

# Rise Bible Study

## HOW WE RISE:

The following Bible study was designed to help you meditate slowly, thoughtfully and intentionally on selected Scripture verses throughout the week. Let the Lord speak to you from His Word as you consider each verse, both in its entirety and phrase by phrase. You might even find that by the end of the week you've memorized the whole verse! As we reflect on the verse, use the questions to guide your thinking and application. I'm using a separate journal to record my answers so I can go back and review what I've written and track my spiritual growth. At some point, we hope to offer an online forum where you and others doing this study can share responses and talk about what we're learning as a result. Until then, feel free to use these verses in your personal or family devotions, at your church or neighborhood Bible study, or in your own online forum. I pray that these weekly devotions will have an eternal impact. -Kit

## Week 1

***Let us acknowledge the Lord; let us press on to acknowledge Him. As surely as the sun rises, He will appear; He will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth. -Hosea 6:3***

*"Let us acknowledge the Lord..."*

To acknowledge means "to admit the existence or truth of, to make notice of, and to express gratitude for or to." Where are you in your relationship with God? Are you struggling to admit that He exists? Or maybe you believe that He exists, but have a lot of questions. Maybe you are settled in your faith, but would benefit from a deeper relationship by taking time to meditate on His Word and taking notice of where He's working in the world today. In whatever circumstance you find yourself, stop right now and express your gratitude for truth, nobility, beauty, love, courage, all the good things in your life.

*"... let us press on to acknowledge Him."*

As you completed the above exercise, where did you find yourself hesitating? Which areas do you need to "press on" in order to smooth out the wrinkles in your relationship with God and

better acknowledge Him in your life? Do you need more truth? More meditation? More prayer? More community? Less distraction? Less doubt? Less negative self-talk? Less sin? What steps can you take today to press on? Where do you need to rise?

*“As surely as the sun rises, He will appear.”*

How often does the sun come up? Do you see God appearing in your life every day? Why or why not? If we are to see the sun rise, we need to get up early and look toward the east. What steps are you taking to put yourself in a place where you can see God more clearly? Even if we sleep through the sunrise, or our vision of it is obscured, we still see the effects of daylight. Where is God’s light directing your attention right now? What would a growing awareness of the Lord’s appearance in your life look like? What things might change if you were more conscious of His presence in your life?

*“... He will come to us like winter rains...”*

Winter rains are a blessing. They come after the harvest, helping whatever was left in the field to decay more quickly and fertilize the soil in advance of spring planting. The rains fill up lakes, rivers, streams and irrigation channels that were depleted during the hot months of summer and fall. They force the farmers to stay inside and enjoy a time of rest and relaxation at home with their families. Recall a time when God granted you (or perhaps forced you into) a season of rest. Describe how you felt, what you experienced, and what you learned as a result. Winter rains, while not entirely predictable, still come every winter. What would it look like if you made a regular time for rest and relaxation in your life? What things might you have time to enjoy if you could stop being so busy? What steps can you take to make more room for rest and relaxation in your life?

*“...like the Spring rains that water the earth.”*

Like the winter rains, spring rains are also a blessing. They prepare established trees and vines for a new season of productivity, coax the annual plants to rise up (seemingly from the dead), and help the freshly sown seeds germinate and grow. What has God planted in your life that needs to be watered in this season? A spiritual practice, a relationship, a business venture, a volunteer opportunity, or a physical challenge? It's easy to measure the growth and vitality of a plant. How can you know that you are becoming stronger and healthier? How would the certainty of the Lord's appearance help you thrive and grow?

*Pray: Lord, help us to acknowledge you in all we think, say and do. May we press on, even when we are feeling discouraged and defeated, knowing that you are coming to us and for us. May we be renewed by your truth that shines its light in the dark places of our minds and hearts and brightens our path to maturity and fruitfulness. May we be refreshed by your faithful love and care for us, as demonstrated by the outpouring of blessings you send in their proper seasons. Let us be like your Son and reign. May we acknowledge others you have put in our lives, and help us shower them with your blessings as well.*

## **Week 2**

***“Blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God: You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out. The Lord will grant that the enemies who rise up against you will be defeated before you. They will come at you from one direction but flee from you in seven.” (Deuteronomy 28:2, 6-7)***

*“Blessings will come on you and accompany you...”*

A blessing is something that contributes to health, happiness, well-being and prosperity. List some of your blessings below and thank God for them today. What does it mean to you for a blessing to come on you and accompany you? What happens inside you when the blessings come? Who else is close enough to you to directly benefit from the blessings that come on you and accompany you?

*“Blessings will come ... if you obey the Lord your God.”*

How are blessings tied to obeying the Lord? What examples do you have in the Bible or in your own personal experience that demonstrate this truth? Have you observed that blessings come on those who don't obey? Explain. In your experience, does doing what God wants guarantee that that you will receive blessings? Explain. In what area are you struggling to obey God? In what ways could your life be blessed by your obedience?

*“You will be blessed when you come in and go out.”*

What does this phrase mean to you? What is the Lord inviting you to enter? What is He inviting you to come out of? In what ways could your life be blessed by accepting His invitations?

*“The Lord will grant that your enemies who rise up against you will be defeated before you.”*

An enemy is defined as one who opposes, who is hate-filled, hostile, destructive or injurious toward another. Who or what in your life would you define as an enemy? Some would admit that they are their own worst enemy. Has that been your experience? While we may not be able to control an external enemy, we can control how we respond to that enemy. Sometimes it is helpful to realize that the person, ideology or situation is not our real enemy, as much as the Satanic influence behind it. Describe a story from the Bible, or a time in your life when God was able to bring something good from the work of the enemy. If your enemy is within you, what would need to be surrendered in order for you to have victory? This verse (along with many others) assures us that our enemies will be defeated. How does that promise give us comfort, courage, strength and hope?

*“They will come at you from one direction but flee from you in seven.”*

I love the description of our enemies' defeat! How strong the enemy seems when he is coming at us! And how weak he appears as he flees helter-skelter in every different direction! Our conversations with Rik Danielsen and Rebecca Reiff describe their deliverances from the self-destructive enemies of drug and alcohol abuse. If you missed those episodes, visit the Now I See podcast archives at <https://nis.media> to hear their words of encouragement and hope for you in your self-destructive behaviors and negative self-talk. Who was responsible for their victory? He is able to deliver you too! Notice that the enemies flee in seven directions. In Scripture the number seven symbolizes completeness. This promise (and the testimony of Rik and Rebecca) assures us that we can have complete and total victory over our enemies. Go back to the start of our meditation passage this week. What is the key to obtaining the blessing of victory over our enemies? What steps can you begin to take today that will help you be more obedient to the Lord?

*Pray: Lord help me to set my heart and mind on obedience to you. Help me to see my sin the same way you do, so that I may hate it as much as you do, and cooperate with you to overcome it. Help me to identify the people, ideologies and situations that would rise up to oppose, injure and destroy me so that I might be able to avoid them, stand against them, and triumph over them in your power. I ask that I might enjoy the health, happiness, well-being and prosperity that you promise to give as I submit myself to you. May my testimony of your faithfulness bring hope and encouragement to others as they face their enemies.*

## Resurrection Anthem:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cErtpg5hBSw>

### Week 3

***“Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!” -Isaiah 30:18***

*“Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you...”*

Yet?! If we look back at the verses that precede this passage we read, *“This is what the Sovereign Lord says, ‘In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it.’* Recall times when you neglected true repentance. Repentance is sorrow or contrition for what one has done or left undone. It probably isn’t hard to

recall with sorrow the things you have done or left undone. There may be a lot of grief, guilt and shame associated with that. But what have you done about it? Have you tried to numb it with noise, hyper-activity, self-loathing or indulgence? How's that working for you? The Lord calls us to repentance. It's the only way to find salvation, forgiveness, deliverance, peace and rest. Is there someone who needs to hear you confess what you've done or neglected to do, and who needs to hear you ask for forgiveness? Do it. Is it something for which you can make restitution? Do it. Is this thing you're doing or not doing, a habitual abuse or neglect that needs to be dealt with? Honestly, according to these verses, the only way you can be saved from it is to repent and give it a rest. Why? Because despite what you have or haven't done, the Lord still longs to be gracious to you. Once you turn from your sin and turn toward the Lord, He embraces you with the forgiveness, compassion and rest you've been missing. He longs to do it. Rather than have none of it, have all of it! Repent and rest.

*"...the Lord longs to be gracious to you..."*

What an astonishing thought: the Lord has a longing. Do you? Is there an emptiness inside you over a longing for a physical need to be met, a broken relationship to be restored, a loss of something or someone precious to you, a shattered dream or an unmet expectation? Express that longing to the Lord. He understands. He has a longing too. You might be wondering why the God who created everything out of nothing, who needs nothing, who is the source of all good things would have a longing. I'm wondering that too. And if He longs to be gracious to us, why doesn't He just go ahead and do it? What if the thing He longs for in us is greater than the things we long for ourselves? My kids used to beg me for cookies before dinner, but I knew their appetite for the healthier foods would be diminished if I gave in to their pleas. How might God be using your longings to create a hunger for better things? Or better yet, how might He be using your longings to create a hunger for Him?

*"... he will rise up to show you compassion."*

Well, that's an odd expression, "God will rise". God is over everything; there is nothing and no one above Him. How can He get any higher? Let's consider what he might be rising from, or what He might be rising for. When you rise up out of bed, or rise up out of a chair, why are you

rising? To do something. When Jesus rose to his feet from writing in the sand (John 8:1-11), what did he rise to do? And when he rose from the table at the Last Supper (John 13:1-17), what did he rise to do? And when he rose from the grave (Luke 24:1-7), what did he rise to do? (Use Romans 6:4 for help). And after Jesus was seated at the right hand of God (Luke 22:69), he rose to his feet at Stephen's stoning (Acts 8:55-56). What did he rise to do? What does our theme verse this week (Isaiah 30:18) say the Lord will rise to do? In what area of your life do you need to see God rise up? Where do you long to see compassion applied? To whom can you show the Lord's compassion this week? Invite Him to show you, then rise with Him to do it.

*"...the Lord is a God of justice."*

Justice is a moral rightness in action and attitude. The fact that we all want justice, especially when we are the victims of injustice, proves that justice exists. Since God alone made the world and everything in it, He alone has the right to set and enforce the boundaries of justice. That is both the scariest and the most comforting thing I have ever heard. Why should we fear God's justice? And why should we be comforted by God's justice? In driver's ed, we had to learn the laws of physics (about hydroplaning, and how long it takes to stop a car that is traveling 60 mph), the laws of the federal highway system (the correct side of the road for driving, how to enter and exit a freeway, what traffic signs mean), and the laws of our locality (speed limits, school zones, and parking lanes). These laws are put in place for our provision and protection, and there are traffic officers with authority to enforce them. It doesn't take much imagination to know what happens when the rules aren't carefully obeyed or fairly enforced. Not knowing the law is no excuse for not obeying the law, as any judge will tell you (don't ask me how I know). How can you better ensure that you are operating inside the laws of God's justice? How can you help others do the same? What injustice have you observed that you are working with God to justify? Thank God today for His perfect justice and mercy.

*"... Blessed are all who wait for him!"*



I hate waiting! But oddly enough, I like anticipation, the feeling that I have as I dream, plan, create and prepare. Sometimes the anticipation is better than the event itself. Wonderful things often happen in the waiting, that if I were anxious, bored or distracted I would miss altogether. Have you ever been given an unexpected delight in the midst of your waiting? Doesn't it make you catch your breath to think you almost missed it? To wait on the Lord is to remain or rest in expectation and readiness. Sometimes I get frustrated when I'm ready, but the Lord doesn't appear to be. "Come on, Lord, let's go!" I've whined. Perhaps you have discovered, as I have, that when we get ahead of the Lord's timing (or lag too far behind), it never goes well for us. It's wiser to wait and rest—not waiting in anxiety, boredom or distraction, but in anticipation and readiness. If we're not prepared and rested, we won't be ready when He tells us it's time. Don't you like to go out to a restaurant and be waited on? A good waiter is attentive, looking for the best time and opportunity to be of service. In what ways can we be more like a good waiter? A good waiter can expect a good tip. What are some of the blessings that come to those who wait on God? Do you have any "tips" for fellow "waiters"?

*Pray: Lord It's hard to believe that you long to be gracious to me, after all I've done to resist you. Yet you are patiently waiting for me to come and enjoy the blessings you have prepared for me, in your compassion, mercy and grace. Help me grow in justice, wisdom, patience, attentiveness and readiness, as I learn to wait on you. In the same way that you have longed for me, may I long for you. May my heart truly say, "It's been a pleasure to serve you." And cause me to reflect your character and nature by righting wrongs and rising to show compassion to others. We all desperately need your justice and grace.*

## **Week 4**

***"But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves." -Malachi 4:2***

*"But for you who revere my name..."*

To revere is to regard as worthy of great honor. When we talk about the Lord's name, we're not just talking about what we call him when we pray to Him. We're talking about his character and nature, the essence of who He has revealed Himself to be. Hagar called Him "the God who

sees me” when He found her anxious and alone in the desert (Genesis 16:13). David called Him “my rock and my refuge” many times in the psalms when he was hiding from his enemies in the wilderness. How has God revealed himself to you? Name some aspects of his character that are especially meaningful to you, and tell why those attributes are so dear.

Just a few verses earlier (Malachi 3:16-18), this is what the Lord says of those who revere His name: *“They will be mine, my treasured possession... and you will see the distinction between those who serve God and those who do not.”* Can you point to someone who serves God with distinction? Can others say the same about you? Thank God for the godly people in your life. Write down some things you can do to honor the Lord this week.

*“...the sun of righteousness will rise...”*

A couple of weeks ago, I watched this glorious sunrise while I was in the Florida Keys on a trip with some girlfriends. From now on, whenever I think of this verse, I will close my eyes and remember this breath-taking moment. What comes to your mind when you consider the sun of righteousness rising?



I also like the idea that the sun of righteousness is rising, when it seems like the dark and heavy gloom of evil is descending and pulling me down with it. What would it mean to you to know that the dark night is ending and the sun of righteousness is on the rise?

*‘...with healing in its rays.’*

The field of medicine is still discovering the relationship between light and health. Useful in both the diagnosis and treatment of a variety of diseases, light in its varying wavelengths and intensities can be used in many ways including lifting the mood of those who suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder, whitening teeth, treating acne, slowing degenerative eye disease, healing wounds caused by inflammation, conducting laser surgery, and irradiating cancer cells. Science is just now coming to recognize what God knew all along. The Bible also frequently

uses the metaphor of dark for sin and light for righteousness. Sin makes us sick spiritually, mentally and physically. Where are you hurting? Where are you asking God to shine his healing rays? Who do you know that is hurting? How can you be a ray of sunshine to them this week?

*“And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves.”*

Unless you grew up in the country, it's probably hard for you to imagine what the frolic of well-fed calves looks like. Picture baby cows in their stalls next to their relaxed and attentive mothers, where they are safely guarded and well cared for. Now imagine the farmer has opened the barn doors and turned them loose on a warm spring day to enjoy the sunshine and dewy green grass. They are full of energy, joy and playfulness. They are free and not afraid. What prevents you from “frolicking”? Ask the Lord to restore your health, strength, energy, confidence, playfulness and delight. Ask him to remove the things that cause you fear and rob your joy. Invite a friend to join you in frolic this week.

#### *Reflect and review:*

Briefly review the verses we studied this month. As we reflect on each of the Scriptures, in what ways have they raised your awareness of and desire for God? What have you learned about God? What have you learned about yourself? What questions remain unanswered? What challenged you? What inspired you? What is the Lord inviting you to do as a result of this study? What steps can you take to help you on your way? Who will you invite to join you on this journey?

*Pray: Thank you Lord, for the privilege of knowing You and the opportunity to serve You and the people You love. I am so grateful that You died in my place, rose from the dead, and have promised me that because I believe, someday I will rise too. Thank You for delivering me from my sin, shame, fear and doubt. Help me to live each day in the assurance of Your love, to revere you with my thoughts, words and deeds, and to reflect Your light in this dark world. Cause me to frolic with delight in Your presence for all that You have done for me, and help me embrace and express your compassion, justice, and mercy in honor of Your great name.*