



*Don't Forsake  
The Lord*

**Dear GOD,**

I need you. Everyday,  
every moment, every  
second that I breathe,  
**I need you.** I am not  
strong enough on my  
own. **AMEN!**

## Don't Forsake the Lord

Thus far in our study of 1 Chron. 28:9-10, we have looked at some details about David's challenge to Solomon, and in doing so it is my hope that each of us gives some serious thought about our own relationship with God. I pray that each of us are committed to "know God and serve Him" recognizing He knows you and me so completely that even our "thoughts" are not hidden from Him. As we continue we find David telling Solomon, "If you seek Him, you will find Him." He then tells Solomon, that when he has found Him, "Do not forsake Him."

No doubt, the task ahead of Solomon was great, but he certainly wasn't alone in his labors. 1<sup>st</sup> Chron. 28:21 tells us that the priests and Levites, along with craftsman and all the people will assist him. In 1<sup>st</sup> Chron. 29:1-3, his father David tells him of all his personal gold, silver, bronze, wood, and precious stones along with marble slabs he is committing to the construction of God's

House. David was fully aware, that even though his son had all this help and resources that there was still one very important thing which would be needed above all else. Is there any doubt what that was? David knew all too well that even

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...but staying with God and not forsaking Him was the only thing that could keep him there!

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though things could not have seemed better to Solomon, that it wasn't going to be easy. At this point Solomon might have been on "cloud 9" as we sometimes say but staying with God and not forsaking Him was the only thing that could keep him there! He knew if Solomon was to be successful in this and all his life's endeavors, that his relationship with God could not be merely one of convenience, not a "here today and gone tomorrow" kind of faith!



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## For the Love of Money

There was a man who had worked all of his life and had saved all of his money. He was a real miser when it came to his money. He loved money more than just about anything.

Just before he died, he said to his wife, "Now listen, when I die, I want you to take all my money and place it in the casket with me, because I wanna take my money to the after-life." So he got his wife to promise him with all her heart that when he died she would put all the money in the casket with him.

Well, one day he died. He was stretched out in the casket, the wife was sitting there in black next to her closest friend. When the ceremony was over and just before the undertakers got ready to close the casket, the wife said, "Wait just a minute!" She had a shoe box with her, and she came to the casket to place the box inside. Then the undertakers locked the casket down and rolled it away.

Her friend said, "I hope you weren't crazy enough to put that money in the casket." She said, "Yes, I promised.

I'm a good Christian, I can't lie. I promised him that I was going to put that money in that casket with him."

"You mean to tell me you put every cent of his money in the casket with him?"

"I surely did," said the wife. "I got it all together, put it into my account and I wrote him a check."

*"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."* (1 Tim 6:10 NKJV)

*Almost Daily*  
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gatherings, and, in addition, the religious ceremonies connected with the feast. It was a time of enjoyment and also a time of dedication to the Lord and his services. It was exciting and the people anticipated the trip with great enthusiasm. In particular the Psalmist says he was glad when they said, "Let us go into the house of the Lord."

How do you feel about the house of the Lord? In his commentary on Psalm 122 Burton Coffman writes:

Moreover, there is a sequel to this. The Christian also is making a long and tedious journey to "Jerusalem." Not the earthly city as did they, "But we are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel" (Hebrews 12:22-24). Furthermore, there is an earnest, a thrilling and beautiful token of that heavenly homecoming in every assembly of the Lord's

believers when they have come to worship even now.

Are you glad when it is time to go to the Lord's house? An old joke comes to mind about two ways to greet the morning. One man says, "Good morning, Lord!" Another man says, "Good Lord, it's morning!" The first man expresses some enthusiasm for the day ahead, while the other reluctantly heads out the door. Do you look forward to the assemblies of the church or do you just drag yourself along because you feel like you have to go? Do you enjoy the fellowship of the saints or are you in a hurry to get away and back to things that you really enjoy?

*"Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands! Serve the Lord with gladness; come before his presence with singing."  
Psalm 100:1-2*

L S Gage

*Vitamin E 7/31/2014*

How often do you need God? If you give an honest answer, it goes without saying each of us need Him daily! Our relationship with God must be like a continuous, burning, inner fire that we feed through study, worship, and prayer. The moment you stop feeding a fire it is soon to go out, and the same principle applies in our relationship with God. If there comes a time in which we think those things are no longer necessary, we have

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begun forsaking God! In John 4, Jesus encounters a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, and a great exchange begins by Jesus simply saying to her, "Give me a drink." He instills in her that He alone can give her a "living water" by which she will never thirst again, but to receive this she must become a worshipper of Him. John 4:24 tells us, "God is a Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and truth." Without a doubt this woman is a changed person. So much so, she goes into town and shares what she has seen with others and they become worshippers themselves. Each time I read the account of John 4, it leaves me thinking, "What an amazing experience

that must have been for this Samaritan woman."

It's very common to hear of someone claiming to have had some type of supernatural experience, leading them to reason they have such a special relationship with God, that they no longer need to attend worship. I think today's society would do well in getting rid of the idea that one great experience can carry us for the rest of our lives! August 14<sup>th</sup>, 1977, was the day Brother Ralph Gage Baptized me for the "forgiveness of sins." I remember this day so vividly, and the wonderful feeling it gave me knowing I had "put on" Christ in Baptism. As great an experience as it was and the feeling it gave me, my journey was only beginning. The fire which began in me on that day, has been one which has needed to be fed each day for forty-one years.

Worship is a great privilege we have, and a special time we should look forward to with joy! In Psalm 122:1, David says, "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the House of the Lord.'" I recently read an article which was published in 2003 by the Religious New Service. It was about a study conducted which asked the question, "How important is your faith." 80% of those sampled said their faith was very important, but only 3 out of 10 said they attend worship regularly. I would love to

tell you that the last statistic surprised me, but truth is it didn't! Probably most of us know someone who was once very faithful in attendance, but for some reason has drifted away from the church. When people fall away from the Lord, it usually doesn't happen suddenly. At first it might be just occasionally, and then more frequent, until one day, where there was once a fire for the Lord, there is now just ashes. I think much of the time this happens because of forgetting what worship really is. Have we forgotten that the Lord is present? We offer up praise to God through song and prayers, and study from God's Word. Most importantly, we obey the command to reflect upon Christ's death and suffering. At worship we have a great opportunity to say to God, "I am so appreciative of what you have done for me." In Hebrews 10:25, Paul says we "are not to forsake assembling together," and he mentions that a reason is we are an encouragement to each other. We should assemble with the attitude, "God I am here to serve you, worship you, and to encourage my Brothers and Sisters in Christ." If we come with that attitude, it will not matter if there are 5, 500, or 5000 in attendance!

When David told Solomon, "If you seek God, He will be found by you," why did he then immediately tell him, "When you find Him, do not forsake Him"?

It is because David knew something that we must remember ourselves; when we have found God, or as Peter said, "Once we have tasted that the Lord is gracious," to continue receiving God's help, blessings, guidance and direction, we must remain faithful. If we will truly consider the cross and Jesus taking our place for our sins, forsaking the assembly of the church will not be an option.

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When you and I find God, we must never forsake Him, because He has promised, "I will never leave you or forsake you." He has shown us how He will be with us, by showing how He was been with others. In Acts Chapter 7, we find the account of the stoning of Stephen. As he is being stoned we are told, "But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, 'Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right of God.'" In Acts Chapter 5, Peter and others are arrested for preaching the gospel, and upon release from prison by an angel of the Lord,

eat meals as a family as often as possible and eat slowly and chew well to reduce over eating, as it takes 20 minutes for the brain to signal the body that it is full; drink water instead of sugary drinks or sodas. Flavor your water with citrus fruits such as slices of lemon, lime, or orange.

The Apostle Paul gave some advice many centuries ago that promises not only hope for our

physical existence but also for our spiritual eternity. It is good to be physically fit and it is even better to be spiritually fit. When you take that walk put the ear buds in your ears and listen to a Bible passage while you walk. That will bless both your body and your soul.

L S Gage

*Vitamin E 4/7/2016*

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## I Was Glad

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*"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.' Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem!" Psalm 122:1*

What excites you? And I am not talking about that car in front of you that is doing 20 mph in a 45 mph zone! That is not excitement...that is aggravation! No, what really excites you? What revs up your engine and makes you want to get up and go? What really brings out the enthusiasm in you?

The passage cited above could very aptly depict a worshiper who has traveled some distance for one of the three annual feasts in Jerusalem. We know that these were festive occasions when large crowds would

assemble in the Holy City. Many of those traveling to Jerusalem may have been in a company of family and friends. When Jesus was twelve years old his family went up to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. When the rest of the family started home Jesus remained behind. Joseph and Mary didn't realize he was missing until they had traveled for a day toward home. They had to go back to Jerusalem and search for him (Luke 2). We can understand how this can happen...I have even heard of parents leaving their kids asleep on a bench at church. In all the festivities Joseph and Mary just supposed he was somewhere in the company of travelers.

No doubt these feasts were times much like our Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. There would be feasting and family

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## Bodily Exercise

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*“For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.”*

*1 Timothy 4:8*

In a recent email from Connect With Kids the CDC highlighted a looming health crisis for children:

“This could well be the first generation of children (whose) whole life expectancies will be less than their parents. We have no record of this happening in the entire history of human kind.” - Dr. David Satcher, M.D., PH.D., Former Surgeon General, commenting in the Connect with Kids documentary, *The Biggest Generation*

Scientific research, academic studies and stories in the media all report increasing trends in overweight children and childhood obesity. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an estimated 12.5 million children ages 2 to 19 are considered medically obese; 16 percent of children age 6 to 19 years are considered overweight. Obesity has become the number one concern for parents, ahead of drug abuse and cig-

arette smoking. Obesity’s consequences are real and dangerous, including both medical and emotional outcomes that no parent wants for a child. Medical studies from the CDC show that obese children are more likely to have high blood pressure and cholesterol; breathing problems such as sleep apnea and asthma; joint problems; and gastrointestinal disorders such as gallstones, reflux and heartburn.

The CDC additionally reports that obese children and adolescents have a greater risk of social and psychological problems, such as being bullied, discriminated against and/or excluded from peer groups. This can lead to poor self-esteem and body-image issues, which often continue into adulthood.

The good news is that this trend can be reversed. Children who are active sleep better, eat better, are academically successful and are more likely to have a good self-image. A few suggestions for lifestyle changes are: Replace television-viewing with an active outside activity like walking; participate in a sport that focuses on doing your personal best and physical activity; do chores that require physical activity;

they are command to teach again. When questioned by the council as to the reason they did so, Peter replied, “We must obey God rather than men.”

David tells Solomon, “If you seek God, you will find Him, and when you have found Him, do not forsake the Him!” He wanted Solomon to keep that fire for doing the work of the Lord burning continuously. As for you and me, we must let God lead us on our journey through life, by study of His Holy Word, prayer, and being faithful in attending worship. May we let the words of the Apostle Paul to the Church at Corinth inspire us: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

Tom Bennett  
Spearsville, LA

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**“We must obey  
God rather than  
men.”**

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Lost In Emotion

© Josephine Zavala-Florez

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Sometimes I feel lost in a maze of emotions, where every direction feels like a dead-end street. I feel so alone in my search for an answer that I start to blame God for not meeting my needs.

But God never promised that life would be easy, for trials will come in different forms. But He did promise that He would never forsake us, and that we can still have peace in the midst of the storm.

God's love runs deeper than the deepest ocean, but He is not altered by the moods that we bring. For every problem, He has a solution. He is consistently working behind the scenes.

So whenever you feel like you're losing the battle and you want to just bow your head in defeat, remember, with God you are always the winner, for with Him by your side, you will never be beat!

Source: <https://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/lost-in-emotion>

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## Do Wednesday Nights Count?

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Have you heard the joke that's going around about the man who was waiting his turn on Judgment Day? He was standing at the end of a vast multitude of people when he heard a great commotion at the head of the line, near the pearly gates. As the noise gradually made its way down the line the man anxiously asked those in front of him, "What is it? What's it all about?" Soon those in front joyfully passed the word back: "They're not counting Wednesday nights! They're not counting Wednesday nights!"

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In every congregation, there are those whose spiritual thirst is easily quenched by an hour on Sunday morning...

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We chuckle with recognition at that joke, mainly because we know some who would be relieved to hear such news. In every congregation, there are those whose spiritual thirst is easily quenched by an hour on Sunday morning and thus they rarely, if ever, participate in any of the other services of the church.

The joke reflects a mindset that occasionally becomes explicit when I am asked, "How many times do I have to come?" Even

though the question may be sincerely asked, I would suggest that such an attitude betrays a mistaken, perhaps even legalistic, approach to church attendance.

If you are a once-a-week Christian (or a once-in-a-while attendee), and you are wondering how you would fare on Judgment Day, I would suggest that the real issue to consider is *priorities*, not performance. As you decide whether you will return for Sunday night worship or Wednesday night Bible study, ask yourself this question: **What will I be doing tonight INSTEAD OF worshipping God?**

If your alternative is more pressing or urgent than meeting with your brothers and sisters to worship God, then by all means, don't come to church. In the story of the Good Samaritan, Jesus pictured the priest and the Levite passing by the beaten and dying traveler, presumably on their way to Jerusalem to worship (Luke 10:30-37). Their example reminds us that church attendance by itself is worthless if we are not willing to live right before God and with others (Jeremiah 7:1-11), so if you are needed to care for a sick neighbor or friend, skip the assembly.

On the other hand, if you consistently look for excuses to

miss the fellowship of your brothers and sisters, only to find yourself sitting at home watching trivial television programs, you need to stop fooling yourself and rearrange your priorities.

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We don't attend any worship service or Bible class in order to "punch our ticket": we come to encourage others and be encouraged by them (Hebrews 10:24-25); we attend to grow spiritually because church is a place where we are encouraged to be less like the world and more like Christ (2 Corinthians 3:12-18); and most of all, we assemble to offer praise to our God with reverence and awe (Hebrews 12:28-29). My worship, like my giving, is to be the expression of a

grateful heart (Colossians 3:15-17), not a grudging duty to fulfill.

So, do Wednesday nights count? That depends. They do if you are hungry and thirsty for righteousness (Matthew 5:6); they do if you, like the earliest disciples, are "*devoted to the apostles teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer*" (Acts 2:42); and they do if you are looking for a place where you and your family will be encouraged to be less worldly and more spiritual.

Where will *you* be this Wednesday night?

Dan Williams  
Vice President for  
Church Relations  
Harding University

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*"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.' Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem!"*

*Psalms 122:1*

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