



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

—Isaiah 66:13



Christian Science Sentinel  
**Bible Lens**

**Love**

July 27–  
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## from the Responsive Reading

### Isaiah 63:16, 19

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

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

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

## from Section 1

### 5 | I John 3:1

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

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

## from Section 2

### 6 | Psalms 143:7

*Hear me speedily, O Lord: my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.*

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

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

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

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

While the English word *dwell* can allude to a temporary condition, the Greek verb used here (*menō*) commonly portrays a steadfast, unwavering state. The writer is depicting

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

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

absolute consistency and continuity in our relationship to God and with other people.

from **Section 3**

## 13 | Matthew 7:7

*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*

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

from **Section 4**

## 14 | I John 4:20

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

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

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

## 17 | Luke 10:29

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

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

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

## 17 | Luke 10:33, 34

*A certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.*

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

### Resources quoted in this issue

**Cit. 5:** Laymon, Charles M. *The Interpreter’s One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1971.

**Cit. 9:** Barclay, William. *The New Daily Study Bible: The Letters of John and Jude*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001–04.

**Cit. 13:** Abraham, A. Kenneth, ed. *The Matthew Henry Study Bible: King James Version*. Westlake, OH: World Bible Publishers, 1994.

**Cit. 14:** Mays, James L., Joseph Blenkinsopp, et al., eds. *The HarperCollins Bible Commentary*. Rev. ed. New York: HarperCollins, 2000.



# Asking with the heart

By Alex Cook

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

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

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

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

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

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

In a few months I had created a whole new body of spiritual music, the likes of

which I had never written before. And in the following years, I began making my living full time as a musician, performing in churches and making the most of countless opportunities to serve others in new and compelling ways.

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

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

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

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