



## **Bible Lens**

**NEW:** Expanded edition

# Bible Lens—July 27–August 2, 2020

Subject: **Love**

From the *Christian Science Sentinel* - July 27, 2020

**As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.**

— [Isaiah 66:13](#)

## Exploring Bible Verses

An exploration of Bible citations from the *Christian Science Quarterly*® Bible Lessons

“ . . . a lesson on which the prosperity of Christian Science largely depends.”—Mary Baker Eddy

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### ***from the Responsive Reading***

#### **Isaiah 63:7**

*I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us.*

*Mention* is not a casual term. Translated from a Hebrew word meaning remember (*zākar*), it’s used repeatedly in Scripture to commemorate God’s goodness and salvation. It also illustrates divine blessings on individuals—for instance, in God’s “remembering” Noah and Abraham (see [Genesis 8:1](#); [19:29](#)).

#### **Isaiah 63:16, 19**

*Thou, O Lord, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.... We are thine.*

*Redeemer* is a title that springs from ancient Hebrew family law. If an individual lost his freedom because of inability to pay a debt, a near relative could pay to rescue or “redeem” him. In the story of Ruth, her kinsman Boaz redeems the inheritance of Naomi and Ruth, giving him the right to marry Ruth (see [Ruth 4:1–12](#)).

From the time of God’s pledge to the Israelites “I will redeem you with a stretched out arm” ([Exodus 6:6](#)), *redeemer* became a continuing description of God as the deliverer of His people from distress and sorrow (see other examples in [Job 19:25](#); [Psalms 19:14](#); [Jeremiah 50:34](#)).

#### **Isaiah 49:14–16**

Zion said, *The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.*

In this verse, Zion—a metaphor for the children of God—mourns its apparent abandonment by God. A mothering image reaffirms God’s faithfulness, and recalls another prophetic promise: “As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you” ([Isaiah 66:13](#), Citation 3). The reference to engraving underscores the permanence of this assurance.

## **from Section 1**

### **1 | Jeremiah 31:3**

*The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.*

*Drawn* (Hebrew, *māšak*) refers to drawing out or sustaining. Several modern translations include wording about God’s unceasing love.

### **2 | Isaiah 43:4**

*Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee.*

Here *honourable* alludes to being honored by God rather than to personal character. It is God’s love that endows man with honor and worth.

#### **Translation**

*You are priceless to me.  
I love you and honor you....*

—New International Reader’s Version

### **5 | John 3:1**

*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.*

To be named as children of God identifies men and women with His loving nature. A Bible scholar explains, “The man who is born of God is set in the right direction—of doing what is right and of loving his brother.... Love is the test of those who are truly born of God.”

#### **Translation**

*See how much the Father has loved us! His love is so great that we are called God’s children—and so, in fact, we are....*

—Good News Translation

# Definitions from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*

by Mary Baker Eddy

## 2 | 516:12–13

*Love, redolent with unselfishness, bathes all in beauty and light.*

**redolent:** fragrant; sweet-smelling; scented

## 6 | 280:4–6

*From Love and from the light and harmony which are the abode of Spirit, only reflections of good can come.*

**abode:** dwelling; home

## from Section 2

### 6 | Psalms 143:1, 4, 7

*Hear my prayer, O Lord, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness.... My heart within me is desolate.... Hear me speedily, O Lord: my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.*

In the Hebrew Bible, *pit* often represents the underworld, a bleak place of shadow and darkness. In this statement, the Hebrew word is *bôr*, signifying a deep place in the ground (including wells and dungeons). The account of Joseph’s betrayal by his brothers employs this word for both the pit and the prison where he was confined (see [Genesis 37:24](#); [41:14](#)). [Psalms 40:2](#) says of God, “He brought me up ... out of an horrible pit,” and [Lamentations 3:55](#) records a cry to God “out of the low dungeon.”

**supplications:** sincere, humble requests or prayers

**desolate:** sad; sorrowful

### Translation

#### 6 | Psalms 143:1, 4, 6–8

*Hear my prayer, O Lord, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness.... My heart within me is desolate.... I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land. Hear me speedily, O Lord: my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit. Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.*

...

*Lord, hear my prayer!*

*In your righteousness listen to my plea;*

*answer me in your faithfulness!...*

*... I am in deep despair...*

*I lift up my hands to you in prayer;*

*like dry ground my soul is thirsty for you.*

*Answer me now, Lord!*

*I have lost all hope.*

*Don't hide yourself from me,*

*or I will be among those who go down to the world of the dead.*

*Remind me each morning of your constant love,*

*for I put my trust in you.*

*My prayers go up to you;*

*show me the way I should go.*

—Good News Translation

## **Translation**

### **7 | Job 23:3, 5**

*Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!... I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me.*

...

*I wish I knew where I could find him!*

*I wish I could go to the place where he lives!...*

*I'd find out what his answers would be.*

*I'd think about what he would say to me.*

—New International Reader's Version

### **8 | Psalms 34:18**

*The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.*

**contrite:** deeply sorry for wrongdoing

## **Translation**

### **8 | Psalms 34:18, 22**

*The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.... None of them that trust in him shall be desolate.*

...

*The Lord is close to the brokenhearted,  
and he saves those whose spirits have been crushed....  
... no one who trusts him will be judged guilty.*

—New Century Version

## **9 | John 4:12, 13**

*If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.*

“It is the work of the Spirit,” suggests a source, “that in the beginning makes us seek God at all; it is the work of the Spirit that makes us aware of God’s presence; and it is the work of the Spirit that gives us the certainty that we are truly at peace with God.”

While the English word *dwell* can allude to a temporary condition, the Greek verb used here (*menō*) commonly portrays a steadfast, unwavering state. The writer is depicting absolute consistency and continuity in our relationship to God and with other people.

### **Translation**

*No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is truly in our hearts. God has given us his Spirit. That is how we know that we are one with him, just as he is one with us.*

—Contemporary English Version

## **Definitions from *Science and Health***

### **7 | 13:2, 20–24**

*Love is impartial and universal in its adaptation and bestowals. It is the open fount which cries, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.”...*

*If we pray to God as a corporeal person, this will prevent us from relinquishing the human doubts and fears which attend such a belief, and so we cannot grasp the wonders wrought by infinite, incorporeal Love, to whom all things are possible.*

**impartial:** fair; just; favoring no one more than another

**relinquishing:** letting go of; leaving behind; abandoning

**grasp:** understand

### **8 | 322:26–31**

*The sharp experiences of belief in the supposititious life of matter, as well as our disappointments and ceaseless woes, turn us like tired children to the arms of divine Love. Then we begin to learn Life in divine Science. Without this process of weaning, “Canst thou by searching find out God?”*

**weaning:** losing dependence on something

## 10 | 14:6

*To be “present with the Lord” is to have, not mere emotional ecstasy or faith, but the actual demonstration and understanding of Life as revealed in Christian Science. To be “with the Lord” is to be in obedience to the law of God, to be absolutely governed by divine Love,—by Spirit, not by matter.*

**ecstasy:** extreme or overpowering feeling

## **from Section 3**

### 10 | II Corinthians 1:3, 4

*Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*

*Parakaleō*, the Greek word rendered *comfort*, encompasses instruction, consolation, encouragement, and entreaty. In the Gospel of John, a related word—*paraklētos*, translated *Comforter*—describes the Holy Spirit (see 14:26).

Expressing gratitude for God’s comfort in the great tribulation he has undergone (see vv. 8–10), Paul offers reassurance to the Christians in Corinth. And he charges church members to extend to others the same encouragement and instruction they have been given.

#### **Translation**

*All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.*

—New Living Translation

## 12 | Matthew 20:30

*Two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David.*

These two blind men are likely waiting near the city gate of Jericho, hoping for charity from the throng of Passover travelers. When they call out to Jesus, he is en route to Jerusalem—the place where betrayal, condemnation, and crucifixion await him. Yet he stops to heal them, overcoming the crowd’s attempts to marginalize them and demonstrating his compassion even in the face of impending violence.

“Son of David” is unequivocal recognition of Jesus as the prophesied Messiah. A scriptural authority notes some irony: “On the way to Jerusalem, where he is to present his claims before the official spokesmen for the Jewish people, only the blind can see who Jesus really is.”

### 13 | Matthew 7:7, 8

*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*

In the original Greek, the form of the commands *ask*, *seek*, and *knock* indicates ongoing activities or attitudes, not one-time actions. We are not to reach out to God once or occasionally but to ask persistently, seek diligently, and persevere in knocking. One commentary offers, “Pray, pray often, pray with sincerity, pray, and pray again.”

### **from Section 4**

### 14 | John 4:20

*He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?*

Long-standing Hebrew law urged love of God and one’s neighbor (see [Leviticus 19:34](#); [Deuteronomy 6:5](#)). First John melds these into an interdependent whole: Love of God is expressed in love of others; love of others springs from God’s love for us.

A scholar writes, “Because love emanates from God’s essential nature and because God’s children live in response to their intimate relationship with God, love must characterize the Christian community.”

#### **Translation**

*... those who don't love their brothers or sisters whom they have seen can hardly love God whom they have not seen!*

—Common English Bible

#### **Translation**

### 15 | Luke 6:36

*Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.*

...

*Be merciful (responsive, compassionate, tender) just as your [heavenly] Father is merciful.*

—Amplified® Bible

### 17 | Luke 10:29

*[A certain lawyer], willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?*

“Who is my neighbour?”—the lawyer’s attempt to prove himself right—can also be seen as a sincere question. Since neighbors were often defined as those sharing common blood or religious belief, the lawyer likely expected simple confirmation of this.

Christ Jesus redefines the debate. In his story, the despised Samaritan isn't the person in need, but the caring neighbor—and “Who is my neighbour?” is answered with guidance about how true neighbors act.

### **17 | Luke 10:33–35**

*A certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.*

Given the theological divide and intense animosity between Jews and Samaritans, Jesus' choice of a Samaritan as the good neighbor in his parable conveys a pointed message about love for others. Describing the way to eternal life with the simple directive “Go, and do thou likewise” (v. 37), the Master illustrates his earlier teaching: “Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you” (Luke 6:27, 28).

The two pence paid by the Samaritan were denarii, the primary silver coin of the Roman Empire. One denarius amounted to about one day's pay for a laborer.

## **Definitions from *Science and Health***

### **21 | 366:12–19**

*The physician who lacks sympathy for his fellow-being is deficient in human affection, and we have the apostolic warrant for asking: “He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” Not having this spiritual affection, the physician lacks faith in the divine Mind and has not that recognition of infinite Love which alone confers the healing power.*

**deficient:** not having something necessary; incomplete

**apostolic:** relating to early Christian teachings and leaders

**warrant:** official authority

### **24 | 242:15, 30–32**

*In patient obedience to a patient God, let us labor to dissolve with the universal solvent of Love the adamant of error,—self-will, self-justification, and self-love,—which wars against spirituality and is the law of sin and death....*

*The finger-posts of divine Science show the way our Master trod, and require of Christians the proof which he gave, instead of mere profession.*

**adamant:** extremely hard substance

**finger-posts:** direction signs

**mere profession:** words without action

## **from Section 5**

### **20 | Psalms 68:6**

*God setteth the solitary in families.*

**the solitary:** people who are alone

## Translation

### 20 | Psalms 68:5, 6

*A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation. God setteth the solitary in families.*

...

*The God who is in his holy dwelling place  
is the father of the fatherless and the defender of widows.  
God places lonely people in families....*

—GOD’S WORD Translation

### 22 | Romans 8:35

*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?*

“The love of Christ” has sometimes been taken to refer to the believer’s love of Christ. More meaningful is the assurance that Christ’s love for us withstands all opposition and secures our victory over evil. One source observes, “The separation is but seeming; the love is indissoluble.”

### 23 | Isaiah 54:10

*The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.*

...

*“The mountains may disappear,  
and the hills may come to an end.  
But my love will never disappear.  
My promise of peace will not come to an end,”  
says the Lord who shows mercy to you.*

—International Children’s Bible

## Definitions from *Science and Health*

### 26 | 266:6–10

*Would existence without personal friends be to you a blank? Then the time will come when you will be solitary, left without sympathy; but this seeming vacuum is already filled with divine Love.*

**blank:** emptiness

**vacuum:** empty space

### 27 | 57:18–30

*Happiness is spiritual, born of Truth and Love. It is unselfish; therefore it cannot exist alone, but requires all mankind to share it.*

*Human affection is not poured forth vainly, even though it meet no return. Love enriches the nature, enlarging, purifying, and elevating it. The wintry blasts of earth may uproot the flowers of affection, and scatter them to the winds; but this severance of fleshly ties serves to unite thought more closely to God, for Love supports the struggling heart until it ceases to sigh over the world and begins to unfold its wings for heaven.*

**vainly:** uselessly; unsuccessfully

**severance:** complete separation

**sigh over:** worry about

## **29 | 58:7**

-

*Unselfish ambition, noble life-motives, and purity,—these constituents of thought, mingling, constitute individually and collectively true happiness, strength, and permanence.*

**constituents:** elements that make up a whole

**individually:** singly

**collectively:** as a group; together

## **from Section 6**

### **24 | Zephaniah 3:17**

*The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.*

God's "rest" doesn't allude to inactivity. *Hāraš*, the Hebrew word rendered *rest*, means to be quiet or silent.

### **Translation**

#### **25 | Song of Solomon 2:4**

*He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.*

...

*He escorts me to the banquet hall;*

*it's obvious how much he loves me.*

—New Living Translation

To learn more about the *Christian Science Quarterly* Bible Lessons, go to <https://quarterly.christianscience.com>.

## Resources quoted in this issue

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## Related Healing Ideas

# Asking with the heart

By Alex Cook

From the April 30, 2012, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

The Bible gives us unequivocal promises that God will give us what we ask for—if we ask! Matthew says, “Ask, and you will receive; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you” (7:7, Good News Translation).

But haven’t we all had the experience of asking God for something and not receiving it? Over and over again the Bible counsels us to communicate with God not just with words, but with our whole heart.

In the chapter titled “Prayer” in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, Mary Baker Eddy wrote at length about desire. Desire can imply a longing for something we don’t have. But when we bring God into the picture and turn our desire over to Him, it can instead be a petition or prayer to Him to fulfill that desire. There is no way to demonstrate spirituality without feeling a great longing to do so! Eddy put it this way: “In the quiet sanctuary of earnest longings, we must deny sin and plead God’s allness. . . . Such prayer is answered, in so far as we put our desires into practice” (*Science and Health*, p. 15).

When I was about ten years into my career as a muralist, I began to feel that it was time for something new. My great desire was to serve, to use my skills, my individuality, and my spiritual conviction.

Then, about a year after I began praying about this issue specifically, I received an answer in prayer: “Dedicate the first four hours of every day to nothing but being creative.” I didn’t know where this would lead. But when I obediently began this discipline of making time for creativity, what came out instead of paintings were songs.

In a few months I had created a whole new body of spiritual music, the likes of which I had never written before. And in the following years, I began making my living full time as a musician, performing in churches and making the most of countless opportunities to serve others in new and compelling ways.

During that time, I saw that my days of working, listening, and exploring the way to make the transition were prayers. By living out my longing, I was asking God for help—and it was being given step by step. For much of the time I didn’t know where my efforts were going, only that this new work was compelling and made my heart feel truly alive.

It is a great and challenging adventure to have our outward life reflect our “earnest longings.” First, we have to be silent and humble in order to hear and truly feel how God is guiding us. Second, as we listen more and more closely, we find that our inner longings often bid us to leave well-trodden, familiar paths. Following the desires God has put in our hearts forces us to grow, learn, expand. It puts us in situations where we must overcome fear, pride, and other vices. But there is no replacing the joy and satisfaction that comes from living a life that is guided by our deep, individual, God-given desires.

The asking that matters is a function of the heart in which we humbly allow God to tell us what we most want, and then live in such a way as to see those desires expressed. This kind of asking leaves no need for words.

To read the entire article, which has been shortened to fit this page, go to [jsh.christianscience.com/asking-with-the-heart](http://jsh.christianscience.com/asking-with-the-heart).

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