



Christian Report

VOLUME 25 ISSUE 9 SEPTEMBER 2025

Search and Rescue

“O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. You scrutinize my path and my lying down, and are intimately acquainted with all my ways. Even before there is a word on my tongue, behold, O Lord, You know it all. You have enclosed me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it.” (Psalm 139:1-6)

According to the latest United Nations estimates, there are some 8.2 BILLION people on planet earth. And while it’s difficult to wrap our minds around that number – 8.2 billion – if we think too long about it, we might ask ourselves two sobering questions. First, “Who am I among so many?” And second, “Do I matter among so many?” Without a good understanding of Scripture, we can never truly know the definitive answer to those questions.

The psalmist assures us: ***“O Lord, You have searched me and known me . . . and are intimately acquainted with all my ways.”*** (vv. 1-6). Whoever you are, you are beloved by the One who spoke the universe into existence. He created and personally knows each of the billions on this planet—and He knows you. That is why He searches you, surrounds you, and lays His hand upon you. No matter who you are or what you’ve done, He loves you.

Romans 5:8 tells us, ***“God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”*** If we did not matter, the sacri-

ficial death of His Son on Calvary would never have occurred. But it did—because we matter profoundly to Him.

So hear this: You are not alone. Never alone. God is with you right now. Wherever you are—at home or away, in sickness or health, in grief or joy—He is with you. This is no throwaway phrase, but the promise of Almighty God. He knows your thoughts, your actions, and even the motives behind them. If He did not, He would not be God.

And yet, despite it all, He loves you.

Think of it: your soul always stands naked before your Creator. Despite who you are deep inside, despite your failures and shortcomings, God loves

you. Believe this if you would know His peace. Romans 5 reminds us: ***“While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”***

God gave His Son to bear the punishment our sins deserve, so that we might live in eternal communion with Him. Jesus still gazes on us from the cross, waiting for us to repent and fall at His feet.

David realized the Lord knew him inside and out, even to the sickness of his soul. No wonder he wrote, ***“Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it.”*** How can the finite grasp the infinite? An amoeba cannot fathom the mind of Einstein. Likewise, we cannot comprehend God’s love, mercy, judgment, or justice. We must either accept His Word as truth or create our own version of God—an eternally deadly choice.

Among the billions, you matter. God not only searches you—He searches for you. David wrote



(Continued from page 1)

in Psalm 23:6, ***“Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life.”*** The Hebrew conveys more than “follow”—it means God’s goodness and mercy will ardently pursue us. He searches for us because we are lost in sin, often without even knowing it. But He pursues to rescue us from ourselves and from eternal darkness.

Colossians 1:13-14 says: ***“For He rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”*** And Galatians 1:4-5 adds: ***“[Jesus] gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen.”***

Years ago, when our daughter was only four, I took her shopping. Though warned not to wander, she slipped away. I followed a few steps behind, unseen. Soon she stopped, realized I wasn’t there, and cried out, “Daddy! Daddy!” Every parent knows such moments. They mirror our own drift from God—and the shock of realizing we are lost without Him.

Jesus illustrated this in Luke 15 with three parables: the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. A shepherd left 99 sheep to find the one that wandered. A woman turned her house upside down until she recovered her lost coin. And the father, watching daily, ran to embrace his prodigal son the moment he returned. Each story shows God’s relentless pursuit of those who are lost.

The prodigal son’s journey may sound familiar. Frustrated with rules and eager for freedom, he demanded his inheritance and squandered it in reckless living. When famine struck, he found himself homeless and hungry. Finally, he came to his senses and returned. Scripture tells us: ***“While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt com-***

passion for him and ran and embraced him and kissed him... For this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.” (Luke 15:20-24).

Let me emphasize: Not only does God search us, He searches for us. It is the Great Shepherd’s joy to find His sheep. ***“The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.”*** (John 10:11). Some may think

their sins are too great or that they have wandered too far for Him to care. But that is a lie. Believe what God says: He loves you so much He left the 99 to find the one—and carries it home on His shoulders.

Hear again John 3:16: ***“God so loved YOU that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life.”***

Whoever you are, whatever you’ve done, however often you’ve done it—the Good Shepherd is still searching for you. And if something stirs inside as you read this, it is the gentle voice of the Holy Spirit, whispering, “I’ve found you. Let’s go home.”

Who am I? Who are you? We are God’s beloved. And yes, we matter—deeply and eternally.

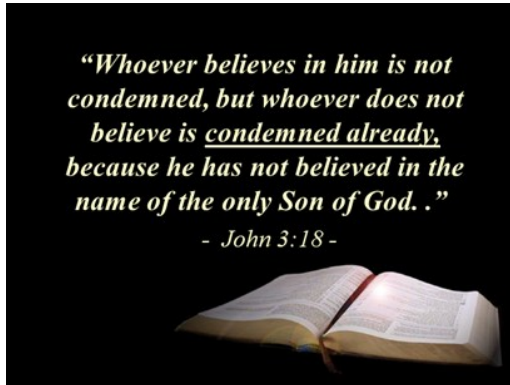
“O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. You scrutinize my path and my lying down and are intimately acquainted with all my ways.”



CDR Richard Maffeo, USN (Ret.) served with the US Navy as a registered nurse. When he retired in 2007, he found employment in nursing education, both in Tacoma, WA and in Georgia. He fully retired in 2020 and now teaches Bible study and holds church services at a local memory care center and a 55+ independent living community. He and his wife, Nancy, are married for 50 years and have three adult children. You can find Richard’s blog at <https://inhimonly.blogspot.com/>. You can also find him on Facebook Richard Maffeo.

I just searched the internet for “the hard sayings of Jesus” and none of the lists that came back included that passage. Maybe it should be in those lists, but maybe it’s so clear it doesn’t need to be included.

They are certainly really strong words, but what does “condemned *already*” really mean, and why does it matter?



First of all, the larger context of John 3:18 is the well-known late-night conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus somewhere in Jerusalem. We know the story. Nicodemus approached Jesus and acknowledged him as a teacher sent by God. Rather than commenting on having been sent from God, Jesus responded by saying “*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*”

Their discussion continued until Jesus utters the most familiar verse in the New Testament:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16)

But Jesus didn’t stop there. After telling Nicodemus that Jesus came into the world to provide salvation, he spoke of judgment:

*“Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is **condemned already**, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.” (John 3:18)*

Did that sink in? Everyone who has not believed (trusted) in Christ for eternal life is already (in the Greek, “even now”) under God’s judgment! Your unsaved family members, friends, neighbors, and fellow employees are right now, even as they live and breathe, facing the wrath of God, just as you

were apart from Christ (Eph 2:1-3).

The BIG question. WHY does it matter?

Short answer: If it doesn’t impact the way we share the precious gospel of Jesus Christ, it should!

It’s been said by many that the GOOD news about the gospel of Jesus Christ doesn’t mean much without the BAD news about sin. Perhaps the worst of the bad news about sin isn’t about the things we do/don’t do, or even that we inherited a sinful nature from the first Adam. Maybe it’s knowing and realizing that apart from Christ we are ***already condemned***, as we live and breathe.

Somehow the *seriousness* of the bad news ends up being minimized, taking a back seat, or is sometimes totally absent when we share the precious gospel with others.

I’m not saying you have to be that “repent or perish!” guy (although that’s a true statement). I’m not suggesting you walk up to your unbelieving family member or friend and blurting out “Did you know that you are already condemned?”



What I am saying that when we share the message of the gospel with others, we get to the BAD news early on in the conversation, whether we start with Romans 3:23 or strike up a conversation about the latest terrible crime in the headlines and why it might have happened.

But even more importantly, in this old soldier’s heart and mind, is being able to picture that unsaved family member or friend not as someone just ‘kinda sorta’ separated from God at the moment, but as a condemned prisoner locked in a cell on death row. I guarantee you that it will transform the way you share the gospel!



SGM Daniel Cartwright, USA (Ret.) is a 28-year veteran of the U.S. Army Special Forces and long-time member of Christian Military Fellowship. Dan is a Local Rep at Ft. Carson. He currently serves on the CMF Board of Directors.

At Christian Military Fellowship, our calling is simple but profound: to walk alongside military members, veterans, and their families with the hope and encouragement of God's Word. Through Bible studies, trauma-healing groups, family support, and discipleship resources, we remind those who serve — and those who love them — that they are never alone.

As you might imagine, this work requires faithful partners who are willing to come alongside.

Faithful Financial Partners: Every dollar makes a difference. Whether it's a small, regular gift or a one-time offering, your support helps provide study materials, fellowship events, and outreach programs that touch lives across the military community. We don't measure gifts by size, but by the impact they make when joined together.

Local Leaders & Teachers: We are looking for men and women who feel called to lead Bible studies in their local area, whether on base, in homes, or within church settings. In addition, CMF has opportunities for those experienced in teaching the Crown Financial program — equipping families with biblical principles of stewardship and financial freedom. If you've been trained in this program or would like to be, we would love to connect with you.

We believe God brings the right people at the right time. If you sense a nudge in your heart to give, to teach, or simply to ask a question about how you might help, we would be honored to talk with you. Together, we can continue to encourage and equip those who have given so much in service.

Are You Interested in Becoming a Local Leader?

Christian Military Fellowship exists to help you fulfill your calling in Christ to share the hope that is in you with those with whom you interact as part of your daily life.

Briefly, CMF Local Leaders will start, and sustain a CMF fellowship made up of members of the military community in their area. While CMF is an "all ranks" ministry, our area of focus is on enlisted personnel. Local leaders institute and lead the military community in

Bible study, prayer, and fellowship, keeping in communication with participants. They should also seek to build relationships with the chaplains and the chaplain team.

Toward that end we encourage you to study and complete the CMF briefing material:

Orientation (Brief #1) that shares an overview of the CMF ministry.

Developing a Local Ministry (Brief

#2) that shares the Biblical foundation for and delineates the logical steps in beginning your local ministry.

Pray and Plan (Brief #3) that shares the most important activity of all! Asking Jesus what He would have you to do and then being obedient to follow His leading in your local ministry. If you choose to begin this process, please reach out to us at: leader@cmfhq.org.

We're praying for you!

CHRISTIAN MILITARY FELLOWSHIP

An Indigenous Ministry • Discipleship • Prayer • Community • Support
Encouraging Men and Women in the United States Armed Forces, and their families, to love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christian Military Fellowship is a long-time recipient of Ministry Watch's "Shining Light" Ministries. To become a Ministry Watch "Shining Light," a ministry must have earned a 5-star rating on Ministry Watch's 5-star financial efficiency scale. Further, those ministries on this list have a Transparency Grade of "A." That's Ministry Watch's highest transparency grade. Few ministries meet these strict criteria.

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We are accredited members of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability and have been awarded a Platinum Seal from Guidestar/Candid in order to maintain the highest standards of excellence and accountability.

