

**Chapter 6: What Shall I Render to the Lord for All His Benefits Toward Me?**  
**Life Application Verses: Psalms 116.**

This chapter of the book will do a little something different: I will walk through these verses and take each verse (or group of verses) and apply a short discussion of each verse (or group of verses) as it applies to life, work, family, and fellowship time with God. Use this discussion to compare your own life to the Holy Words of God to see how they apply or help you live a more productive Christian life—*that is, a Heavenly Minded life that is Earthly Good*. Remember: These Words are God’s Holy Words.

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1 I love the LORD, because He hears my voice *and* my supplications.

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Have you ever had a sleepless night? The sort of night in which something bothered you, like one of the children or grandchildren were ill, you had just lost a parent, your boss sends you an email and says that he or she needs to see you at the earliest convenience, yet not a word why the meeting was so urgent? Ever have one of those nights? You even think of the Words of Jesus in Matthew 6: 27: “Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?” In 6: 27-34, He is telling us not to worry because if we first seek the Kingdom of our God, all things we need will be added to us. But, we can’t shut off that valve that leaks a bit of worry into our minds, like a dripping faucet. Drip, Drip, Drip, Worry, Worry, Worry... So, if it is impossible for us to eliminate ALL of our worry, maybe we can divert worry into the Promise of God above.

When you consult a thesaurus on the word, ‘worries’, you get a lengthy list: doubts, qualms, uncertainties, reservations, fears, suspicions, concerns, apprehensions, anxieties, cares, burdens, uneasiness, nervousness, frets, troubles, and there are more. But listen to what the writer of Psalms 116 says: “I love the Lord, because He hears my voice and my supplications.” Another way to say this is that I love my God, because he hears my doubts, fears, anxieties, cares, burdens and my prayers, petitions, appeals, requests, pleas, and my heart. You are having a sleepless night because you are worried about something that keeps you up, or at the least, is causing you a restless night; but God hears your voice with all those worries when you open up your heart and make those worries known to Him in prayer. How can you not love your God that takes the time to hear your pleas for comfort? Worry is driven out when we give God our worries

because He hears our voice and brings Peace to our doubts, qualms, uncertainties, reservations, fears, and ... Give God your worries in Christ; let His Peace of mind, heart, and body bring comfort so that your sleepless night turns into Resting in the God that hears our voice.

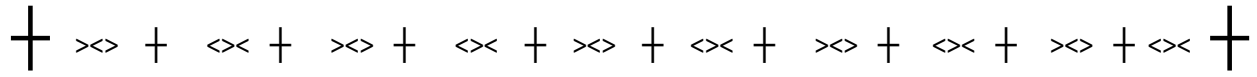
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2 Because He has inclined His ear to me,  
Therefore I shall call *upon Him* as long as I live.

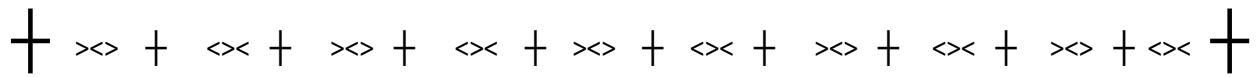
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When we have worries about something, it causes us to want to talk to someone about it. We want to share our thoughts, concerns, and get support from our friends or family to help with these uneasy thoughts. But, take a look at v. 2. “Because He has inclined His ear to me, Therefore I shall call upon Him as long as I live.” Think about something for a moment: In v.1, we have the assurance that God hears our voice when we Pray, but in v.2, He is not just listening, He is intently listening. Why? Can you fathom the depth of how God listens to us, by the idea that “He has inclined His ear to me?” That’s not casual listening, that’s active-interested listening. Have you ever been in a situation where you could ‘almost’ hear something? What did you do to improve your hearing? You inclined your ear in the direction of the sound you were trying to hear because you desired to hear the sound or voice more clearly! Imagine God doing that for us!

God doesn’t just listen, He inclines His ear to us to hear us clearly, fully, and with Love. If we are the Children of God, that should give us Hope and Joy, that our God—the God of all creation, the Father of Christ Jesus, the One True God—is not just a casual listener to our needs, but inclines His ear to hear to us in Love, Mercy, and Grace. Should we do any less than Honor and Glorify Him, as we “call upon Him as long as we live!” In our supplications before God, let us not forget to also give Him our Thanks for His Mighty Love in Christ Jesus. Remember the story Jesus told of the ten lepers, and only one returned to thank Him for His healing! Be that one before the Throne of God, where Christ is seated at the right-hand of the Father. Think on these things because if our God, who holds the very breath in our lungs will incline His ear to us to hear our worries, then how awesome is our God in Love, Mercy, and Help in times of trouble or need!



3 The cords of death encompassed me And the terrors of Sheol came upon me; I found distress and sorrow. 4 Then I called upon the name of the LORD: “O LORD, I beseech You, save my life!” 5 Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; Yes, our God is compassionate. 6 The LORD preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me. 7 Return to your rest, O my soul, For the LORD has dealt bountifully with you. 8 For You have rescued my soul from death, My eyes from tears, My feet from stumbling. 9 I shall walk before the LORD In the land of the living. 10 I believed when I said, “I am greatly afflicted.” 11 I said in my alarm, “All men are liars.” 12 What shall I render to the LORD For all His benefits toward me? 13 I shall lift up the cup of salvation And call upon the name of the LORD. 14 I shall pay my vows to the LORD, Oh *may it be* in the presence of all His people. 15 Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His godly ones.



At the end of 2015 and into the first of 2016, I went through a bout with pneumonia. Many of you, also, have experienced illness in your life. When we experience these times of physical distress, we are what we read in v. 3 – 15. At one point in my fight for breath, I actually thought I might not make it through the illness. I couldn’t function, missed several weeks of work, and I actually feared for my continuance because I wanted to be here for my family for a while longer (especially my 6 year and 9 month old grandchildren). The ‘cords of death encompassed me...I found distress and sorrow.’ I did call on the Name of the Lord, I was brought low, and yes, I Prayed, “O Lord, I beseech you, save my life.” It took some 6-to-8 weeks before I was ‘normal.’ I gave thanks also: “The Lord has dealt bountifully with me; He has rescued my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling. I shall walk before the Lord in the land of the living.”

Have you ever been in a situation like this? Maybe from illness, loss of a job, a child that was so sick your heart was broken just from the stress? Whatever you are going through, call on the name of the Lord: ‘Then I called upon the name of the LORD: “O LORD, I beseech You, save my life!” Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; Yes, our God is compassionate. The LORD preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me. Return to your rest, O my soul, For the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.’” God, in Christ Jesus, answers our earnest Prayers. The answers are in His Will to provide as He deems it best for our lives. I don’t have the Mind of God,

but I do know from personal experience, that God deals bountifully with us in many different ways. We must call on Him at all times for Help and to also Praise Him. Don't forget that: there are two sides to Prayer: 1) the petitions from our worries and concerns; and, 2) our thanks to God for answering our Prayers.

How do we thank God for inclining His ear to us?: "What shall I render to the LORD For all His benefits toward me? I shall lift up the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the LORD. I shall pay my vows to the LORD, Oh *may it be* in the presence of all His people." Ask yourself that question daily: What will I give my God for all He has done for me? For healing, for Eternal Life in Jesus, for giving us the Holy Spirit to comfort us in times of losing a loved family member; yes, we may grieve sorely at the loss of a member of our family, as my family grieved when my mother went Home singing Praise to the Lord of Lords and King of Kings! But we take heart also, because in these verses, God gives us a Mighty Powerful view of how He views the loss of His and our loved ones: "Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His godly ones."

As part of your rendering to the Lord, start out each day by remembering Psalms 118: 24, and Lamentations 3: 23: (Paraphrased) "This is the day that the Lord has made, I will rejoice and be glad in it, because His mercies are new every morning." Then, render to the Lord Kindness, Love, Mercy, Help, Study, and what you know in your heart is 'right in the Sight of the Lord in Christ.' Since my pneumonia, I have given God in Christ ALL that I am. I desire to seek His Face in Love, Obedience, and Prayer. It's not perfect because I am not perfect; but neither do I intend to give up on my best effort of "what shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" Remember, we must walk before the Lord in the land of the living—as Witnesses to His Glory in Christ Jesus, as those who turn not a blind eye to the needs of the less fortunate or the lost!

Make every day count for Jesus, or Carpe Diem for Christ! Seize the day for Jesus; render to God each day Honor and Glory that God in Christ deserves as daily service to His Majesty to answer: "What shall I render to the LORD For all His benefits toward me?" Live your life as if today is the day of service; tomorrow is another day of service; and my life is a life of service. What shall I render to God in Christ Jesus for the abundance of giving me life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness? The name of Jesus will never depart from my lips, nor my heart; nor from loving my family or the lost as He loves me! Glory to God in the Highest!

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16 O LORD, surely I am Your servant, I am Your servant, the son of Your handmaid, You have loosed my bonds. 17 To You I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving, And call upon the name of the LORD. 18 I shall pay my vows to the LORD, Oh *may it be* in the presence of all His people, 19 In the courts of the LORD'S house, In the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD!

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As I am considering at this very moment what to write in this empty space, I am inclining my *own* ear to God's direction. What would He say to us if **He** were typing on this clackety-clackety keyboard? I think He has said to you and me that He cares about us all the time, not just when it is convenient, when we are ill, or when our loved ones are sick or have left us for their Heavenly Home! Sometimes we serve *Him* when it is convenient and maybe as we have read these verses and considered their application to us, that convenience in service to God is not the response that we need to render to our Lord. Rather, we need to be reminded that we must pay our vows to the Lord in every endeavor of our lives. Our vows should be driven by presenting Honor to our God in every facet of our life. From the time we get up (some of us at odd hours of the morning) to the time we simply can't go another step, our vows are to be Faith-based intentional. In his book, *Turn The Ship Around*, L. David Marquet<sup>1</sup> uses a phrase to speak of how leadership significantly changed the nuclear submarine he commanded. The phrase was, "Control without competence is chaos." I want to modify that phrase to give us something to seriously consider; "Faith without competence is chaos." Let me state it this way:

To be saved, we must accept Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and in Faith receive this gift. This gift of salvation is the 'given' baseline of all Christianity. But being saved cannot (should not) be followed-up by what I have heard many times: 'saved and sit-down Christians.' That's the chaos. Our Faith in and acceptance of Christ was how we were saved; our study in God's 'Wonderful Words of Life' is how we gain competence in our Living Faith. I am here to proclaim that Christian competence is not optional, it is what God teaches us in the Old Testament lives of

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<sup>1</sup> Marquet, L. (2012). *Turn the ship around! A true story of turning followers into leaders*. New York, NY: Penguin Group.

Moses, Elijah, and all those we read about; Jesus taught us in the Gospels and Paul and others in the Books of the New Testament. In sum total, our competence to pray effectively, live Heavenly Minded, Earthly Good lives, witness through our discomfort when talking to strangers about Jesus, be the best employee that you are able to be, and call upon God with the confidence He desires, is based upon our study and application of God's Word. This means that we study His Holy Words, not read them... STUDY THEM! APPLY THEM! LIVE THEM! COMPETENCE IN THE WORD! We are to avoid, "Faith without competence is chaos."

Faith is stepping out to accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior. Faith lived is what happens after we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior, and that is where the rubber-meets-the-road. That is life lived every single day and living a Christian life must not be chaos; we can't live our Faith if we don't know what our God says about life's decisions or how we should respond to people around us or just the normal outcomes we produce throughout the day and night! A competent faith is based on God's direction in life and that comes through the study of His Word (and Bible Study groups, sermons, and so on). Simply put, what shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me if my Faith is based on chaos because my understanding of God Himself or Jesus is based on incompetence in continuous knowledge of His word? How can you be a servant if you don't know the One you desire to serve? How can you know Him if you don't study His Technical Reference Guide? How will you know what to render if your Faith is bound in chaos?

Before I end this discussion, let me say one more thing: ***I'm not going to leave any reader with the impression that if you believe in Christ Jesus as your Savior that you are an incompetent Christian.*** Please understand that the more you study God's Word, pray, focus on His guidance in your life, the less ***self-driven*** chaos there will be. Before my Lord, I confess that I have lived through a time when 'Faith without competence was chaos.' I was a 'backslider', if you will accept that term, and even though I had made a profession of faith in Jesus, I was a self-centered prodigal son for a time. It nearly cost me a career. I was living in chaos because I was 'incompetent' in and rebellious to the Word of God. I didn't read or study or even seriously consider it; my prayer life was nil (except when I was in trouble). My faith had saved me, but I lived in a distorted and self-serving world of my own chaos-making because I was "incompetent"

in being faithful to study and prayer and living my Faith. Now, my prima facie question in life is:

***‘What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?’***

**A Question of Curiosity:**

In your daily life, do you study God’s Word and pray? If not, what other areas of your life do you make time for? Which is more important: other things in life or to build up our Faith in God? Can you make time for the One who holds the very breath that we breathe? Make a list of those things you would render to God for all His benefits toward you? Can you see it? Do you see the balance scale with His Benefits on one side and ‘your rendering’ on the other? Which way is the scale leaning?

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**“Gentlemen, I have lived a long time and am convinced that God governs in the affairs of men. If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? I move that prayer imploring the assistance of Heaven be held every morning before we proceed to business.” ~ Benjamin Franklin ~**

**“We should spend as much time in thanking God for his benefits as we do in asking him for them.”  
~ Vencent de Paul, Roman Catholic priest and spiritual writer ~**

**THE BIBLE WAS  
NOT GIVEN  
FOR OUR  
INFORMATION  
BUT OUR  
TRANSFORMATION**

- D. L. Moody

**I HAVE LEARNED  
TO KISS THE  
WAVE THAT  
THROWS ME  
AGAINST THE  
ROCK OF AGES.**

- Charles Spurgeon

*A Story of the Heart*

Last week I took my children to a restaurant. My six-year-old son asked if he could say grace. As we bowed our heads he said, "God is good, God is great. Thank you for the food, and I would even thank you more if Mom gets us ice cream for dessert. And Liberty and justice for all! Amen!"

Along with the laughter from the other customers nearby I heard a woman remark, "That's what's wrong with this country. Kids today don't even know how to pray. Asking God for ice cream! Why, I never!"

Hearing this, my son burst into tears and asked me, "Did I do it wrong? Is God mad at me?"

As I held him and assured him that he had done a terrific job and God was certainly not mad at him, an elderly gentleman approached the table.

He winked at my son and said, "I happen to know that God thought that was a great prayer. "Really?" my son asked. "Cross my heart," the man replied.

Then in a theatrical whisper he added (indicating the woman whose remark had started this whole thing), "Too bad she never asks God for ice cream. A little ice cream is good for the soul sometimes."

Naturally, I bought my kids ice cream at the end of the meal. My son stared at his for a moment and then did something I will remember the rest of my life.

He picked up his sundae and without a word, walked over and placed it in front of the woman. With a big smile he told her, "Here, this is for you. Ice cream is good for the soul sometimes; and my soul is good already."

~ Unknown ~

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### My Prayer For You

Lord God of All Things, Maker of Heaven and Earth, It is my prayer on this day that You will become the most important part of the lives of those who may read this now or as You direct its application. May You be Praised above all things and may we be aware of Your benefits to us in the small things of life as well as the important things and concerns of our lives. I pray God that if there is a reader of these words that does not know Jesus Christ as their Savior, that they will read and understand John 3:16. If the reader is a Christian who has given their Heart and Life to Christ Jesus, I pray that their increase in knowledge of You will be tenfold to the degree that they understand Your benefits towards us and give You the Honor and Praise that is Yours. Help us to understand Your Holy Words when we read and study them so that our lives will be transformed and that the Light that others see in us will be reflected to You so that all Men may know that we serve a God who is Holy and has given us the greatest gift of all time, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I pray that our service to You will be formed in our hearts so that we may continually ask, "What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" In the name of Thy Son, Amen.

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#### ***What Shall I Render to the Lord for All His Benefits Toward Me?***

God's Benefits...

Our Benefits...

Jesus Christ suffered on our cross; He died, was raised again for our Eternal Life; and God the Father accomplished this for us;

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of Men. The Light Shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it..."



**Which side of the scale do you think carries the greater benefits? God's Benefits! Thus, we should never stop giving to God in Christ as long as we live to Honor His Mercies.**

We:

Pray  
Need Help  
Give God Glory  
Witness to the Lost  
Help feed the hungry  
Cannot save ourselves  
Sin  
Seek Forgiveness  
Complain  
Teach Bible Study  
Fall Down!  
Study God's Word  
Accept Christ  
Repent  
Make messes  
Curse  
Give tithes/offerings  
Attend local churches  
Follow God in Christ  
Support our families  
Get educations  
Pray  
And...PRAY!