

Morning Watch Readings

2018

AUGUST



This Morning Watch Calendar follows the

Believe
His Prophets

Daily Bible Reading Guide.

Each chapter has a study verse to be used as the Youth
Morning Watch verse of the day.

Daily chapter summary statements are provided.

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August 1

Chapter: 2 Thessalonians 1
Theme: Rewards Despite Trouble
Study Verse: 2 Thessalonians 1:11

Statement: This letter was written only a few months after the last one. Apparently, someone brought news to Paul that some people thought Jesus was coming right away and were becoming fanatical. This makes this letter particularly appropriate for Adventists, as we try to maintain a balance between watching for Jesus to come, but not getting all excited or setting dates. As usual, Paul begins with commendations and prayers for the faithful people.

Response:

Prayer: *Dear Jesus, make me worthy of Your calling, and bring my desire for good to fulfillment.*



August 2

Chapter: 2 Thessalonians 2
Theme: Preparation for the Last Day
Study Verse: 2 Thessalonians 2:16

Statement: Did you know some people claim Paul didn't write this letter because he hadn't spoken of the “man of sin,” (that is, the antichrist) before this? But Paul, as a Pharisee, knew his Old Testament practically by heart, and Daniel had made very clear the kind of things that would happen before the Great Day of the Lord. Paul reminds the Thessalonians (and us) that before Jesus comes, the prophecies of the antichrist must first come to pass. What in this chapter gives you hope and comfort?

Response:

Prayer: *Father, we can see the Great Day approaching now. We can even see that “man of sin” at work in our world, in ways Paul could not have imagined. Keep us faithful, and safe from both apathy and fanaticism.*



August 3

Chapter: 2 Thessalonians 3
Theme: Final Instructions
Study Verse: 2 Thessalonians 3:16

Statement: It would be interesting to compare the final words of all the letters of Paul. Some things are common: he always encourages people to be faithful, do good, and follow Jesus. Some are individual: greetings to certain persons, or instructions that are particular to their situation. For example, in this case, he reminds them to keep away from foolish teachings. Which of these instructions is applicable to you and your companions, in your situation?

Response:

Prayer: *Dear Jesus, keep us faithful and active in our faith, and keep us in Your peace.*



August 4

Chapter: 1 Timothy 1

Theme: Letter to a Young Minister

Study Verse: 1 Timothy 1:5

Statement: Unlike most of the letters, this one is to a particular person, and in particular circumstances. Paul, as an older leader in the church, is giving advice to a young man who has been put in charge of the church at Ephesus. In some ways, then, it might not seem equally applicable to everyone. But as you read, notice both the things that are specific to ministry, and the things that are general, especially those that speak to you where you are now. What are three things you can personally take from this chapter?

Response:

Prayer: *Good Shepherd, You have given some to shepherd Your flock. Perhaps You are calling me to this. Whether You are or not, I know that You have work for me to do. Show me the counsel that I need.*



August 5

Chapter: 1 Timothy 2
Theme: Praying Together
Study Verse: 1 Timothy 2:5, 6a

Statement: This chapter goes back to basics again, as Paul so often does. Everything begins and ends with Jesus and His life and death for us. Then, using customs that are particular to Paul's time and place (and to some places on earth now), Paul urges everyone to pray together. The main point is the faithful prayer, not whether you hold up your hands or fold them, bow or stand. It isn't that it matters so much whether you are male or female (as Paul has strongly pointed out before), but that we must *all* be praying faithfully together. How do people pray where you live?

Response:

Prayer: *God of all, we lift up our hands and hearts to You. Forgive us, carry us, and make us faithful.*



August 6

Chapter: 1 Timothy 3
Theme: Church Management
Study Verse: 1 Timothy 3:16

Statement: This chapter, especially, goes into specific advice to pastors. Paul shows Timothy how to choose good elders and good deacons (the Greek word, *diakonos*, is gender neutral and simply means servant). As a young man, perhaps Timothy was timid of choosing and overseeing the work of people who might have been older than he was. Then Paul finishes with that early *credo*, giving the basic, foundational truths about Christ. Nothing matters more than that.

Response:

Prayer: *Dear God, make me faithful to whatever calling You give, and help me to respect church leaders.*



August 7

Chapter: 1 Timothy 4
Theme: Young Examples
Study Verse: 1 Timothy 4:12

Statement: Again, Paul is giving Timothy advice as a pastor, but you can take these words to heart as a young person. You may not be in a position of leadership, as Timothy was (and you can imagine how difficult it sometimes must have been for him) but you can be an example to all. Just remember how Jesus, at only twelve, was a shining example of godliness to the priests in the temple. Choose two things from this chapter: the thing you have the most difficulty with, and the piece of advice that will help you most.

Response:

Prayer: *Father God, I know that only You are the real Head of the church, and all authority flows from You. Sometimes You do call the young to lead the older. I have learned from little ones sometimes. Make me a good example.*



August 8

Chapter: 1 Timothy 5
Theme: Specific Instructions
Study Verse: 1 Timothy 5:22

Statement: Here are some more church management counsels. But we can learn a lot from them. What does this chapter teach you about respect for elders, for instance? It seems that Timothy might sometimes have to reprove even elders (we all make mistakes) but he was to do so with gentleness and respect. Don't you think that's good advice for anyone, of any age? How would you want to be reprovved when it's necessary?

Response:

Prayer: *God most high, You bring judgment only with love and compassion, remembering how weak and faulty we are. When I am rebuked, or when I must point some error out to another, help me be overflowing with love no matter what.*



August 9

Chapter: 1 Timothy 6
Theme: Final Counsels
Study Verse: 1 Timothy 6:12

Statement: Slavery, in that day, was a sticky subject. God has never approved of it, but it was not, then, what it became in later centuries. Still, God shows how to act with love even toward those who have unfair advantage. Paul speaks of greed and idleness, and how much better contentment is. What are the real riches mentioned in this chapter? How rich are you?

Response:

Prayer: *Jesus, the riches of Your grace and presence are enough for me! No matter how much or little I have of worldly possessions, teach me to be content and generous with what I have.*



August 10

Chapter: 2 Timothy 1
Theme: Paul's Last Letter
Study Verse: 2 Timothy 1:7

Statement: Paul wrote this last letter during his final Roman imprisonment. Earlier, he had been allowed to live in his own rented house, with only a guard. Now he was probably kept in the famous Mamartine Dungeon. (You can see a picture online.) Some say Peter was kept here, too, but it's doubtful, since it was used for political prisoners, which Paul was. As you read these words, bear in mind they are written by a man who suspects that he doesn't have long to live, but is determined that every day he has will be used to tell the gospel. How would it feel to be Timothy and get this letter?

Response:

Prayer: *Great Father, I am comforted knowing that You were with Paul, and are with everyone in the world who is in trouble, especially for Your sake. Make me strong in Your strength, as they were.*



August 11

Chapter: 2 Timothy 2
Theme: Advice
Study Verse: 2 Timothy 2:22

Statement: Paul reminds Timothy to keep faithfully preaching the truth, no matter how it is received. He compares the Christian life to the training of an athlete or soldier. Others might criticize or disagree, but the only person to try to please is the leader—and in this case, the Leader is Jesus. It only matters if we please Him, not anyone else. Notice how he says that even the strongest opponents must be reasoned with “gently.” The hope is that even they will reach repentance. Have you tried reasoning with an opponent?

Response:

Prayer: *Dear God, when I face argument, opposition, or mocking, keep my eyes on only You. Show me that You are pleased, and I can take anything else.*



August 12

Chapter: 2 Timothy 3
Theme: Faithfulness for Hard Times
Study Verse: 2 Timothy 3:15

Statement: Timothy knows, and Paul agrees (and you know, too) that hard times come to everybody. Paul's description of the last days is very recognizable, isn't it! Even without the stress of the whole world that comes in the last days, individuals face problems and persecutions. Paul spends the last half of this chapter laying out the things that will keep Timothy (and you) faithful and steady during those times. Make a list and consider which things you may need to strengthen.

Response:

Prayer: *Master, You have brought me through many hard times already, and I know there will be more. Help me to hold onto what I have learned, and to trust You.*



August 13

Chapter: 2 Timothy 4
Theme: Last Words
Study Verse: 2 Timothy 4:18

Statement: It's moving to read these words and know they were the last ones that Paul wrote in letter form, unless there are letters that have been lost over the 2,000 years from then to now. Familiar verses like 7 and 8 take on new meaning in this light. Paul knows his time is short. Notice the particular imagery he uses in verse 6. What do you think he means, "like a drink offering"? Why did he choose that image? You could look up drink offerings in the Old Testament and see what parallels you could draw.

Response:

Prayer: Faithful God, You were by Paul's side every single minute, and when he opens his eyes, Yours will be the first face he sees. I know You are by my side, too. Keep me faithful.



August 14

Chapter: Titus 1
Theme: Pure or Impure
Study Verse: Titus 1:15

Statement: Paul had left Titus on the island of Crete, in the Mediterranean, to take over the leadership and organization of the churches there. As in many of these pagan cities, there was controversy even among believers, stirred up by people who were either unconverted or only partially converted, and having to do with myths and genealogies and legalism. Paul tells Titus that even when things are good, impure people (any people whose hearts are not completely turned over to God alone) either misunderstand them or twist them, so that even truth seems false. What safeties against this sort of falsehood can you find in this chapter?

Response:

Prayer: *Dear God, it's true, the world can be confusing. Sometimes truth is mixed up with falsehood. Help me to be so familiar with Your Word that I recognize truth and falsehood wherever they are found.*



August 15

Chapter: Titus 2
Theme: Generational Responsibilities
Study Verse: Titus 2:11, 12

Statement: Throughout the Bible, God shows us that the young and the old have responsibilities toward each other. Young are to respect elders, and elders are to be patient and kind to the young. We have seen this doesn't mean blind obedience; Timothy was told not to allow older people to just brush him off because he was young. Where does true wisdom come from? How can you tell when someone, young or not-so-young, is wise?

Response:

Prayer: *Giver of all wisdom, show me how to be respectful and helpful to the elders in my life. May I store up some of their wisdom in my own heart and mind.*



August 16

Chapter: Titus 3
Theme: Godly Living
Study Verse: Titus 3:5
Statement: Not only are we, of any age, to be respectful and helpful to each other, but we are also to respect and submit to earthly authorities, so long as they don't command us in opposition to God's law, which comes first. Paul makes a clear distinction between the sinful natures we used to give into all the time, and the new natures we are being granted by the Holy Spirit. What are some of the differences?

Response:

Prayer: *Lord, I am so glad You are making me into a new creature, more and more like Jesus every day! Help me to be respectful to authority, without letting any human rise above You in my mind.*



August 17

Chapter: Philemon 1
Theme: A Personal Request
Study Verse: Philemon 1:4, 5

Statement: This brief letter is entirely a personal note to a friend. It doesn't seek to teach any doctrine. It simply intercedes on behalf of a servant who apparently used to be “useless” but is now converted, and Paul asks Philemon, his boss, to accept him “*as you would me.*” That's quite a request, about a slave, whom some would consider as not deserving of so much respect. It can be hard to read this letter, accepting slavery as a fact of life. We simply have to accept that God takes us where we are, and leads us closer to Him step-by-step. Paul wants Philemon to consider Onesimus as a brother and an equal now. How do you imagine Philemon responded?

Response:

Prayer: *My only Master, in some ways, we are all slaves in this world, subject to all kinds of circumstances over which we have no control. Make me subject only to You, and help me do all labor as if it were directly for You.*



August 18

Chapter: Hebrews 1
Theme: Jesus—First, Last, and Always
Study Verse: Hebrews 1:3

Statement: This book is a beautiful explanation of the old sanctuary system in the light of the fulfilled prophecies of a sacrificial Messiah. This first chapter, much of which is a collection of quotes from the Old Testament, centers on the full Godhood of Jesus. How many things can you list from the first four verses which are attributes that prove that Jesus is God?

Response:

Prayer: *Dear Jesus, thank You so much for coming to us to make all “the radiance of Your Father’s glory” plain to human beings!*



August 19

Chapter: Hebrews 2
Theme: One Father, All Brothers and Sisters
Study Verse: Hebrews 2:11

Statement: This chapter goes into more proofs of Jesus being fully God, and in authority over all things. Then it says He “is not ashamed to call us brothers”! That's amazing, isn't it? (Of course, it means sisters, too.) *You* are a little brother or sister of Jesus, who made the whole world, including you! How can you help your friends to realize this great truth?

Response:

Prayer: *Elder Brother Jesus, I want all those I love to be part of Your family. Show me how to help.*



August 20

Chapter: Hebrews 3
Theme: Our High Priest
Study Verse: Hebrews 3:14

Statement: Several chapters of this book will be devoted to the priesthood of Christ. This is the beginning of the discussion. Moses was faithful as a leader of his people, the passage says, and Christ also was faithful to His Father, and is the leader of *all* the people of God. But Moses wasn't a priest. He couldn't make sacrifices. Jesus can—in fact, He gave *Himself* as the sacrifice for all time! We will learn more as we read the rest of this book.

Response:

Prayer: *Great High Priest, You have made intercession for me, with Your own Holy Self. I am in awe.*



August 21

Chapter: Hebrews 4
Theme: True Rest
Study Verse: Hebrews 4:9

Statement: This is a beautiful side note on the beauty and fullness of God's promised rest. Since it is written to the Hebrews (that is, to the Jews), they already knew about the Sabbath, of course. But they had made it a burden instead of a rest. Here, we are told that it is meant to be a peaceful rest. Then that rest is used as an example of the *complete* rest we are invited to enter into by grace: to rest from our works as God did from His. What do you think this means?

Response:

Prayer: *Creator God, You made all things, then You rested. We hadn't done any of that work, yet You invited us to share Your rest. You even invite us to settle into full rest in Your work for our salvation. I accept!*



August 22

Chapter: Hebrews 5
Theme: The Perfect High Priest
Study Verse: Hebrews 5:9

Statement: Earthly high priests, no matter how faithful and godly they were, still had sins of their own to make atonement for, besides the sins of the people. When they made sacrifices, they were sacrificing for themselves as much as for the people. Not Jesus. He was Himself both the perfect High Priest and the perfect Sacrifice. It's impossible for human minds to fully understand. That's why it's compared to solid food, as opposed to the milk we give babies, which is easy to eat and digest.

Response:

Prayer: *Dear Jesus, at least I can fully take in the “milk” part of the gospel: You love me, You died for me, You save me, and I can just relax in Your love.*



August 23

Chapter: Hebrews 6
Theme: Baby Food
Study Verse: Hebrews 6:11

Statement: This is a fascinating passage. If you were asked to list the most basic “baby food” facts of the gospel of salvation, what would you list? Notice the four or five things that are listed here, in verses 1 and 2. They're kind of surprising, aren't they? For example, nowadays we seem to have trouble getting so far as “repenting (*repenting!*) from our works,” yet here that's considered baby food! We know we can't work for our own salvation, but do we really have to *repent* from trying to? What do you think?

Response:

Prayer: *Dear God, You are the One who has done, is doing, and will do all the work of saving souls. All I want is the chance to point a few wanderers toward You. And to live in Your light.*



August 24

Chapter: Hebrews 7
Theme: Melchizedek
Study Verse: Hebrews 7:25

Statement: This is a difficult chapter. Melchizedek was the priest to whom Abram (even before he became Abraham) paid tithes of all the spoil from his mission to rescue Lot and the others who had been captured. The main point in this chapter is simply that human priests are priests only for a period of time, but Jesus lives forever and is our High Priest forever. What would you like to tell your High Priest today? He is listening.

Response:

Prayer: *My High Priest, I love You. I want to talk to You about* _____



August 25

Chapter: Hebrews 8
Theme: God's Tabernacle
Study Verse: Hebrews 8:1, 2

Statement: If you wondered about the main point, here it is—just as we discovered in the last chapter, but laid out in so many words. Try rewriting verses 1 and 2 to say the same things, but in your own words. Jesus is the one and only High Priest in the *real* sanctuary—the one in heaven, which no human built. Even the one humans did build, according to the pattern given them by God, was only a pale picture of the real one, with real, living angels, and a real throne of God and a real mercy seat where we can go. Have you been there today?

Response:

Prayer: *Father God, I come to Your throne and bow in wonder and adoration. I know You have everything I need.*



August 26

Chapter: Hebrews 9
Theme: A New Covenant
Study Verse: Hebrews 9:11, 12

Statement: Just as the earthly tabernacle was only a shadow of what was to come, so the old covenant was only a shadow of better things. Always, from before the foundation of the earth, God's plan had been to send a perfect Redeemer to put Himself in our place. The sanctuary system was given to keep God and His promises in the people's minds, and to point forward to that perfect sacrifice and perfect High Priest. He has come! Yet...in the very last verse of this chapter, we are still waiting...What are we waiting for?

Response:

Prayer: Dear Jesus, Thank you for your promise to me, and everyone who believe in you. Please help us to accept the Gift you gave us when you died on the cross, in Jesus name I pray, amen.



August 27

Chapter: Hebrews 10
Theme: One Sacrifice
Study Verse: Hebrews 10:12

Statement: Just one! The Jewish high priest had to make atonement every day, over and over, and then especially on the great Day of Atonement. Jesus was sacrificed just once, for all people, for all time. No more is necessary. Except...that we say yes! In verses 19-25, what are the things we are told to do, to live in that new reality? Why do we have to enter into the Holy Place with Jesus in order to accomplish these things?

Response:

Prayer: *Dear Jesus, I thank You for the clean heart You have given me, and I draw near to You with full confidence that You hear me and love me.*



August 28

Chapter: Hebrews 11
Theme: Our Great Examples
Study Verse: Hebrews 11:1

Statement: Here is the great Faith Chapter. If anyone thinks that in the Old Testament, people were saved by their obedience to the law, all they have to do is read this chapter. *By faith* every single one of these Old Testament heroes—men and women, young and old, great and less-known—only by faith did they live and move and act for God. Only by faith were they saved. Which are your favorites in this chapter?

Response:

Prayer: *God of the unseen, help my faith to grow, to be strong to grasp Your promises and never let go.*



August 29

Chapter: Hebrews 12
Theme: Make the Weak Strong
Study Verse: Hebrews 12:12, 13

Statement: This chapter speaks of the discipline of loving fathers, which no one (least of all the father) enjoys at the time, but which helps us grow. Yet, lest anyone think it means to be harsh and stern, look at the study verses. This is what true, loving discipline looks like. Of course, sternness is sometimes needed, when someone is determined to rebel, but most of the time, people are trying, and they need encouragement, not punishment. What does this attribute of God mean to you?

Response:

Prayer: *Lord, if You ever need to be stern with me, please do. But I'll try to follow closely, so that all I'll need is a gentle word and a strengthening hand when I start to stray.*



August 30

Chapter: Hebrews 13
Theme: Jesus is the Same, Now and Always
Study Verse: Hebrews 13:20, 21

Statement: As always, this letter ends with personal exhortations and encouragements. People are told to be hospitable (when Abraham was, he made dinner for angels!) They are told to help and encourage each other, and to be faithful in their marriages. Above all, they are assured that Jesus has everything they need, and will strengthen them to do all that pleases Him. Which are your favorite parts of the chapter?

Response:

Prayer: *Dear God, I want to live as the kind of person described in this chapter. I am grateful I have Your strength and love to depend on.*



August 31

Chapter: James 1
Theme: True, Tested Faith
Study Verse: James 1:2

Statement: We don't know for sure which James wrote this book, but it was clearly a leader in the church, and could possibly have been Jesus' brother! This is a man who is all about practical Christianity. He says it's all well and good to call yourself a Christian, but if your life doesn't match your words, there's no point. List three things in this first chapter that you think are particularly useful to you in strengthening your faith.

Response:

Prayer: *Dear God, please make me focused and clear, eyes on You, and not double-minded or unstable.*

