4:7-12, 20-21

Our Awesome God Gives a New Commandment, Part 2

Any attempt to define the love of Jesus is doomed to be incomplete. We look at Jesus’ own interactions with people and catch a glimpse of the meaning of his words, “as I have loved you.” We see his compassion in his healing miracles as he healed all people according to their needs. We see his acceptance of people as he sat at table with outcasts and sinners. We see his tenderness as he gathered children around him and held one on his lap. We see his enabling of other people as we watch his interaction with his disciples and with Mary and Martha. His words were kind—sometimes gentle, sometimes stern—but always spoken for the good of others. Ultimately, we see his love on the cross. We see his love for the Father as he demonstrated his complete obedience. He showed his love for each one of us as he paid the price for our sins and revealed the length to which God would go to draw us to Himself.

A total, unconditional, self-sacrificing love like that of Jesus is a rare part of our human experience. For me, a form of this feeling was present after the birth of each of my children. When the child was first placed in my arms, the overwhelming almost tangible feeling was a fierce knowledge that there was nothing that I would not do for the child no matter what it cost me personally. This may be a faint echo of the love that Jesus showed in his life.

If Jesus’ commandment demands the impossible from us, what is our hope of ever doing as he asks? It is possible only through our intimate relationship with him. He calls us “friends,” calls us to an obedience that bears fruit for him and promises us power when we pray in his name. It is not our love that we are to give to each person we meet; it is the love of Jesus given to us that we are to pass on to others. Then and only then are we able to obey this commandment from our Awesome God.

R&D *Human love is shallow, fleeting, unreliable, and must be replenished each day from the deep well of God’s vast love. How do you keep your small jar of love full and ready to share with others?*

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, I am fearful that I cannot love others in the same way that you love me. Help me see and understand that every person I meet is loved by you, and help me to love each one too.*

Day 30

Read: John 6:1-14, 22-35

Our Awesome God Is the Bread of Life

Each year finds many people in this country trying to lose weight. Diet books proliferate and the famous South Beach diet and others of its ilk are published with regularity. These newer diets take the carbohydrates away, and limit the dieter primarily to meats and vegetables. I tried one diet myself, and it worked for a period of time. The problem with the diet is that it does not satisfy. One can eat until full, but one is never satisfied.

In Bethsaida near the Sea of Galilee, Jesus fed the physical hunger of 5000 people with bread and fish. The people had eaten their fill but were not satisfied. They wanted, needed, and craved more, so they followed him as he moved from one side of the lake to the other, to Capernaum. They had heard Jesus' words, seen the awesome nature of his power and wanted more.

The admonition of Jesus to the crowd was plain and direct: "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life" (v.27). When the crowd asked what kind of labor was necessary in order to receive eternal life, Jesus again responded, "This is the work of God that you believe in him whom he has sent" (v.29). "Don't misunderstand me," he says, "I am not here to bring you food for the body, but food for the soul. You receive that food when you believe in me."

There is within all of us that desire, that need, that craving to live a life that has meaning. We continually search for satisfaction all our lives, looking at and trying various philosophies, submerging ourselves in the world with its offerings of money and power, perhaps even dabbling along the periphery of the church, but without real commitment. Nothing satisfies us. It is only when we become serious about Jesus, when we earnestly take Jesus at his word and truly believe in him, that we find the food that satisfies. He becomes the nourishment that we need to live daily. Our Awesome God, Jesus Christ, offers us food to satisfy our spiritual hunger.

R&D "I am the bread of life; they who come to me shall not hunger; they who believe in me shall not thirst. No one can come to me unless the Father draw them." Describe how your relationship with Jesus Christ feeds your spirit.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I love food. Thank you for all the good things you have put on this earth to nourish our physical bodies. But so very much more, I thank you that you offer yourself to us as spiritual food. Help me always to seek your nourishment and feed on you.

Day 31

Read: John 11:17-43

Our Awesome God Is Resurrection and Life

"Welcome, Happy Morning," we sing on Easter Sunday as we celebrate Jesus Christ's glorious resurrection from the dead. The Easter service is always thrilling with special music and the proclamation from the pulpit that Jesus is alive. Easter is also the day on which I especially remember my mother. She died over twenty years ago, and yet I still miss her and long to talk with her. But I am not sad on Easter that she is gone. I am content because I know that one day I will see her again. How do I know that? Because she believed and I believe in the promises of Jesus, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."

Jesus enriched his powerful proclamation of resurrection with an equally powerful statement about life. While the resurrection awaits us in the future, the life that we receive from Jesus begins now. It began the first moment we knew him, at our conversion.

For some it is a dramatic Damascus road experience where, like St. Paul, through unique and unusual circumstances, a person encounters Jesus, accepts the fact that he is alive, and further dedicates his or her life to Christ's control.

For some it is a gradual awakening, through seeing Christ in another person or through the witness of the community of the faithful, or perhaps through some period of great need when Christ enters and his presence is felt and known.

Or, for some like myself, conversion has no beginning or end. Aware as a child of my mother's faith, I knew there was more to life than the people I could see or the food I ate or the toys with which I played. Someone else was present, Someone that I could not see. I was unable to articulate who this Someone was, yet I knew that He loved me.

As I look back now, in my older years, I can see that Jesus becomes more visible, more real, as he reveals himself to me through other people and through life's circumstances. How wonderful it will be to see him face to face, my Awesome Resurrected Lord!

R&D "I serve a risen Savior. He's in the world today. I know that he is living no matter what men say. I see his hand of mercy, I hear his voice of cheer and just the time I need him he's always near." What difference does it make in your day-to-day life that Jesus Christ is alive?

Prayer: My Gracious God, I thank You for the resurrection. I thank You for Jesus through whom I can know You. I thank You for the Holy Spirit who moved within my heart from my childhood, helping me to know that You are real. Even now, help me to dedicate myself each day to Your will for my life.

Day 32

Read: John 14:27-29, 16:33; Isaiah 26:3-4; James 3:13-18

Our Awesome God Brings Peace

Listening to two of our grown children talk about their jobs, we hear them commiserating with each other over the stress level with which they live. They laugh about being the "pond scum" of senior management in two large national companies, with a great deal of responsibility to make decisions and yet always under the onus of having to please top management. In that regard they are no different from thousands of other people in this country, yet they are different from many. Both seem to manage stress in a remarkable way, to live full happy lives with family and friends, to have a positive and hopeful attitude towards life. What do they have that makes them different from many others? They have discovered an inner peace that comes from their commitment to Jesus Christ.

In both the Old and New Testaments, we discover a multi-faceted gem among the many-jeweled promises of God. It is the promise of peace.

How we long for peace in our time! There are wars on almost every continent with the attendant human suffering and loss of life that war brings. There is constant harangue and bickering among the political parties of this country and dishonesty among public officials. Every newscast, every newspaper is filled with myriad reports of persons who cannot live at peace with their neighbors.

Where is this promised peace? What is this promised peace? Jesus promises not the world's peace, but his own.

The peace of Jesus comes to us in spite of our outward circumstances. We may be fearful and anxious. We may be in the turmoil of broken relationships, job stress, chronic or life-threatening illnesses, or carrying heavy responsibility for our own children and our elderly parents at the same time. It is precisely in such times that the peace of God can come to us. God's peace may not change the circumstances we face, but His peace changes us. It is an inner peace, a spiritual peace, and a gift from God. His peace comes with a power that enables us to live in hope and with thanksgiving for the life we have, no matter what the circumstances. God's peace is a by-product of our relationship with our Awesome God.

R&D How do you avail yourself of the peace that God offers? What difference does it make in the circumstances of my life?

Prayer: Holy Jesus, I know when I am anxious and fearful that I have strayed far from you. Forgive me, draw me close to you, and fill me with the peace only you can give.

Day 33

Read: John 14:15-17, 25-26; 16:12-15

Our Awesome God Is Our Companion

An old hymn paints an idyllic picture of our relationship with Christ: "I come to the garden alone while the dew is still on the roses and the voice I hear falling on my ear, the Son of God discloses. And he walks with me and he talks with me, and he tells me I am his own." It describes the intimacy, the one-on-one companionship that believers desire to have with Christ. This is precisely the intimate relationship that Jesus promised to his disciples before his death and resurrection and ascension. He promised to be with each and every believer through the Holy Spirit.

We are often confused in our thinking about the Holy Spirit and his work. For me, it is simply this: whenever I am aware of what Jesus taught and allow it to guide my life, I understand that the Spirit is at work within me. Whenever I act with more love and compassion and understanding, beyond what I would normally expect of myself, I understand that the Spirit is at work within me. Whenever I find a deep reservoir of strength to deal with the hard and difficult situations of life, I understand that the Spirit is at work within me.

Jesus was very specific about the work that the Holy Spirit would do and how the Spirit would be active within us. This Awesome Companion who is God Himself speaks truth. He is present with us and dwells within us. The work of the Spirit is to glorify Jesus in our lives, to speak the word and the will of God within us, and to teach us all things as he reminds us of what Jesus taught.

There are good people in the world who, by the world's standards, practice the "principles of goodness" in their own lives. They live moral lives and are persons who would never "lie, cheat, or steal." The reality of life for a Christian is that we are held to a different standard. Our lives are judged to be "good" not by the world, but by the Father. It is here the work of the Holy Spirit within us comes back into play. Knowing our own weaknesses, our inclination towards sinful behaviors, our Awesome Companion directs, guides, strengthens us and enables the image of Christ to shine through us.

R&D *“This is the secret of Christian sanctity. It is not that we should strive to live like Jesus, but that He by His Spirit should come and live in us” (John Stott). How do you respond to such an idea? What does this say to you about your own will and decision making?*

Prayer: *“Breathe on me, Breath of God. Fill me with life anew, that I may love what thou dost love, and do what thou wouldst do” (Edwin Hatch). Thank you, Holy Spirit, that you have been and continue to be my daily companion.*

Day 34

Read: Matthew 7:24-27, 6:9-13; Luke 11:1-4

Our Awesome God Is Our Teacher

It is said by some scholars that the Gospel of Matthew was written, in part, to be a teaching manual for Christians to give them guidance and direction in living a Christian life. A renewed interest in Bible study among Christians in our generation is motivated in large measure by our need for the same direction and aid in the present day as we try to live a Christ-centered life.

Jesus has been described as the greatest teacher who ever lived. Certainly his parables are works of art, each worthy of any literary prize ever given. They are drawn from everyday life, easily remembered, direct in their application, and they require a response from each person who hears or reads his words. Just as a person who is a wise builder will choose a sound site for his dwelling, so the believer will listen to the words of Jesus and will choose to make them the foundation for his or her life.

Perhaps the greatest, certainly the best known, teaching of Jesus occurred when his disciples, seeing him pray, asked him to teach them how to pray. Being devout Jews, they knew the Jewish prayers but they sensed in Jesus a different relationship with God the Father and they wanted that relationship for themselves. So Jesus taught them the prayer that we call “The Lord’s Prayer.” It is often said that rather than being only a prayer, it is also an outline for the way that we should pray. In those 54 short words he describes our relationship with God, the nature of God, the need for doing the will of God, the avenue for forgiveness, the necessity of extending that forgiveness to others, and where to find the strength to live safely in this world.

Each of us has at least one teacher to whom we can point as someone who has given us important information about how to live life. In our Awesome God, we have the greatest teacher of all, who has not only the words but also the power to put those words into practice in our lives. Our God is an Awesome Teacher.

R&D *William Barclay said that after studying the Bible for fifty years, he could always find in it something that he had not seen before. What is your favorite teaching of Jesus? How can you discover something new in it, make some new application in your life?*

Prayer: *Gracious Lord, give me the desire and the discipline to continually study Your words in the scripture. Help me to see them always as something fresh and new that will help me follow You. Bless me as I read and study.*

Day 35

Read: Romans 3:21-26; John 3:17

Our Awesome God Is Our Savior

Some of the indelible pictures, burned into the minds of every American who watched the terrible events unfold on September 11, 2001, were of the New York firemen who risked their lives trying to clear the huge skyscraper office buildings of people. Carrying their heavy equipment, trudging up the many flights of stairs, walking into smoke and flames, they attempted to evacuate the building. And when the buildings collapsed, many of those firemen gave their lives trying to save others. There are times of disaster and danger and tragedy when we cannot help ourselves and must have outside help in order to be saved.

In the world of the Spirit, this same truth abides. We were created by a perfect God to be His perfect children. “You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). We were given a freedom to choose how to live. Given the freedom to choose between God’s will for us and our own will, we inevitably choose our own. And our own will, just as inevitably, leads us to wrong and hurtful choices. We hurt ourselves, we hurt others, and we hurt God. Paul says in what is a universal truth, “I can will what is right but I cannot do it; the evil that I do not want, that is what I do” (Romans 7:18-19). This is the human dilemma.

God, who loves us in spite of what we do, is not willing to see us perish but has intervened. Because we are unable to save ourselves, because we cannot achieve perfection for ourselves, He has sent us a Savior to intercede in our lives and to save us from the consequences of our sinful behavior. He has sent us Jesus Christ, who was willing to endure the cross for you and for me.

What God asks of us in return is that we believe in Jesus Christ as His Son and our Savior. When we are saved from the separation from God which results from our sin, our Awesome God Himself dwells within us and helps us to live the life we were created to live, to be the people that He created us to be.

R&D What does it mean to you that Jesus Christ died to save you from your sin? How aware are you of the sacrifice that he made for you?

Prayer: Gracious Father, I am overwhelmed at Your goodness to me, Your love for me. I thank You that You sent Jesus to die for me. I take him as my Savior. Give me the desire to follow his leading and, through the Holy Spirit, to live the life You choose for me.

Day 36

Read: John 14:23-26; Matthew 28:19

Our Awesome God Is Three in One, part 1

For many Christians, the doctrine of the Trinity is the most ignored doctrine because it is the most difficult to understand. That stalwart old hymn, “Holy, Holy, Holy,” describes the Trinity as “God in three Persons, blessed Trinity.” Scripture is decisive when it says there is *one* God, “Thus says the Lord. I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god” (Isaiah 44:5-6). The Creator God’s far reaching presence fills the entire Bible. His footprints are seen in every event. Echoes of Him are found everywhere in Scripture.

Yet from the beginning of the Bible, we are made aware of another Person, “The Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters” (Genesis 1:2). Throughout the Old Testament we see the work of the Holy Spirit. He permeates the New Testament from the beginning of the ministry of Jesus, “He (Jesus) saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him” (Matthew

3:16). The Holy Spirit is the principal character in the Book of the Acts and later writings of the Scripture, moving, guiding, strengthening, and inspiring the early church.

Yet there is another Person. We see the life of Jesus in the Gospels and say with Peter, who, when asked by Jesus, “Who do you say that I am?” replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:15-16).

Three Persons, each distinguishable by the way Scripture describes them, and by the work they have done and still do in the world. Yet they are bound together as One God. Our Awesome God is Three in One. God the Father is the Creator of all that is or ever will be. He is the final judge. He holds the world in the palm of His hand and we can trust Him because His overwhelming characteristic is love.

God the Holy Spirit is present in the world now, moving in the hearts of people, drawing us to belief in Jesus Christ, guiding and directing our lives.

God the Son, Jesus Christ, is our Savior and Redeemer, the revealer of the Father’s love, who went to death for our salvation and even now, on the right hand of God, is our advocate with the Father.

R&D In how many different ways do you experience God in your life? How do you sense God being a part of your life?

Prayer: “I bind unto myself today the strong Name of the Trinity, by invocation of the same, The Three in One, and One in Three.” Great God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, even today I recommit myself to You. Take my life and let it be devoted to You that I may live always in Your presence.

Day 37

Read: 2 Corinthians 13:14: Ephesians 1:3-14

Our Awesome God Is Three in One, part 2

Perhaps the best way to think of the Trinity is not as a concept in our minds, but as an experience in our lives. I don’t know if I am typical, but I experience God in three ways as He reveals Himself. It is God the Father who made me, who gave me all of the physical, mental, and spiritual potential to be who I am, and even more, the potential to become the person He desires me to be. It is Jesus Christ who, by coming to earth as a man, has shown me in a most personal way what God is like. It is Jesus, who by his death on the cross and his resurrection, has saved me from the consequences of my sin and opened the door for me to ultimate life with the Father. It is the Holy Spirit, who drew me to my conversion, reminds me to pray, challenges me to service and involves himself in all of my relationships, both human and divine.

The Three in One is revealed in more mundane things as well. When we look at the complexity of nature, see the majesty of the oceans, are aware of the intricacy of all living things, we see the Master Builder, God the Father, in His created universe. When we look at the depravity of mankind in war, read of the inhumanity of the abuse of children, look without blinders into our own treatment of others, we see the need for our Savior, Jesus. When we are drawn to the good and reject the evil, when we are loving and patient and kind and generous, we see the fruits of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Yet, in some mysterious paradoxical way, God is *not* three gods but one God. He appears in my life not in just three ways but in hundreds of ways. I try to respond as best I can. The heart of the matter is not that He is “Three in One and One in Three” but that He is *my* God. I try to

serve as best I can. I think that my Awesome God expects nothing more than that from me and from you.

R&D *“For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood” (1 Corinthians 13:12). What part does your inability to completely know God play in your faith? Does it limit or enlarge your faith? Explain?*

Prayer: *Gracious God, how little I understand You. Your greatness, Your generosity, Your care for me is beyond my grasp. The ways You have prepared for me to know You fill me with overwhelming gladness. I thank You for Your presence in my life. Help me to see You more completely.*

Day 38

Read: Philippians 2:5-11; Luke 2:40, 52

Our Awesome God Enters Human History

An oft-told story concerns little Nancy. Like many small children, in the middle of the night when things troubled her, she retreated to the safety of her parents' bed. One night during a particularly violent thunderstorm, Nancy appeared at the bedside of her parents and asked to sleep with them. They got up, walked with her to her room, lovingly reassured her that everything was fine and left her with words reminding her that God loved her and was with her. Three times this same scenario was played out. Finally, little Nancy said, “I know God loves me and that He is here with me, but I need somebody with skin on.”

It seems that we all are in need of somebody with skin on. We all need reassurance that somebody loves us and is there for us. How blessed indeed were those early disciples who could see and touch the physical presence of Jesus! How fortunate were those who came to believe in him as God! Yet, we too are blessed. Jesus said to Thomas, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe” (John 20:29). The witness of the disciples and the many others who formed the early church was that Jesus was a human person, fully man, who breathed and ate and loved and laughed and cried and who lived on this earth with the limitations of a man.

There were some in later generations of Christians who could not believe that Jesus was fully human. They devised various theories suggesting that he only appeared to be a man, that he never suffered as a man, and that he never bore the temptations of the flesh.

Yet, we base our faith in Jesus as Savior *precisely on the fact that he was fully man*. Undergirding all that we believe as Christians, is the belief that God loved us enough to come Himself, through His Son Jesus, to show us in His fully human life how life was to be lived in the harmonious relationships that God had intended from the beginning. Fully human, He understands our frailties, our temptations, our desires and our needs because He experienced them Himself. Only thus, could He be what He is for us, our mediator, advocate, and friend. How Awesome is our God who has given us all someone with skin on to whom we can give our loyalty and love!

R&D *The Nicene Creed contains the words, “by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.” What is your response to such a statement? What does the fact that Jesus was fully man mean in your life?*

Prayer: *Heavenly Father, I am struck yet again by Your generous love. Thank You for the gift of Your Son who by his example shows us what life should be. Thank You for his humility and his obedience. Help me to show those same qualities in my life.*

Day 39

Read: Luke 19:1-10; John 15:14-17

Our Awesome God Is a Friend to Sinners

A grandson leaves middle school this year to enter into the scary unknown world of high school next fall. Orientation sessions have already been held. The 8th graders have already visited the high school to help make the transition easier. Stephen plays in the middle school band and so will play with the high school marching band next fall. He does not easily share his feelings but even he confessed to a universal feeling, which comes to all of us when we enter something new: “Will I know anyone there? Will I have any friends?”

You and I can try almost anything if we have a friend with us. The qualities of a friend are manifold, “loyalty” being foremost. We share our intimate thoughts and feelings with a friend who is trustworthy. We share our joys and sorrows with a friend who is affirming and reassuring. We confess our mistakes to a friend who is nonjudgmental and forgiving. The list could go on and on. There is uniqueness about friendship that outlasts time and distance. The welcoming smile of an old friend warms the heart and gives life meaning.

Jesus said to his disciples, “No longer do I call you servants; I call you friends.” What a change in relationship! He had many other friends beyond the Twelve, more often than not among the poor and downtrodden and disenfranchised. Those with the greatest need found him to be their greatest friend.

You and I can call him a friend as well. Someone said, “A true friend doesn’t sympathize with your weakness; he helps summon your strength.” We find just such a friend in Jesus. He is with us in our weakness, but he enables us to face whatever lies ahead with fortitude and power. And Henry Ford remarked, “My best friend is the one who brings out the best in me.” One of the prayers that my husband, who is my best friend, and I often pray says, “Help us to bring out the best in each other” (Bishop Slattery). We find just such a friend in Jesus. He takes the seed of the best that is in us and helps it blossom.

My hope for my grandson is that he will find a friend in high school. Even more, my prayer is that he will increasingly realize that he already has the best friend in the world in Jesus.

R&D R. L. Stevenson said, “A friend is a present you give yourself.” As you think about your own friends, how do you nurture those relationships? As you think about Jesus, how do you nurture your friendship with him?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, my heart is filled with thanks for the many friendships that I have had over the years. I thank you for each one. But even more, I thank you that you are my friend. Help me to love and be loyal to you and to those you send me to be my friends.*

Day 40

Read: Revelation 21:5-7; Psalm 139:1-18

Our Awesome God Is the Beginning and the End

One of my earliest childhood memories involved my mother. We lived in a farmhouse that was set on a hill. Down the hill was another farm, their pasture separated from ours by a barbed

wire fence. We could barely see the next farmhouse nestled in the tree break. It was very different from our house, and occasionally my mother and I would visit the house down the hill. It was dark and ornately decorated, and the farmwoman kept a parrot that fascinated me. And the house smelled of baking cookies. The rule was that I could not visit the neighbors by myself because the pasture between us was the home of a large and dangerous bull. Nevertheless, one day I chanced it and made a visit alone. After a lovely visit, I squeezed under the fence at the far side of the pasture and looked up the hill. I saw my mother running towards me. Fortunately, the bull had stayed safely at the other end of the pasture as I ran home. Not knowing quite what to expect, I was surprised when my mother swept me up in her arms and she, who never cried, had tears on her face. "Don't you ever do that again!" she said, "I don't want to lose you." And I never did.

We serve a God who is like that, who is everywhere, always watching over us, who loves us and protects us from danger. The Psalmist describes his own relationship with God as intimate and long-lasting. "Thou searchest out my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For thou didst form my inward parts, thou didst knit me together in my mother's womb" (Psalm 139).

And the writer of Revelations describes God as "Alpha and Omega," beginning and end. Our God is not a sometimes God, but a Forever God. As He was a part of our birth, so will He be a part of our life and of our death. His gifts are many, a newness to each day, the water of life now and eternally; and because of obedient faith, we *are* His sons and daughters, intimately connected to Him.

As we grow older we gain a sense of the transitory nature of this life. My mother was at my beginning, but she will not be at my ending. Seasons change, people change, the world around us changes. But our God endures forever. Praise His name, Our Awesome God is everlasting!

R&D "*Great is thy faithfulness, O God, my Father. Morning by morning new mercies I see. Thou changest not, thy compassion it fails not. Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.*" *What response can you make in your life to show your gratitude for your Everlasting God?*

Prayer: *At my beginning, O God, You were there. Daily as I walk the path of this life, You are with me. My death is still to come and even there You will be present. I praise Your name, O everlasting God.*

by John and Shirley MacNaughton

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