

Morning Watch Readings

2018
JULY



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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July 1

Chapter: 2 Corinthians 8

Theme: Giving Hearts

Study Verse: 2 Corinthians 8:7

Statement: Paul holds up the example of one church to another. The churches in Macedonia, even though they were going through very hard times themselves, begged to be allowed to send offerings for the relief of other churches in trouble. Paul asks the Corinthians to see this generosity of spirit as a challenge to them to do the same. Do you give even when it feels you have little to share? How does it make you feel?

Response:

Prayer: *Giving God, You made us like You, and when You live in us, we become eager to give and to help, just as You are.*



July 2

Chapter: 2 Corinthians 9

Theme: The Blessings of Generosity

Study Verse: 2 Corinthians 9:8

Statement: What a surprise! The Corinthians now learn that, just as Paul has bragged about the Macedonians to them, he was also bragging to the Macedonians about *them!* He goes on to give more detail about the kind of life blessings that follow generosity. The fact is, if we are selfish, it doesn't make us have any more plenty. It only makes us unhappy. But if we give lovingly, we find that God meets all our needs. How have you found this to be true in your life?

Response:

Prayer: *Dear Jesus, You gave so much You even gave Your life! Thank You for all the blessings You give me, and help me to share them happily.*



July 3

Chapter: 2 Corinthians 10

Theme: Divine Weapons

Study Verse: 2 Corinthians 10:4

Statement: When the world wages war, blood flows. When professed Christians wage war, often hearts break. But when true Christians wage war, it is *only* against demonic powers in the world, *never* against other people. There is a whole sermon in verses 3-6. Make a list of the kinds of things Paul says spiritual weapons can overthrow. We will be learning more about spiritual warfare in his future letters, so be thinking about the things in and around your life that you would like to conquer.

Response:

Prayer: *Heavenly Commander, Yours is the only army I want to belong to. Teach me carefully how to wage spiritual warfare, when, and against what. Let me never hurt a brother or sister with “friendly fire.”*



July 4

Chapter: 2 Corinthians 11

Theme: True and False Boasting

Study Verse: 2 Corinthians 11:2

Statement: Apparently there are other preachers pretending to preach a “gospel,” but only to gain money or power. They are mocking Paul and claiming to be more qualified to preach. Paul points out that if he wanted to boast of being a “super Jew,” (as in fact he used to do) he could. He lists all his so-called qualifications for conceit. But he says he only wants to boast of his weaknesses and that God still loves him even though he doesn't deserve it. Have you ever gone through any of the trials Paul lists here? How has God held you through any and every pain and trouble?

Response:

Prayer: *Great God, You are all I have, and all I need. I have nothing to boast of, but I love You and I am forever grateful for Your love to me.*



July 5

Chapter: 2 Corinthians 12

Theme: Strength in Weakness

Study Verse: 2 Corinthians 12:9

Statement: There are obviously still things that Paul worries about, as far as the Corinthians go. Their faith still falters, and they still are inclined to follow after people who claim to be powerful instead of sticking to the simple gospel they have been taught. Paul points out that it is precisely his weaknesses that cause the power and glory of God to shine forth. That's true for all of us. What weaknesses have you seen God shine through? What does verse 9 mean to you?

Response:

Prayer: *Merciful God, You are strength when I need it, power when I am fainting, and love at all times. Help me to live in Your love and let it shine.*



July 6

Chapter: 2 Corinthians 13

Theme: Final Injunctions

Study Verse: 2 Corinthians 13:11

Statement: Paul finishes his letter, first with some stern warnings, in case there are still some who have not repented of sins he rebuked earlier, then with a return to love and compassion. He mentions a third letter here, which has been lost to time. Some believe that this third letter is the one in which he was even more stern and disciplinary than he was in 1 Corinthians, but we don't know for sure. Still, verse 11 by itself, if followed, would solve all other problems. Would you agree? Why or why not?

Response:

Prayer: *Dear Jesus, as You led Paul, lead me. As you worked with those who sinned and strayed, but repented, work with Me. I don't want to leave You—ever!*



July 7

Chapter: Galatians 1

Theme: Called by God

Study Verse: Galatians 1:3-5

Statement: In this letter, Paul must fight strongly to prevent the Galatian churches from falling into complete apostasy. Often we see apostasy as being turning away from God's law; that was what had threatened the Corinthians. But apostasy can also be turning to laws instead of to God. In this case, some people are insisting that carefully keeping all Old Testament Jewish laws and ceremonies is the only way to be saved. This is precisely the view Jesus came and spent His life combating. In this first chapter, Paul sets forth his credentials—why should they listen to him? Because his call came direct from God, not from any human or any church or synagogue.

Response:

Prayer:

Lord, let me be as faithful in defending Your total grace and forgiveness, and in fighting against a works-based religion as Paul was.



July 8

Chapter: Galatians 2

Theme: Paul and Peter

Study Verse: Galatians 2:20

Statement: In this chapter, Paul tells a story of a time when he even rebuked Peter. Knowing what we do of Peter, and of his fall on the night Jesus was arrested, it's easy to see why he might be afraid of being too lenient and losing his salvation. He had fallen prey to those who insisted that all Old Testament laws must be kept, and Paul had to speak sternly to his face. We can know, though he doesn't complete the story here, that Peter recognized that Paul was right. This shows how even experienced leaders in the church can make mistakes, but can also lovingly set each other straight—and can listen to each other. Reread verses 15-21. What is your response?

Response:

Prayer: *Gracious God, You are so patient with us! Help us to be patient with each other, too. And if someone needs to rebuke me, help me to listen humbly and be teachable.*



July 9

Chapter: Galatians 3

Theme: One in Christ

Study Verse: Galatians 3:28

Statement: Again, as in Romans, Paul lays out his understanding of salvation by grace alone. He speaks to a misconception that is common to this day. People think, “Okay, we're saved by grace. Now, to show our gratitude to God, we have to work hard to be perfect.” What does Paul say to this attitude in verse 3? The last few verses of this chapter are some of the most important in the New Testament. What do you think would happen in your home, school, church, and community of those verses were truly lived?

Response:

Prayer: *God of grace, You have saved me—all by Yourself, with no help from me, and I said Yes! Now help me to live, still all by Yourself, with only cooperation and trust from me.*



July 10

Chapter: Galatians 4

Theme: Free Children and Heirs

Study Verse: Galatians 4:6

Statement: Would you rather be a son or daughter, or a slave? Of course, you would rather be a child of the King! What an inheritance! Paul explains that all people, not just Jews, are spiritual children of Abraham, and more importantly, children of God. When you read verse 6, be sure to say daughter if you are a daughter. What have you inherited already from your kingly heavenly Father? What are you looking forward to inheriting? Do you struggle with some of these same issues, worrying that you will not be perfect enough? Which verses give you the most help and comfort?

Response:

Prayer: *Father, Abba, keep me safe and trusting, just like a tiny child riding on a parent's back, perfectly content that he or she will not fall.*



July 11

Chapter: Galatians 5

Theme: Walk by the Spirit

Study Verse: Galatians 5:14

Statement: The most surprising thing about this controversy is that these are not bad things that Paul is speaking against. It's not as if he's saying *not* to keep the law. It's that we *must not* depend on that law-keeping to save us. In the second half of this chapter, he reminds his listeners that although they are free, they are not to use that freedom to do evil. If they did, they would immediately fall straight back into slavery under the devil. We are free—free to love, free to trust, free to do more good than we ever thought possible back when we were struggling to *Be Good Enough*.

Response:

Prayer: *Father, Your goodness is enough for me. It is all I need, and all I want. May Your Spirit shine through me in love and goodness, without any worrying on my part. Just clinging.*



July 12

Chapter: Galatians 6

Theme: Restoring Each Other

Study Verse: Galatians 6:1

Statement: So, what should we do if we see someone falling into either the sin of “doing whatever we want because we’re free” or the sin of “being good, being good, trying hard to be good enough so God will love me”? Paul shows the balancing act. Try to restore the person with gentleness and compassion. You might be the one to fall next, so treat that brother or sister as you hope to be treated. But also, be cautious, because you might fall into their sin if you’re *too* “gentle” about it. It’s hard. In fact, it’s impossible. Unless, of course, you are listening moment by moment to the leading of the one and only One who really *knows* that person and how to reach them.

Response:

Prayer: *Spirit of reconciliation, walk with me. Show me exactly what to do, what to say, when to keep quiet. Remind me it's You doing the reconciling—I'm just Your servant.*



July 13

Chapter: Ephesians 1

Theme: Glorious Grace

Study Verse: Ephesians 1:3

Statement: Paul wrote this letter while he was in prison in Rome, and scholars think that he wrote it not only to the churches in Ephesus, but to the whole church, all over the world. That makes it especially applicable to us today (though of course all the Bible is). It is one of Paul's most beautiful letters. The first half of this chapter is a lyrical restatement of the gospel, Paul's lifelong devotion. It is hard to choose a study verse. Find your favorites and write them down to learn. How do you think someone in prison could write such a cheerful, blessing-filled letter?

Response:

Prayer: *Lord of life, You have called me to be Your child, and given me blessings so rich I can't even describe them. Let me live in Your light.*



July 14

Chapter: Ephesians 2

Theme: From Death to Life

Study Verse: Ephesians 2:4, 5

Statement: In this chapter, Paul first looks back to how dead in sin we all were until Christ came into our hearts. Then he looks forward, saying that we *are already* seated with Christ in heavenly places, now! Give some thought to that. How can it be true, when Jesus hasn't come yet? Finally, Paul reminds his readers that Jew and Gentile are all one in Christ, and that all together, believers all over the world are being built into a dwelling place fit for the God of heaven. Astonishing, isn't it?

Response:

Prayer: *God of all, You have made all Your children of one blood physically, but we have created barriers of tribe and race and caste. So You came and reunited us again, as You had planned from the beginning. Make my life today a picture of that unity.*



July 15

Chapter: Ephesians 3

Theme: Glorious Riches

Study Verse: Ephesians 3:16, 17a

Statement: Paul just can't stop testifying about the beauty and riches of God's grace. Once again, it was hard to choose a study verse. Look at the first part, where Paul explains why he was chosen specifically as the apostle to bring Jew and Gentile together forever. Then look at the middle part, where he speaks of the plan of salvation through the ages. We've heard about it for 2,000 years now—imagine how thrilling it was when it was brand new to the people! Finally look at the end, where Paul prays for the Ephesians—and for you!

Response:

Prayer: *Dear Lord, I too pray that I will be able to grasp the enormity of Your love, and be filled to the brim with the fullness of You!*



July 16

Chapter: Ephesians 4

Theme: Unity through Diversity

Study Verse: Ephesians 4:3

Statement: For the third time, Paul lays out the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and once again, perhaps even more clearly, he makes the point that we are *all one in the Spirit* at the very same time that *we are all different in gifts, abilities, and interests*, and **that's a good thing!** Christians, Seventh-day Adventists among them, waste far too much time trying to make everybody all the same. God does not want that. He wants you and me to figure out which gifts He is giving us...and *use them for Him!*

Response:

Prayer: *Gift-Giver, I want to learn what You want me to do, and then to learn to do it well. Then all I want of life is to give those gifts right back to You in loving service.*



July 17

Chapter: Ephesians 5

Theme: Some Instructions

Study Verse: Ephesians 5:1, 2

Statement: Here Paul gets down to basics again. Don't you love how he pictures Christians as "dearly loved children"? There are two main ways of trying to obey God. One is by thinking of God as stern and ready to be angry at every mistake. We can worry all the time about being good enough. The other is to think of Him the way a toddler thinks of her daddy, expecting Him to be excited over her first steps, and pick her up the second she falls, and kiss her bruises. What difference does it make to our Christian obedience, which way we think of God?

Response:

Prayer: *Abba, Father, I know You rejoice when I do what You ask, because Jesus said so. And I know You pick me up and comfort me when I fall, because Jesus said that, too.*



July 18

Chapter: Ephesians 6

Theme: God's Armor

Study Verse: Ephesians 6:10, 11

Statement: This is a great passage! Did you notice, it doesn't say to put on the armor of a Christian, it says to put on *God's* armor! That would be some pretty powerful armor, right? You'll find it wonderful to pray through each piece, imagining Jesus putting it on you before you begin your day. Pay attention to an important fact: all the pieces of armor are protective and defensive except one—the sword of the Spirit, and that's the Word of God, and never to be used against another person (verse 12). So don't think of God's armor as warlike. It's to protect you from the devil and his wiles, and to help you protect others, too.

Response:

Prayer: *Mighty Commander, I sign up for Your army and no one else's! Show me how to use Your word to protect myself and all those I love.*



July 19

Chapter: Philippians 1

Theme: No Chains on the Gospel

Study Verse: Philippians 1:9, 10

Statement: Do you remember when Paul had the vision of a man from Macedonia pleading for him to come? He, Silas, Timothy, and Luke went right away, and went to Philippi in Macedonia. There they met the women worshiping by the river, and there, the first place in Europe, the gospel was preached. Over ten years have passed, and Paul is in prison in Rome when he writes one of his most loving letters to the Philippians. He must know they are worried about him, because he assures them that even his imprisonment has advanced the gospel. Could you witness to your jailers?

Response:

Prayer: *God of grace, You were with Paul and You are with me. Let my life shine to Your glory as his did..*



July 20

Chapter: Philippians 2

Theme: Shine Like the Stars

Study Verse: Philippians 2:14, 15

Statement: Paul says he is able to be humble no matter what circumstances he is in, because Jesus did the same thing—only more! If the King of heaven could come down and be a peasant, then Paul the apostle could be a prisoner. He asks his friends to “have the same mind as Jesus.” How can we have that same mind? By asking Him to dwell within us. Then we will have the same concern for others that Paul shows in his letters, sending personal greetings, promising to send friends home to them, just because they were worried.

Response:

Prayer: *Dear God, give me that humility and that care for others that You brought, and passed on to Your servant, Paul*



July 21

Chapter: Philippians 3

Theme: Heavenly Citizenship

Study Verse: Philippians 3:20

Statement: Still there are some who insist that the letter of the law leads to salvation. Paul speaks sternly of them. He lists, again, his own earthly honors—if anyone had human reasons to boast, Paul does. But what does he consider all those earthly honors, compared to the truth of the gospel? Garbage! Would you consider your school or church honors, the Pathfinder goals you have reached, any awards you have won in your town, all garbage in comparison to Jesus?

Response:

Prayer: *Jesus, I do my best in all I do, and I appreciate and value earthly honors, as did Paul. But the only goal really worth striving for is a place at Your side in heaven.*



July 22

Chapter: Philippians 4

Theme: A Fortress of Peace

Study Verse: Philippians 4:5, 6

Statement: Here is one of the loveliest chapters in the whole Bible. If ever you are anxious, worried, or lonely, you will find comfort in Philippians 4. If you are finding your mind distracted by the speed and digital craziness of our world, look to Philippians 4. If you have an argument or conflict with a friend, look to Philippians 4. If you feel poor and needy, you will find comfort here. Verse 7 is especially touching—the promise that peace will guard your heart and mind is just like promising a fortress of God's love and care surrounding your soul. Nothing can touch you there.

Response:

Prayer: *God of peace, You surround my soul, whether it is light or dark, whether I am happy or sad, poor or rich, alone or with a crowd, Your arms are my fortress walls.*



July 23

Chapter: Colossians 1

Theme: Jesus, First, Last, and Always

Study Verse: Colossians 1:15, 16

Statement: No one knows exactly how the church at Colossae began, but Paul learned that there was a dangerous mixture of truth and falsehood spreading through them. We will see details of it as we study this book, but you can see that Paul begins first by affirming the good things he knows of their faith, and then by restating in the strongest possible terms that it's all about Jesus. Jesus is the visible image of an invisible God, and He is the one through Whom and for Whom all things were created. That's the basis for all truth.

Response:

Prayer: *Creator Christ, let me never lose sight of the fact that You were first, You will be last, and You are the Alpha and Omega, the A and Z, of my life.*



July 24

Chapter: Colossians 2

Theme: Heavenly vs. Earthly Forces

Study Verse: Colossians 2:6, 7

Statement: In this chapter we see the first hints of the untruths floating around in Colossae. There are apparently people who believe that angels are worthy of worship and bring salvation. Paul was very clear that the only gospel is the one of Jesus. He is our only Savior, and He alone is worthy of worship. At the same time, either those same false teachers or others were teaching (again!) that life had to be lived by rigid rules—Don't do this and don't do that! Paul repeated, live in the freedom of the Holy Spirit. Don't let people take you back into spiritual slavery.

Response:

Prayer: *Jesus, You are the fullness of the Godhead. You have founded me, You are building me up, and You will finish what You have begun. Don't let me lose sight of You for any human philosophy.*



July 25

Chapter: Colossians 3

Theme: How to Live a Holy Life

Study Verse: Colossians 3:12

Statement: Instead of following a long list of do's and don't's, Paul says, here is how to live. First, verses 3 and 4, die with Jesus and set your mind on Him. Next, verses 5 through 11, throw off all your old sins and habits, including the temptation to divide people into castes or cliques. Finally, verses 12 through 17, like a beloved child, put on love and gentleness and all the lovely garments of salvation bought for us by Jesus. Then you'll see the loving family relationships described in the last part of the chapter.

Response:

Prayer: *Father God, we are all one family in You. It sounds so beautiful when it's laid out like this—it's only when I look with the eyes of my sinful nature that I'm tempted to be mean and angry. Keep my eyes on You!*



July 26

Chapter: Colossians 4

Theme: Personal Greetings

Study Verse: Colossians 4:5

Statement: As usual, Paul ends with personal greetings and instructions to individuals, but notice two things—he asks for prayer for himself as he seeks to spread the gospel even in his chains, and he advises that we all be “wise” in how we treat people outside our own churches and communities, “making the most of every opportunity.” In other words, don’t just avoid people who believe differently. Watch for ways to show them love, and increase their curiosity about Jesus. What are some ways you could do that?

Response:

Prayer: *Dear God, give me wisdom in how I deal with people who don't think or act as I do. Help me to be loving toward them, so they might want to know about You.*



July 27

Chapter: 1 Thessalonians 1

Theme: Affirmations

Study Verse: 1 Thessalonians 1:3

Statement: This letter may be the very first Bible book written. Only James could possibly be older. It was probably written from Corinth, and is generally considered to be the first preserved letter from Paul. This first chapter is heartwarming; Paul simply overflows with thanksgiving to God for the faith and compassion of the people in Thessalonica. Imagine how it would feel if your conference president wrote a letter to your church saying you were an example to your whole country!

Response:

Prayer: *Dear Father, if our faith shines in the darkness, it is all due to You and Your love and faithfulness.*



July 28

Chapter: 1 Thessalonians 2

Theme: Memories

Study Verse: 1 Thessalonians 2:13

Statement: Paul remembers when he first came to this area. It was right after he and his companions were harried from Philippi, and the loving and eager reception they received in Thessalonica was balm for their hearts. When missionaries visit in your area, how can you be an encouragement to them, after the hardships and sometimes opposition they have faced in other places?

Response:

Prayer: *Lord, Your people travel near and far, facing all kinds of trials and tribulations for Your sake. Help me always to be loving and welcoming, part of the solution rather than part of the problem.*



July 29

Chapter: 1 Thessalonians 3

Theme: Blessings

Study Verse: 1 Thessalonians 3:13

Statement: Paul had longed to go visit, himself, but when he couldn't, he sent Timothy. He was worried that he might get a sad report, but instead, Timothy came back with exciting news about the faithfulness, love, and diligence of the Thessalonians. Why do you think it helped Paul so much in his own trials to learn that these others were being faithful? Do you think it helps others when you are faithful?

Response:

Prayer: *Father, keep me faithful. Help me be an encouragement to all with whom I come in contact.*



July 30

Chapter: 1 Thessalonians 4

Theme: Instructions, and a Passage on the Coming

Study Verse: 1 Thessalonians 4:16

Statement: Paul hardly has anything he needs to teach the Thessalonians. He says they are already following all his instructions in godly living, and that God Himself has taught them to be loving. All he can do is ask them to keep up the good work. But apparently some are confused about the resurrection, so he writes a passage that is beloved to this day. It would be encouraging to you to learn the whole passage from verse 16 to 18. How does it make you feel?

Response:

Prayer: *Oh, Jesus, I can't wait for You to come again! Please hurry! I am so looking forward to seeing You, and to seeing those I have lost to death.*



July 31

Chapter: 1 Thessalonians 5

Theme: Final Instructions

Study Verse: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Statement:

Statement: Paul reminds his readers that they already know Jesus is coming again, so even though we don't know when, we won't be surprised as others will be. In the meantime, it's our job to tell as many others as possible, so they, too, will be ready. Then he gives some final instructions. And, lest anyone think that he's laying a bunch of rules on them, he repeats his constant theme, in verses 23 and 24: *God is faithful, and He is the one who will do it.*

Response:

Prayer: *Master, I know You have begun the good work in me, and that You will bring it to completion, so that I will be ready when You come again.*

