

Forgiven Creatures

By Tracy E. Grindle

Leader's Guide

You will call and I will answer you; you will long for the creature your hands have made.
Job 14:15

Opening Prayer

Dear Lord, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, thank You for opening Your Word to us. Your Word is life, and we are so very grateful for the life you give us, and the incredible promise of eternal life to come. We praise You, awesome Creator, and ask You to bless our time together. In Jesus' holy name. Amen.

Opening Discussion

If you know the Lord as your Creator, you may hold on to hope like Job did. Through the torture and despair that had overcome him, he hoped to hear God call. He was prepared to answer. He still believed that God loved him — “you will long for the creature your hands have made.” God did eventually answer Job, and Job could not ask any more questions. He told the Lord in effect, “You are God. I am not. I repent.” The Lord responded with great blessings for Job after his near destruction by Satan.

Do you think God longs for you?
_____ Answers may
vary. _____

If you answered, “No” or “I don't know,” have I got news for you! So many passages in the Bible tell us of God's love and compassion for us. The very pinnacle of proof that God longs for you is Jesus Christ. His atoning sacrifice opened the way for our salvation and eternal life, indescribable gifts so we needn't long for God forever — or He for us.

What Does Our Creator Say?

Verses to look up:

Romans 5:8 (*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*)

John 3:14–17 (*Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.*)

(Yes, this is a very familiar passage, so please read it out loud with all the excitement you can, as if you are hearing this good news for the first time!)

Ephesians 2:4–10 (*But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with*

Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.)

Forgiveness, Longing, Renewal

I had melanoma surgery several years ago and, in the days right after the surgery, my mind and emotions were a mess. What would the biopsy show? Would I need further treatment? I was filled with questions and fear, until God's peace broke through. I asked forgiveness for the pity party and lack of trust, and then I longed for heaven.

Have you ever longed for heaven?

_____ Answers may vary. _____

What delightful thing does **Ecclesiastes 3:11** tell us about eternity? (*He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.*)

The longing for heaven took me by surprise and the devil used even that to scare me. "If you are longing for heaven, maybe it means you are going there soon!" I was certainly not longing to die, but the certainty and peace and complete joy of heaven was so appealing. The idea of walking hand-in-hand with Jesus, whole and perfect, was overcoming my wild thoughts. I hadn't invited Jesus to my fear-fest pity party, but

He came and chased the fear away anyway. My mind was being renewed in a way that I hadn't expected.

Has the Lord ever intervened in your life, or in your thought patterns, and surprised you with a renewal you might not have been seeking? _____ Has He granted renewal when you *were* seeking it?

_____ Encourage the sharing of examples if there are volunteers who are comfortable doing so.

Have a look at **Colossians 3:9–10**. What do we learn about the "new self"? (*Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*)

It's a beautiful blessing when one's "new self," scarred and scared as it may be, is renewed by her Creator, for her Creator, in the very image of her Creator. (See **Genesis 1:27**. *So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*) He created us in His image and, when we live with our Creator in mind, literally *in* our minds through His Holy Spirit, how can we not be different? We can be new and renewed, even when our bodies are sick or aging, having parts missing and parts that need replacing. We are renewed in knowledge, refreshed in spirit, held in the Hand of our Creator (**Isaiah 49:15–16** *Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me.*). He longs for us with a holy

passion that's strong enough to carry us through life's trials and into heaven.

Please look up **2 Corinthians 4:6–7**. (*For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to*

show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.) How does this reference God as Creator? (**Genesis 1:3** *And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.*) Where does His light shine? (**Our hearts!**)

Doesn't that humble you and make you want to shout hallelujah at the same time?

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, You shine Your light into our hearts and we are forever grateful. Let us live as joyful creatures, praising and serving our awesome Creator. We pray in the name of Jesus, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

Closing Hymn

Say or sing together "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing" (*LSB #686*) or "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty" (*LSB #790; LW #444; TLH #39*).