

needs  
(Phil. 4:19)

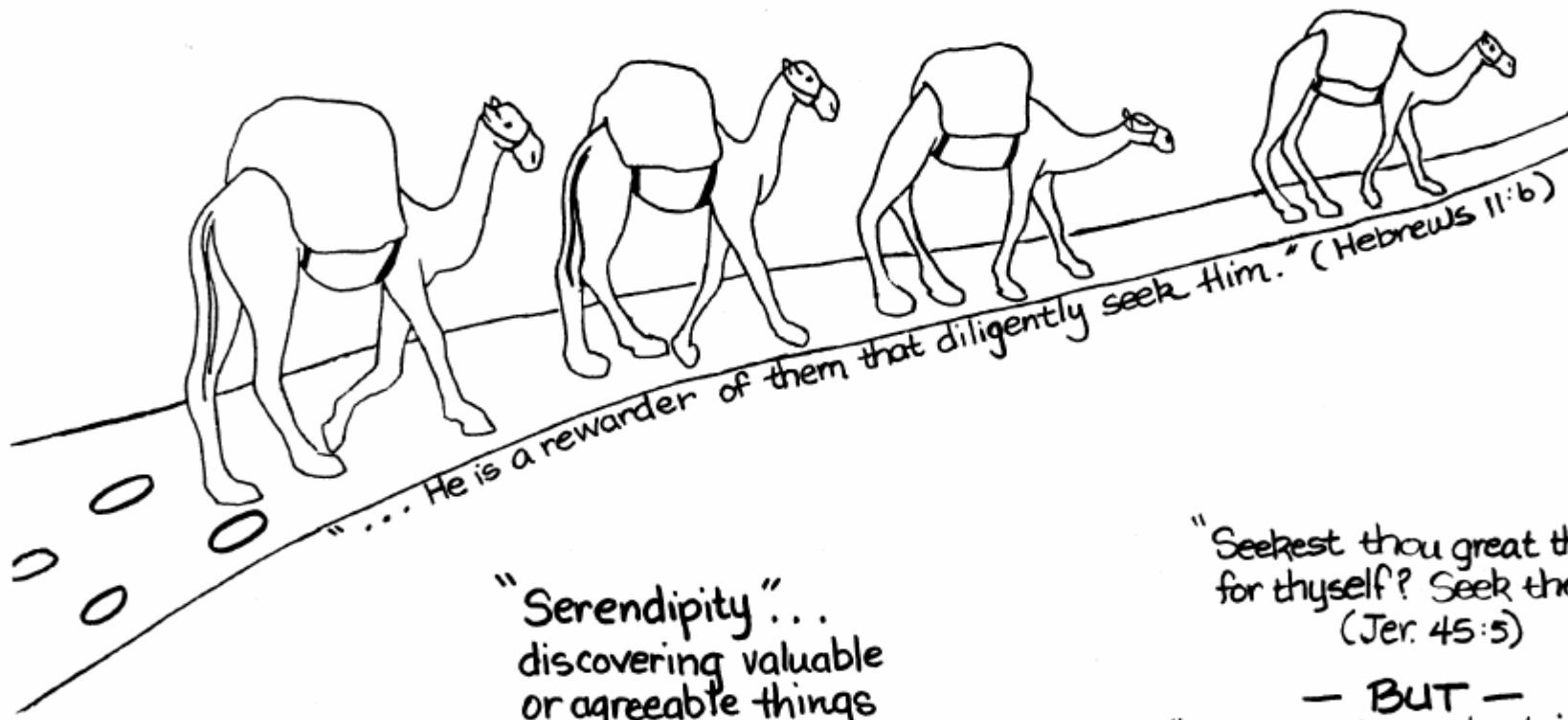


longings  
(Psa. 37:4)

expectations  
(Psa. 62:5)

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man,  
but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Pr. 14:12)

"Seek Me,  
and ye shall  
live." (Amos 5:4)



"Serendipity"...  
discovering valuable  
or agreeable things  
not sought for...

"Seekest thou great things  
for thyself? Seek them not..."  
(Jer. 45:5)

— BUT —

"Seek ye first the kingdom  
of God and his righteousness  
and all these things (serendipities)  
shall be added unto you." (Mt. 6:33)

# ***Serendipity***

But my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19, KJV).

Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires (longings) of thine heart (Ps. 37:4, KJV).

My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him (Ps. 62:5, KJV).

For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water (Jer. 2:13, KJV).

...I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live (Deut. 30:19, KJV).

He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek Him, that seek thy face... (Ps. 24:5, 6, KJV).

Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord (Is. 55:6-8, KJV).

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land (2 Chr. 7:14, KJV).

I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies (Ps. 119:59, KJV).

If (Since) ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth (Col. 3:1, 2, KJV).

...You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the Devil, you enemy of righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight paths of the Lord (Acts 13:10, NASB)?

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight (Prov. 3:5-6, NASB).

# GRACE for the Rest of Your Life

## SERENDIPITY

**SUFFICIENT GRACE: Seeking God; Lure of the World; Sufficiency of Christ; Benefits Follow (Serendipities)**

### **Seeking God**

The Serendipity visual addresses where our focus centers in life. Jeremiah 45:5 states, *“Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not.” “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things (serendipities) shall be added unto you”* (Matt. 6:33).

Serendipity means “discovering valuable or agreeable things not sought for.” This coined word originated from a fable, *The Three Princes of Serendip*. As three princes were loading up their camels to caravan from point A to point B across the desert, they had “scientifically” worked out exactly what they would need for the trip, thus resisting the temptation to veer off the path in search for more. En route from point A to point B, invariably they would find that there were extra enjoyable things that came along their way. Perhaps other merchants intersected them on the path, and they were able to trade with them. Or, they came across spoils in the desert that they could just take as their own. They enjoyed “serendipities,” but never sought them out on their own.

Our focus as Christians is not to seek great things for ourselves. If we seek the Lord first, He will add all these “serendipities” to us. This adventure makes the Christian life enjoyable. Matthew 6:26-34 speaks about the birds of the air and the lilies of the field and their Heavenly Father’s care for them. They do not have to seek to meet their own needs. We too are encouraged to seek Him first—not to seek to meet our needs apart from Him.

In our own lives, if we veer off that path, we get into trouble. Towards the left center of the visual, we see what looks like an oasis. However, if we pursue it, we find to our dismay it is only a mirage. A mirage is an optical phenomenon that creates an illusion of water. It is a distortion of light caused by alternate layers of hot and cold. To the naked eye, this illusion can look very real. However, the camera does not lie. If you try to take a photo of what you believe to be real, when the film is developed, the illusion will NOT be in the photo.

It would make sense if you are on this path, and you see water in the distance, to go ahead, fill your canteens, let your camels have a drink, and then proceed. But many times when we get off the path in that search, we find out it is just a mirage and we have depleted our resources in the process.

This reminds us of 2 Corinthians 11:14-15, *“For even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their deeds.” “There is way which seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death”* (Prov. 14:12).

### **Lure of the World**

Satan’s design is to lure us off the path. James 1:14 speaks of being lured away by our own lust, *“But each of us is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.”* ‘Lure’ means anything that entices, beguiles, or attracts with promise of reward. It is the promise of reward that deceives us. ‘Entice’ involves drawing one on skillfully by making attractive

promises. 'Beguile' implies deluding or victimizing by craft, charm, or any device that diverts attention. Satan is an enemy of righteousness. Acts 13:10 says, "You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight path of the Lord?" Our enemy attempts to lure us off the path so our ways will be made crooked and not straight.

It is tempting for us to look toward the hills (on the upper left of the card) of having our **needs**, **longings** and **expectations** met on our own, without seeking the Lord. Paul assures us in Philippians 4:19 that "My God shall supply all your **needs** according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." God also tells us in His Word, "Delight yourself in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires (or **longings**) of thy heart" (Ps. 37:4). And then in Psalm 62:5 He says, "My soul, wait thou only upon God for my **expectation** is from Him." "We have fixed our hope on the living God" (1 Tim. 4:10). Peter reminds us, "That He has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3).

Jeremiah gives the warning also about looking elsewhere for our needs to be met, "For My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jer. 2:13). A cistern is a place dug out—a hole which catches rainwater. A fountain is a natural spring of water, bubbling up continually. When there is no water in the cisterns we have made for ourselves, we should not blame God for not supplying!

Picture the three hills as three pyramids representing Egypt (the world system). Interestingly, Las Vegas, Nevada has just built the fourth pyramid and the sphinx. The world is a symbol of Egypt, and God has warned us not to go back to Egypt.

"Do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt" (Ezek. 20:7). "Do not lift your eyes to them or remember Egypt anymore" (Ezek. 23:27). "Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of Me; and that cover with a covering, but not of My Spirit, that they may add sin to sin: that walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at My mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt! Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion" (Isa. 30:1-3).

As Christians, we are to refuse to have any part of Egypt (the world system). When the children of Israel left Egypt, they took the spoils with them, and causing them much trouble. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 Jn. 2:15).

### **Call to Return**

However, even if we have veered off onto a wrong path, God still invites us to return to Him. "If my people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sins, and will heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14).

God gives this promise to those who recognize they have gone astray and want to return to Him. "Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,' declares the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts'" (Isa. 55:6-9).

## **Sufficiency of Christ**

*“If, then, you have been raised up with Christ, seek for things above, where Christ is seated at God’s right hand. Apply your minds to things above, not to things on earth” (Col. 3:1-2 BERK).*

On the right side of the visual the invitation is, *“Seek Me and ye shall live”* (Amos 5:4). In other words, our sustenance is from Him, our security is from Him and our significance is from Him. Our sufficiency is from Him in everything. We could write over the “balloon” (on the center right of the visual) the word *“El-Shaddai”* which means, “God is enough.” He is not only sufficient, He is enough!

Many people have found that **“God is enough”** through deep trials in their lives:

One of the pastors in a Romanian prison had been stripped of his family, his home and his pastorate, and was confined to a one-room cell. All he had was a blanket. He slept on the floor in his blanket. Many times the guards would jerk him out of his cell, beat him for various false charges, and then throw him back into his cell. He would immediately look for his blanket, curl up in it, and be so grateful that at least he had a blanket. One day he was taken out and beaten. The whole time he was thinking, “Oh, I cannot wait until I return to my cell and curl up in my blanket.” When he was thrown back into his cell, he saw that there was already someone in his blanket. His heart sank. “Oh, no! Now even my blanket is gone!” Just then the person inside the blanket said, “Aren’t I enough?” and then disappeared. That humble servant took it as a gentle rebuke from the Lord. Unknowingly he had started depending on the blanket instead of depending on the Lord. *(as told by David Howard)*

Dr. Helen Roseveare was in Zaire during the time when rebels took over the country. Her hospital was burned; her papers and language lessons were destroyed; she was personally violated; and was left tied to a tree with her arms behind her back. Previously, when she was in hard straits, she would always say or pray, “Is it worth it?” And she would resolve, “Yes, Lord, it is worth it.” Another hard circumstance, and again she would say and pray, “Is it worth it?” Again the resolve, “Yes, it is worth it, Lord.” However, in this extremely dire circumstance, she said again, “Is it worth it?” This time the Lord gently rebuked her, “Helen, you have been asking me the wrong question all these years. The question is, ‘Am I worthy?’” “Yes, Lord, **You are worthy!**” Now, she speaks around the world of God’s grace and faithfulness. He is worthy! He is enough! *(as told by Howard Hendricks)*

Upon the release of an imprisoned pastor behind the Iron Curtain, he was asked, *“What Bible verse sustained you in prison?”* *(as told by Mimi Wilson):*

*It is not the verse, “The Lord is my Shepherd.” It was the **Shepherd!***

*It is not the verse, “My grace is sufficient,” but **GRACE** is sufficient!*

## **Benefits Follow (Serendipities)**

Leighton Ford spoke at a seminary giving direction to the students saying, **“Ministry is what we leave in our tracks as we follow the Lord.”** So as we look behind at the footprints of this caravan of camels, remember that ministry is what we leave in our tracks as we follow the Lord. Even a good goal like “ministry” cannot be our focus.

Let’s picture one of these camels turning his head and looking over to the mirage, then turning back and thinking this verse in Psalms 119:59, *“I thought on my ways and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies.”* We can resolve to follow the Lord, and as we seek Him—not seeking great things for ourselves—we will find that all these serendipities will be added unto us.

**Look *around* and be distressed,  
Look *inside* and be depressed,  
Look to Jesus and be at rest.**

Along the path we see the verse from Hebrews 11:6, “*He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.*” He is a “serendipity-giver” of those that diligently seek Him. Psalm 24:5-6 says, “*He shall receive a blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face...*” And then in Genesis 15:1, He says, “*I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.*” He was speaking to Abraham, but God also wants to reward us with Himself—all our needs are met in Him.

#### Concluding Thoughts:

“When we are rightly related to God, life is full of spontaneous, joyful uncertainty and expectancy. We do not know what God is going to do next; He packs our life with surprises (serendipities).” (Oswald Chambers)

**Turn your eyes upon Jesus  
Look full on His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim  
In the light of His glory and grace.**

(Helen H. Lemmel)

Second Corinthians 3:18 speaks of beholding Him, that we are changed into His image. So instead of looking at a **mirage**, we can look to Christ as in a **mirror**, and as we look to Him, we are being changed daily into His image—reflecting Him. (Mirror: any surface capable of reflecting sufficient undiffused light to form a virtual image (true reflection) of an object placed in front of it.)

“*Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, lean not on thine own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your path straight*” (Prov. 3:5-6). Jesus will make our paths straight as we follow Him.

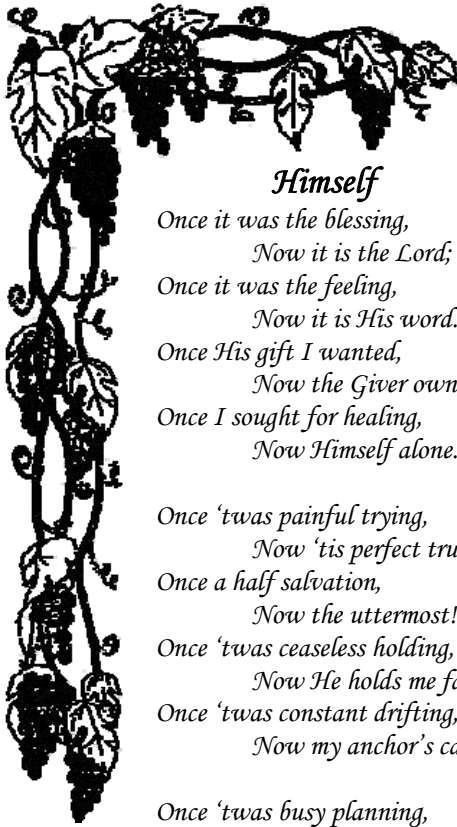
Jim Elliot expressed the following during a pivotal time in his life: “**What is actual, is actual. What might have been, simply is not. Therefore, I must not question as though God had robbed me of things that are not, but the things that are are good, God-given, and enriched, and I must not let the longing of those things that are not, spoil the appetite of my living.**”

“*And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me*” (2 Cor. 12:9).

#### Prayer

Lord, we are very thankful for Your **sufficient grace** today. We thank You for the many serendipities that You bring to us along our way as we focus on You. Return us to Your paths if we go astray seeking our own way. Return us to You so that we can enjoy You, so that You can become ‘El-Shaddai’ in our lives—our God Who is enough. Thank You in Jesus’ name, Amen.

**Review and reinforce this lesson by incorporating the following notes and quotes pages and by reading the Scriptures.**



### *Himself*

Once it was the blessing,  
Now it is the Lord;  
Once it was the feeling,  
Now it is His word.  
Once His gift I wanted,  
Now the Giver own;  
Once I sought for healing,  
Now Himself alone.

Once 'twas painful trying,  
Now 'tis perfect trust  
Once a half salvation,  
Now the uttermost!  
Once 'twas ceaseless holding,  
Now He holds me fast  
Once 'twas constant drifting,  
Now my anchor's cast.

Once 'twas busy planning,  
Now 'tis trustful prayer;  
Once 'twas anxious caring,  
Now He has the care;  
Once 'twas what I wanted,  
Now what Jesus says;  
Once 'twas constant asking,  
Now 'tis ceaseless praise.

Once it was my working,  
His it hence shall be;  
Once I tried to use Him,  
Now He uses me;  
Once the power I wanted,  
Now the Mighty One;  
Once for self I labored,  
Now for Him alone.

Once I hoped in Jesus,  
Now I know He's mine;  
Once my lamps were dying,  
Now they brightly shine;  
Once for death I waited,  
Now His coming hail;  
And my hopes are anchored  
Safe within the veil.  
A. B. Simpson

***Jesus is not only everything –  
He's enough!***

Art Yohner

*“El Shaddai” – The God Who is Enough!*

## **Self-Occupation**

**S**elf-occupation is a great mistake for the Christian. Of course, until a sinner has learned the plague of his own soul, he must be turned in upon himself. Thus he will cry, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” and find salvation and peace in turning to God. So, too, a Christian must be reminded of himself as long as he thinks there is anything good in him. But when he can say with Paul, “I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing,” he is privileged to turn from himself to Christ to find his all in Him.

What a relief it is! Instead of thinking about *my* feelings, *my* attainments, *my* work, and *my* dignity – to live in the joy of the Lord and what He has done for us. And then let Him work in us that which is well pleasing in His sight, in the desire that He may be glorified. This is what is meant by the words, “To me to live is Christ”; living is Christ.

Are you thinking of yourself? Then you are in danger of being a Pharisee, or being miserable. Do you long to be happy, or holy? Turn to Jesus the Author and Finisher of faith; find your all in Him.

Our Daily Bread

**Look around and be distressed  
Look inside and be depressed  
Look at Jesus and be at rest!**

Corrie Ten Boom

### **Hebrews 12:2**

Looking unto Jesus... and nothing else;  
As our text expresses it in one untranslatable word (aphorontes), which at the same time directs us to fix our gaze upon Him, and to turn it away from everything else.

Theodore Monod

**“What is actual, is actual. What might have been simply is not. Therefore I must not question as though God had robbed me of things that are not. But the things that are, are good, God-given and enriched. And I must not let the longing of those things (that are not) spoil the appetite of my living.”**

Jim Elliot

# But We See Jesus

I look not back; God knows the fruitless efforts,  
The wasted hours, the sinning, the regrets.  
I leave them all with Him who blots the record,  
And graciously forgives, and then forgets.

I look not forward; God sees all the future,  
The road that, short or long, will lead me home,  
And He will face with me its every trial,  
And bear for me the burdens that may come.

I look not inward; that would make me wretched;  
For I have naught on which to stay my trust.  
Nothing I see save failures and shortcomings,  
And weak endeavors, crumbling into the dust.

But I look up – into the face of Jesus,  
For there my heart can rest, my fears are stilled;  
And there is joy, and love, and light for darkness,  
And perfect peace, and every hope fulfilled.

Annie Johnson Flint  
Oskar Ahnfelt (3<sup>rd</sup> verse)



“Then the servant took ten camels from the camels of his master (Abraham), and set out with a variety of good things of his master’s in his hand...” (Genesis 24:10)

There were ten camels loaded up for the bride. Ten typifies all the fullness that God can supply. Everything is provided for the journey. We don’t often realize the counsels of God concerning ourselves... The camels are circumstances that take us through this scene. They have big broad feet; they cannot sink, although often, on her journey, Rebekah was jolted forward and sometimes backward.

Blest the sorrow, kind the storm that drives us nearer home.

Christian Treasury

## Abide in Christ As your Righteousness

“You bear about with you a nature altogether corrupt and vile, ever seeking to rise up and darken your sense of acceptance, and of access to unbroken fellowship with the Father. Nothing can enable you to walk and dwell in the light of God, without even the shadow of a cloud between, but the habitual abiding in Christ as your righteousness... Live your daily life in God’s sight, an object of delight and pleasure in Christ. ‘Of God He is made unto you righteousness.’ This will keep you in perfect peace... So shall your inmost being be transformed into being righteous and doing righteousness... Joy and gladness above measure will be your portion.”

Andrew Murray

**Everyone who does not have Christ  
has either a disappointed heart or  
a heart seeking what will  
disappoint it.**

Unknown

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus  
Look full in His wonderful Face  
And the things of earth  
Will grow strangely dim,  
In the light of His glory and  
grace.*

Helen H. Lemmel

## **“Keep your Eyes Fixed on Jesus”**

*“The more we keep our eyes on Him, the more He will keep the rocks out of our path. Keep your eyes off the things around you. Stop often and praise and worship Him. Do not fret... even if you stumble; He will use it for His glory, if you keep your eyes on Him”*

Unknown

***I am resolved no longer to linger,  
Charmed by the world’s delight;  
Things that are higher, things that are  
nobler –  
These have allured my sight.***

Hartsouch

All that I want is in Jesus  
He satisfies; Joy He supplies.  
Life would be worthless without  
Him  
All things (serendipities) in  
Jesus I find.

Harry D. Loes

Seek ye first, not earthly pleasure  
Fading joy, and failing treasure,  
But the love that knows no measure,  
Seek ye first.

Seek ye first God’s peace and blessing;  
Ye have all of this possessing.  
Come, your need and sin confessing,  
Seek Him first.

Seek Him first; then when forgiven,  
Pardoned, made an heir of heaven,  
Let your life to Him be given.  
Seek this first.

Seek this first – Be pure and holy,  
Like the Master, meek and lowly,  
Yielded to His service wholly.  
Seek this first.

Unknown