David’s Secret—Relationship of Reliance

Intro

How many of you are fans of the Olympic games? I get sucked in every time. Of course the sporting events, but also the athlete profiles. It’s always amazed me that I can be drawn into watching badminton or table tennis if there’s a good human interest story behind it.

Well, this summer during Jason’s sabbatical we’ve had a number of guest preachers, and as it turns out, many have focused on Old Testament characters. What if we were to summarize their profiles like those of Olympic athletes? We could say that some had success throughout their careers, while some trained hard but never won any medals. Some were disqualified for various reasons. Some started well, but stumbled before the finish line.

Today I’d like to focus on King David, and specifically the question, “What was the key to David being considered a man after God’s own heart?” Because that’s how David’s legacy is captured.

And when he had removed (Saul), he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, ‘I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will. Of this man’s offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised.’ Acts 13:22-23.

For a long time it’s puzzled me how someone who had fallen into such terrible sins as adultery and murder could be singled out as being a man after God’s heart. Have you wondered about that too? Clearly there must be more to the question of living a life that’s pleasing to God than simply avoiding sin.

My hope in looking at David’s life is to help us get insight into the crucial question, “Am I living my life in a way that pleases God?” Imagine the tragedy of reaching the end of our lives and finding that we’ve seriously missed the mark.

How we live our lives during the short time we have on earth determines our future for all of eternity. And the sobering thing is that it’s possible to convince ourselves that we’re on track, but in reality be completely off.

As an example, the Scribes and Pharisees thought they were living in a way that pleased God by focusing on keeping the letter of the law, but Jesus says,

This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.

Matt 15:8,9
Their way of worshipping the Lord is called “vain”. They were putting a huge effort into keeping the law and going through the right motions, but those things were worthless because their hearts were far from away from Him.

And Jesus goes on to makes the shocking statement in the Sermon on the Mount,

\[
\text{For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.}
\]

\[\text{Matt 5:20}\]

Sobering words, but we’re not left without hope of understanding how God would have us live our lives. Throughout the Bible we find strong clues in the lives of people that we can learn from and emulate.

**David: An Impressive Resume**

By any measure, David was an impressive figure. He rose from obscurity to serve as a musician in the king’s court, eventually replacing Saul as king. He defeated or subjugated Israel’s enemies, united the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, and led the people of Israel in worship of God. He was also a gifted and prolific songwriter and possibly the most-read poet in history. As if all of that weren’t enough, through his line came Jesus, the Messiah.

And who can help but be impressed by his leadership qualities? Have you ever been asked to fill out one of those personality questionnaires for a friend or colleague? How would you answer if I asked you to check which of the following applied to David?

- Courageous
- Bold
- Principled
- Charismatic
- Decisive

Those adjectives describe traits of great leaders, and I suspect that none of us would hesitate to check all of those boxes on David’s personality assessment form. As I spent time in the Psalms, though, I don’t think those were the keys to his being considered a man after God’s heart.

**Outside vs. Inside**

Let’s turn back the clock 3,000 years. Saul has been given notice that God has rejected him as king, and God sends Samuel to anoint the next king. You remember that there had been a lot of excitement when Saul had been chosen to be Israel’s first king because he was impressive looking...a head taller than everyone else.

When it came to Saul’s successor, God made it clear that he had a different kind of king in mind. God says to Samuel,
For the Lord sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” 1 Sam 16:7.

So though we’re told that David was handsome and had beautiful eyes, in other respects he apparently wasn’t anything special, and his appearance wouldn’t turn out to be the key to his success. Neither would other external factors like charm, charisma, wit, sense of humor, leadership ability, social position, or wealth.

I’ve got a box I’d like to show you. Let me give you a little background. It’s made from koa wood, which only grows in Hawaii. It has beautiful grain, is rare and expensive. It’s highly valued by musical instrument makers, especially the curly koa with figured grain. Now check out this other box. It’s made of pine wood from a shipping pallet. If I gave you a choice, which one would you select? Of course you’d go for the koa box, right? So in selecting a king for his people, Israel, why would God choose the equivalent of the pallet-wood box? He did it to send his people an important message, that the Lord doesn’t look on the outward appearance, he looks on the inside...the heart.

Picture the scene as Jesse brings his sons before Samuel to find out which one God has chosen to be the next king. First comes Eliab, a koa wood box if there ever was one. Samuel thinks, “Surely this is the Lord’s anointed.” But the Lord says to Samuel,

“Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”

The same scene plays out for the next brother, Abinadab, then Ramah, and the other brothers, seven in all. Samuel finally has to ask Jesse if there are any other brothers since God hadn’t chosen any of them. Jesse was all out of koa-wood sons, and it didn’t even occur to him to bring out the pallet wood son, but sure enough, God had selected the very ordinary shepherd boy, David, to be the next king.

Before continuing with David’s story, it’s worth stopping for a moment to consider your own box. When you look in the mirror, do you feel discouragement, disappointment, even shame? Does it take you an hour to find a Facebook profile photo that you’re not too embarrassed to post? You’re not alone...surveys consistently show that the vast majority of people don’t feel good about their appearance.

Then besides appearance, there are other external things like intelligence, athletic ability, social skills, job, and status. Or maybe you feel discouraged about being an introvert in extrovert’s world. Almost everyone has areas where they feel that they don’t measure up.
Comparing our boxes to others’ boxes could lead to discouragement, or even bitterness and anger toward God for making us this way, but what is God teaching us through David’s example about the importance of the external things? He’s making it clear that the secret to being a man or woman after God’s own heart doesn’t have to do with the outer trappings. Pine boxes are just fine, and actually have some crucial advantages. If David had been the obvious choice for king based on his external appearance, he could have easily fallen into patterns of pride and self-reliance. Instead, David clearly saw his neediness.

**Study of David in the Psalms**

So if David’s success in God’s eyes wasn’t the result of external trappings, what were the internal things that David “got right”? I poured through all of David’s psalms, (and about half of the psalms were written by him), looking for clues and patterns. I actually kept a tally of how many times the top themes showed up.

So here’s the top 10 list of behaviors I noticed from David’s own hand.

**<Slide 3>**

They’re in ranked order, and each one has listed the number of times it appeared.

- 36 He **cried out** to the Lord when surrounded by enemies or other distress
- 32 He turned to God as his **refuge**, his stronghold, his rock and strength.
- 30 He **sang for joy** to the Lord and **praised** him in song
- 18 He **prayed** fervently, and **called out** to God to hear and answer
- 14 He experienced God’s **love** and reflected it back to God
- 13 He remembered God’s **attributes**, like his righteousness, goodness and mercy and compassion
- 13 He **confessed his sin** and looked to God for forgiveness
- 11 He put his **trust and hope** in God
- 9 He gave **thanks** to God
- 9 He **waited** for God

**Two Themes**

Well that’s a long list, and I’m sure it’s way too much information to digest and act on. But let’s see if we can bring it into more focus by asking, “do any trends pop out”?

**<Slide 4>**

One that’s pretty obvious is that David was in times of trouble and distress...a lot. And these weren’t mild inconveniences that he could just power through on his own. No, throughout most of his life he was in very real danger of losing his kingdom or his life. And as a result he cried out to God for deliverance. He uses vivid metaphors for God...words like “refuge, stronghold, fortress, rock, and shepherd”. This theme is
echoed over and over, in fact in over half of David’s psalms. So we’ll call this first theme, “Reliance”.

The second theme was broader and harder to pinpoint at first. I slowly saw that it boiled down to a deep, intimate and loving relationship that David had with his Heavenly Father.

<Slide 5>

To put it simply, David passionately lived out the first and great commandment,

\[
\text{You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. Deut 6:5.}
\]

Did David get everything right? Absolutely not, but he clearly got the most important thing right...he loved God and expressed that love with enthusiastic praise. We’ll call this second theme, “Relationship”.

We’ll spend the rest of this sermon exploring these two themes, of “Reliance and Relationship” to understand key factors that contributed to making David the man he was, and to help us be men and women after God’s heart as well.

Reliance

Let’s dive into this first theme of reliance in more detail. I wish we could read through the dozens of psalms that include this theme, but here’s one representative example to give a sense of David’s experience of neediness and reliance on God.

<Slide 6>

\[
\text{I love you, O Lord, my strength.}
\]
\[
\text{The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.}
\]
\[
\text{I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.}
\]
\[
\text{In my distress I called upon the Lord; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears.}
\]
\[
\text{Psalm 18:1-4,6}
\]

Why does David use images like Refuge, Fortress and Stronghold? For David it wasn’t simply an intellectual exercise to ask for the Lord’s help. He could clearly see that he was powerless in the face of the threats against him, and truly needed God to save him. David didn’t brag about his own strength and courage...instead when he was up against Saul, he referred to himself in the humblest of terms, as a “dead dog” and a “flea”.
Looking back at our earlier list of David’s personality characteristics: courage, boldness, charisma, leadership, it has the sound of someone who could have been inclined toward self-reliance. But what do we see instead? David consistently threw himself at God’s feet, not just asking for help, but crying out for help. He saw his neediness and recognized that God was his only hope.

Just consider some of the desperate situations David was in:
- On paper he was completely outmatched by Goliath in hand-to-hand combat.
- Multiple times, Saul, his employer and king, tried to skewer him with a spear.
- Saul and his army hunted down David, who was on the run. His makeshift band of followers was often hungry, tired and discouraged.
- He had strong enemies in the form of neighboring countries out to destroy him.
- His own son mounted a sizeable rebellion to overthrow him as king.

David could clearly see that he was outmatched, forcing him to put all his trust in God, the One he knew could and would protect him. Especially later in life he could have been tempted to depend on his own battle experience, military tactics, weapons, or on foreign alliances to protect him, a common practice in the day, but instead he relied on God.

<Slide 7>

Now I know that the Lord saves his anointed; he will answer him from his holy heaven with the saving might of his right hand. Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. They collapse and fall, but we rise and stand upright.

Psalm 20:6-8

It’s interesting to place the descriptor “Reliant” next to the list of David’s attributes like bold, charismatic, and decisive. Does it seem out of place? But in God’s economy, they actually go together, like Paul’s conclusion,

For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

2 Cor 12:10

Jesus is the ultimate example of being strong but at the same time being completely reliant on his Heavenly Father. We read in John 5:

So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing.”
So reliance on God isn’t a sign of weakness…it’s meekness, one of the beatitudes we studied in the Sermon on the Mount.

It’s worth pausing here and asking how this principle of reliance on God in the midst of scary and threatening circumstances applies to us. Unlike David’s experience, it’s rare that we literally have to fear for our lives, but don’t we face terrors that feel almost as threatening? What is it for you? What’s the first thing that jumps into your mind?

It could be a fractured relationship. It could be a difficult or even hostile work environment. The threat of layoff. A son or daughter who’s falling farther and farther behind in school. A close relative with a life-threatening illness. Hundreds of things could make us come face to face with our helplessness. But we do have a refuge, a stronghold, a rock that we can cry out and cling to. God hears, he cares, and he can rescue us.

Fundamentally we can look at trials in one of two ways:

1. As interruptions from the pleasant, comfortable life that we think we deserve, or
2. As necessary things to keep us relying on God and in relationship with him.

Even though we often feel that peace and comfort should be the norm, we’re actually told to expect trials as something God will inevitably bring for our good,

*Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.*

1 Peter 4:12

I don’t want to leave the wrong impression that relying on God is easy or natural. It isn’t easy for us and it wasn’t easy for David. He often poured his heart out to God in his sadness, confusion and discouragement. Many times it felt that God had abandoned him and he couldn’t understand God’s lack of action on his behalf.

*<Slide 8>*

1 O Lord, rebuke me not in your anger,  
   nor discipline me in your wrath.  
2 Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am languishing;  
   heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled.  
3 My soul also is greatly troubled.  
   But you, O Lord—how long?  
4 Turn, O Lord, deliver my life;  
   save me for the sake of your steadfast love.  
5 For in death there is no remembrance of you;  
   in Sheol who will give you praise?
And just listen to David’s agonizing words in the next verses:

<Slide 9>

6 I am weary with my moaning; 
every night I flood my bed with tears; 
I drench my couch with my weeping.  
7 My eye wastes away because of grief; 
it grows weak because of all my foes. 

Psalm 6:1-7

In David’s case, he found his source of strength in God alone. Friends failed him, family failed him, everything failed him at some point, but the one thing he ultimately never lost was his reliance on God for his daily strength, comfort and help.

So to review where we’ve come so far, David being a man after God’s own heart doesn’t seem to be explained by external things like his looks or personality traits or even his great accomplishments for God. When we look to his own writings in the Psalms, we see a strong theme that David faced almost continuous threats from very scary enemies, causing him to rely on God to provide refuge and help.

**Relationship**

Now let’s transition from the first theme of Reliance to the second theme of Relationship.

<Slide #10>

What does it even mean to have a relationship with God? I remember hearing the Gospel for the first time as an 18 year-old and being strongly drawn by the hope of an actual relationship with God. What an exciting and liberating prospect compared to the dry rule-keeping kind of religion I’d experienced up to that point. But at the same time it was confusing...how was it possible to have a relationship with a God who couldn’t be seen or heard? And was it supposed to be like a peer friendship or something else?

Let’s start by thinking about healthy human relationships in general. I was struck in reading about David’s life that he experienced with God many of the same things that people do in deep human relationships. What do you do when you love someone?

- You tell them that you love them.
- You want to spend lots of time with them.
- You talk with them about real things.
- You listen to what they say.
- You learn from them.
- You want to know all about them.
- You’re thankful for them and tell them so.
You often put their desires above your own.
You’re excited to tell others about how amazing they are.

Looking back over this list, it’s more clear how we can have a relationship with God. These are exactly the kinds of things we see in David’s life. He told God he loved him. He spent time getting to know him through frequent prayer and meditation. He was genuine in expressing his feelings to God. He delighted in learning the Law...not just understanding God’s restrictions, but also as a way to know God’s heart better. He gave thanks to God. He submitted to him. He was excited to tell others about him. He depended on Him. In short, his relationship with God had many of the same characteristics that we enjoy in deep human relationships. In terms of the question of how David related to God, it wasn’t a peer relationship...maybe a closer parallel (and one often used in Scripture) would be that of a rescued adopted son.

Another way our relationship with God is like healthy human relationships, is that it can’t be coerced or forced. Jesus tells us in Revelation 3:20,

<Slide 11>

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

Rev 3:20

The Lord invites us into relationship with himself. He stands at the door and knocks...he doesn’t force his way in. Our choice is whether or not we choose to open the door and let him in.

Notice what happens if we do let him in...it says that we share meals together. This is another way of saying that we enter into close relationship. We talk about real things, we laugh, we cry, we share life together.

I’d always taken this as a salvation verse, referring to the first time we invite Jesus into our hearts. And of course it’s that, but it’s much more. It’s a decision that we make many times every single day. Will we invite him in or not?

I believe that a key reason that David was a man after God’s heart is that he lived his life with the lid of his box wide open. God had free access into his heart and vice versa. Of course there were times when David closed the lid, but for the most part, his heart was open and soft toward God. That gives God tremendous delight. As an aside, this picture of living with the door open has been helpful to me in understanding what must be meant by New Testament terms like “praying without ceasing”, “abiding in Christ” and “walking in the Spirit”. It’s a lifestyle of opening the door and giving God continuous access into our lives.

It would be obvious to ask, “Well who wouldn’t choose to open the door to this incredible God who loves me and wants to have a relationship with me?” But there are reasons
why we often close the door...why we’re reluctant or even scared to be in a relationship with Him. These choices are usually not even conscious, so they’re worth exploring.

First, there’s a very real possibility that if we enter into a dialog with God that he’s going to nudge us to do something we don’t want to do. We may intellectually know that he’s doing it for his bigger plan and for our good, but we just don’t want to go there.

Remember back to a time when you had the door open and you could almost hear God telling you to, for example, apologize to someone who’d hurt you deeply. You had no interest in hearing from the Lord on the subject, so you quietly closed the door. Or think back to a time when you felt like you should give money to someone in need, but you had other ideas for that money. So you shut the door.

Second, we can easily let busy-ness and the worries of life push God away so we barely even hear the knocking on the door of our hearts. It’s totally understandable in this busy age we live in that we would struggle in this area. At the same time, it’s interesting that David was able to find time to have a deep relationship with God. And I’m pretty sure that being a king made for a schedule that was at least as busy as yours or mine, yet he was still tuned into God’s knocking and kept the door open.

What else can cause us to shut the door? It can be due to our choice to sin. When Adam and Eve hid themselves from God after their fall in the Garden, it was the first time anyone had shut the door. They didn’t want to face God, so they hid themselves. David also closed the door of his heart when it came to his sin with Bathsheba. In his guilt and shame he couldn’t face God, so he closed the door and felt completely alone. After being accustomed to a lifetime of living with the door to his Father open, the separation from God was devastating. Listen to his description in Psalm 32:

<Slide 12>

1 Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
2 Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.
3 For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.
4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

Psalm 32:1-4

During his time of cover-up for his sin, he was essentially keeping the door to his heart firmly closed. He was guilty and ashamed by what he’d done and rather than facing God, he tried to conceal it.
The description of life without God’s presence is graphic….his bones wasting away, groaning all day long, his strength dried up as by the heat of summer. Finally it was too much for him. With the help of a nudge from the Prophet Nathan, he finally opened the door and allowed the Lord in. He confessed his sin and God forgave him, as we read in the next verse.

<Slide 13>

5 I acknowledged my sin to you,  
   and I did not cover my iniquity;  
I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,”  
   and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.  

Psalm 32:5

Not only did God forgive him, but amazingly, especially since this takes place in Old Testament times, God forgave him so thoroughly that this forgiven sin doesn’t even factor in when God evaluates him as a man after his heart. David himself writes the words we so often sing,

<Slide 14>

11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth,  
   so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;  
12 as far as the east is from the west,  
   so far does he remove our transgressions from us.  
13 As a father shows compassion to his children,  
   so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.  
14 For he knows our frame;  
   he remembers that we are dust.  

Psalm 103:11-14

There’s that picture again of relationship between a loving father and child. He loves us and is ready to completely blot out our sins so that he sees us as righteous. He is eager to resume fellowship with us and to refresh us from the weight of carrying sins on our own shoulders. And isn’t it crazy to think we can hide from God, who can see right into the box even with the lid closed? Yet we all do it. David of all people knew that it was pointless to hide from his loving Father....he wrote a whole psalm about it! Psalm 139 starts out:

<Slide 15>

1 O Lord, you have searched me and known me!  
2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
   you discern my thoughts from afar.  
3 You search out my path and my lying down  
   and are acquainted with all my ways.
4 Even before a word is on my tongue, 
behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. “Where shall I go from your Spirit? 
Or where shall I flee from your presence?

Well now I’d like return to the Rev. 3 passage. Just before the part about Jesus knocking at the door of our hearts, it has some sobering words.

<Slide 16>

15 I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! 16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. 17 For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. 19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. 

Rev. 3:15-17,19

A big part of David being a man after God’s own heart was that when it came to his love for God, to use Jason’s term, David was “all in”. Cold or hot. Lukewarmness wasn’t even in his vocabulary.

We recently got back from a wonderful mission trip to Mexico. Wonderful, but very hot. We were working outside and the high’s were close to 100 every day. I was thrilled to discover that it was possible to buy cold bottled water from the snack shack there at the family camp. The refrigerator was so cold that there was even some ice in the bottles of water. As I took a break from my project and reached for the bottle I could almost feel the refreshingly cold water gliding down my throat. I took a big gulp then realized I’d grabbed the wrong bottle...one that been sitting in the sun. Ughhh! Lukewarmness! God is just not interested in a lukewarm relationship with us. He loves us too much for that.

When we open the door to our hearts, we should know what Jesus expects. (The shorthand for this is “counting the cost”.) He wants our entire hearts to do his work in our lives. If we’re comfortable with life without him (“rich, prosperous, needing nothing” as we just read), we’re going to leave the door almost completely closed, but he won’t be content to leave it there. We might try to convince ourselves, “I’m not closing the door...see, it’s still ajar. I’ll give God a little bit of access...he can tweak the areas where I give him permission.” But God isn’t tame in that way....he will not be content to do light trimming if we need heavy pruning. He promises to reprove and discipline us, because he loves us.

At this point you may be thinking, “I do want a close relationship with God, but he often seems distant. I try to read the Bible and pray, but I just don’t feel the zeal that I once did. David must have had a special advantage since he always seems to be excited about praising God.”
But is that really true? David often felt confused by God not taking the action he was expecting, or certainly not as quickly as David would have liked. But when that happened, what did David do? Rather than closing the door, he talked with God about it. Here's one of many examples:

*<Slide 17>*

1 How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?
2 How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?
3 Consider and answer me, O Lord my God; light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,
4 lest my enemy say, “I have prevailed over him,” lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.

*Psalm 16:1-4*

It's a very short psalm. There are only two more verses, and look at the change that happens in David as he keeps in communication with God rather than closing the door.

*<Slide 18>*

5 But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.
6 I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.

*Psalm 16:5-6*

Keep in mind that in the Psalms when David seems to have an abrupt turnaround in his attitude, seeming to quickly move from desperation to trust with rejoicing, that the change likely didn’t come about instantly. There are hints of this processing time in several of David’s psalms.

*<32 min>*

**Summary and Application**

To summarize, then, we’ve seen that David was a man after God’s heart not because of any external factors, like physical appearance or personality traits. His frequent times of distress caused him to live in reliance on his Father. And most of all, David was a delight to God because he loved God and stayed in intimate relationship with Him.

*<Slide 19>*
When I started this process of trying to discover what made David a man after God’s heart I didn’t know where it would lead, but in hindsight it shouldn’t have been a surprise. The central theme of loving God and living in dependence on him is throughout the Bible, literally from Genesis to Revelation as we’ve seen today.

It’s everywhere in Scripture, and much closer to home it’s at the heart of our mission statement as a church. “We exist to glorify God by pointing the affections of all peoples to the all-satisfying person of Jesus Christ.”

I had considered closing with a checklist of suggestions for deepening your relationship with Jesus, but I don’t think that relationships really lend themselves to checklists. So instead I’d like this to be between you and Lord. Let’s pray as I suggest some seeds to focus your own prayers.

Lord, thank you for your steadfast love for me and reaching out to rescue me in my neediness. I want to open the door of my heart to you. Show me areas where I’ve been closing the door and give me courage to listen and follow you.

Lord, show me areas where I’ve been dissatisfied with the way that you’ve made me and the circumstances you’ve brought into my life. Help me to see that your plan for my life is perfect and not accidental in any way.

Finally, in the week ahead show me fresh ways that I can live in a way that will bring you great joy. Amen.