

The Debt Eraser

Xochitl Dixon



*As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. **Psalm 103:12***

Read: Psalm 103:1–12

Bible in a Year: Genesis 20–22; Matthew 6:19–34

I blinked back tears as I reviewed my medical bill. Considering my husband's severe cut in salary after a lengthy unemployment, even paying half of the balance would require years of small monthly installments. I prayed before calling the doctor's office to explain our situation and request a payment plan.

After leaving me on hold for a short time, the receptionist informed me the doctor had zeroed out our account.

I sobbed a thank you. The generous gift overwhelmed me with gratitude. Hanging up the phone, I praised God. I considered saving the bill, not as a reminder of what I used to owe but as a reminder of what God had done.

My physician's choice to pardon my debt brought to mind God's choice to forgive the insurmountable debt of my sins. Scripture assures us God is "compassionate and gracious" and "abounding in love" (Psalm 103:8). He "does not treat us as our sins deserve" (v. 10). He removes our sins "as far as the east is from the west" (v. 12), when we repent and accept Christ as our Savior. His sacrifice erases the debt we once owed. Completely.

Once forgiven, we aren't defined by or limited by our past debt. In response to the Lord's extravagant gift, we can acknowledge all He's done. Offering our devoted worship and grateful affection, we can live for Him and share Him with others.

Thank You for erasing our debt completely when we place our confidence in You, Lord.

Our greatest debt, caused by sin, is erased by our greater God.

Stones of Remembrance

Amy Peterson



*Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced. **Psalm 105:5***

Read: [Joshua 3:14–4:7](#)

Bible in a Year: [Genesis 23–24](#); [Matthew 7](#)

Some mornings when I go online, Facebook shows me “memories”—things I’ve posted on that day in previous years. These memories, such as photos from my brother’s wedding or a video of my daughter playing with my grandmother, usually make me smile. But sometimes they have a more profound emotional effect. When I see a note about a visit to my brother-in-law during his chemotherapy or a picture of the staples across my mother’s scalp after her brain surgery three years ago, I am reminded of God’s faithful presence during difficult circumstances. These Facebook memories nudge me towards prayer and gratitude.

All of us are prone to forget the things God has done for us. We need reminders. When Joshua led God’s people towards their new home, they had to cross the Jordan River (Joshua 3:15–16). God parted the waters, and His people walked through on dry land (v. 17). To create a memorial of this miracle, they took twelve stones from the middle of the riverbed and stacked them on the other side (4:3, 6–7). When others asked what the stones meant, God’s people would tell the story of what God had done that day.

Physical reminders of God’s faithfulness in the past can remind us to trust Him in the present—and with the future.

God, thank You for Your faithfulness to me over many years! Help me to trust You with the present and the future as well.

How can you create physical, daily reminders of God’s faithfulness to you? Share it with us in the comment section at odb.org.

Growing a Servant's Heart

Adam Holz



I am among you as one who serves. [Luke 22:27](#)

Read: [Luke 22:24–30](#)

Bible in a Year: [Genesis 25–26](#); [Matthew 8:1–17](#)

It was a long day at work. But when I got home, it was time to start my “other” job: being a good dad. Greetings from my wife and kids soon became, “Dad, what’s for dinner?” “Dad, can you get me some water?” “Dad, can we play soccer?”

I just wanted to sit down. And even though *part* of me really wanted to be a good dad, I didn’t *feel* like serving my family’s needs. That’s when I saw it: a thank-you card my wife had received from someone at church. It pictured a bowl of water, a towel, and dirty sandals. Across the bottom were these words from Luke 22:27: “I am among you as one who serves.”

That statement of Jesus’s mission, to serve those He came to seek and save (Luke 19:10), was *exactly* what I needed. If Jesus was willing to do the dirtiest of jobs for His followers—like scrubbing His followers’ no doubt filthy feet (John 13:1–17)—I could get my son a cup of water without grumbling about it. In that moment, I was reminded that my family’s requests to serve them weren’t merely an *obligation*, but an *opportunity* to reflect Jesus’s servant heart and His love to them. When requests are made of us, they are chances to become more like the One who served His followers by laying down His life for us.

Lord, sometimes it’s hard to serve others’ needs. Help us to become more like You, willing to express Your love in the many opportunities we have to serve those around us each day.

God’s love for us empowers us to serve others.

***Our Daily Bread* welcomes writer Adam Holz! Meet Adam and all our authors at odb.org/all-authors.**

What's Inside?



Kirsten Holmberg

*But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. **2 Corinthians 4:7***

Read: 2 Corinthians 4:7–18

Bible in a Year: Genesis 27–28; Matthew 8:18–34

“Do you want to see what’s inside?” my friend asked. I had just complimented her on the old-fashioned rag doll her daughter held in her small arms. Instantly curious, I replied that yes, I very much wanted to see what was inside. She turned the doll face down and pulled open a discreet zipper sewn into its back. From within the cloth body, Emily gently removed a treasure: the rag doll she’d held and loved throughout the years of her own childhood more than two decades prior. The “outer” doll was merely a shell without this inner core to give it strength and form.

Paul describes the truth of Jesus’s life, death, and resurrection as a treasure, carried about in the frail humanity of God’s people. That treasure enables those who trust in Him to bear up under unthinkable adversity and continue in their service. When they do, His light—His life—shines brightly through the “cracks” of their humanness. Paul encourages us all not to “lose heart” (2 Corinthians 4:16) because God strengthens us to do His work.

Like the “inner” doll, the gospel-treasure within us lends both purpose and fortitude to our lives. When God’s strength shines through us, it invites others to ask, “What’s inside?” We can then unzip our hearts and reveal the life-giving promise of salvation in Christ.

Thank You, Lord, for saving me. Please shine Your light brightly through my broken life so others will be invited to know You too.

The gospel of truth shines through the brokenness of God’s people.



Fitting In

Poh Fang Chia



*Then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. **Malachi 3:16***

Read: **Malachi 3:13–18**

Bible in a Year: **Genesis 29–30; Matthew 9:1–17**

Lee is a diligent and reliable bank employee. Yet he often finds himself sticking out like a sore thumb for living out his faith. This reveals itself in practical ways, such as when he leaves the break room during an inappropriate conversation. At a Bible study, he shared with his friends, “I fear that I’m losing promotion opportunities for not fitting in.”

Believers during the prophet Malachi’s time faced a similar challenge. They had returned from exile and the temple had been rebuilt, but there was skepticism about God’s plan for their future. Some of the Israelites were saying, “It is futile to serve God. What do we gain by carrying out his requirements . . . ? But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly evildoers prosper, and even when they put God to the test, they get away with it” (Malachi 3:14–15).

How can we stand firm for God in a culture that tells us we will lose out if we don’t blend in? The faithful in Malachi’s time responded to that challenge by meeting with like-minded believers to encourage each other. Malachi shares this important detail with us: “The Lord listened and heard” (v. 16).

God notices and cares for all who fear and honor Him. He doesn’t call us to “fit in” but to draw closer to Him each day as we encourage each other. Let’s stay faithful!

Lord, help us to keep on encouraging one another to stay faithful to You in this faithless world.

Our faith may be tested so that we may trust God’s faithfulness.
