# 'TIS SO SWEET Devotional & Study Guide

RESTON BIBLE CHURCH

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### History

'Tis So Sweet is a hymn inspired by great personal tragedy. Yet each stanza celebrates trust and dependency on the sure and steady rock of Jesus Christ in the face of hardship, trial and uncertainty.

The hymn was originally written by Louisa M. R. Stead in 1882. As Louisa, her husband, and their daughter Lily spent an evening enjoying a picnic along the banks of the Long Island Sound, they heard cries for help coming from a young boy struggling to stay above the water's surface. Mr. Stead raced into the sound to rescue the boy, but as Louisa and Lily watched helplessly from the bank, both the boy and Mr. Stead tragically slipped beneath the water and drowned. Louisa and Lily were devastated. This was only the beginning of Louisa's troubles as she and her daughter faced an uncertain future alone and fell into poverty. Yet throughout their trials, the Lord remained faithful. They clung to Jesus as the Rock of their hope and later gave their lives to missionary service in Africa. She once wrote to a friend that "one cannot, in the face of the peculiar difficulties, help but say, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' But with simple confidence and trust we may and do say, 'Our sufficiency is of God.'" Because Louisa walked through those difficulties, and more, with an abiding dependence upon her Savior, she was able to proclaim with confidence that Jesus was sufficient for her life.

### Old Made New

As a gift to the congregation of Reston Bible Church, the RBC worship team composed an original musical arrangement and wrote additional lyrics to Stead's version of 'Tis So Sweet. Even though this is a song born from tragedy, there is an even deeper root of joy that we felt would bless our church family as we celebrate the goodness of Jesus over all facets of life.

You can find links to RBC's original audio and video recordings of this song online at: www.restonbible.org/worship

### How to Use this Guide

This study guide will walk you through each stanza of the original hymn in addition to the new lyrics over seven days. Take a few minutes each day to listen through the song and consider the words. Think and pray through the accompanying Scriptures, and take time to journal and answer the questions as you prayerfully reflect on what it means to trust the Lord, even in times of loss and sorrow.

### Tis So Sweet

'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus Just to take Him at His Word Just to rest upon His promise, Just to know, "Thus saith the Lord!"

Oh, how sweet to trust in Jesus, Just to trust His cleansing blood And in simple faith to plunge me 'Neath the healing, cleansing flood!

Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him! How I've proved Him o'er and o'er Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus! Oh, for grace to trust Him more!

Yes, 'tis sweet to trust in Jesus, Just from sin and self to cease Just from Jesus simply taking Life and rest, and joy and peace.

I'm so glad I learned to trust Him, Precious Jesus, Savior, Friend And I know that He is with me, Will be with me to the end. In You I find my hope,
In You I find my peace,
In Your presence Lord,
My joy is made complete.
My heart will gladly sing
Of all You've done for me
Give me grace to trust Your love for me.

You make all things new You have overcome Though my sin is crimson red, You washed it white as snow.

I'm so glad I learned to trust Thee Precious Jesus, Savior, Friend And I know that You are with me, Will be with me to the end.

### **DAY ONE**Upon His Promise

'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus, Just to take Him at His Word Just to rest upon His promise, Just to know, "Thus saith the Lord!"

#### Read & Reflect

Hebrews 13:8, James 1:17, Philippians 4:19, Jeremiah 29:11, Isaiah 46:9-11, Numbers 23:19

The Lord never changes. What He has promised, He will do. There is no turning to the left or to the right. His character and nature are sure, steady and trustworthy. If He says He will or claims that He is, then He will not ever stray from that promise. Though everything about life may fail, falter, or be stripped away, the Lord stays the same, and we can cling to Him as a steady anchor for our souls. No matter the circumstance, our Lord remains steadfast and eternally, unwaveringly good.

- 1. What does the Lord promise to us as His children? What are some of your favorite promises from Scripture?
- 2. Where have you witnessed the promises of God holding true in your life, even in difficult situations?
- 3. Do you feel like God has ever failed you? What is one of the most painful and difficult things you've faced in your life? What happened? How to the promises of God in His Word speak to your situation?
- 4. Take a moment to pray and ask the Lord to bring to remembrance the great promises He has specifically made to you. Spend some time thanking Him for His perfect, unending goodness.

### **DAY TWO** *His Cleansing Blood*

Oh, how sweet to trust in Jesus, Just to trust His cleansing blood And in simple faith to plunge me 'Neath the healing, cleansing flood!

### Read & Reflect

Hebrews 7:18-27, Ephesians 1:11-19, Titus 3:7, 1 Peter 1:17-21, 2 Corinthians 5:21

We may not think about blood on a regular basis, but no one can refute its importance. The promo materials for our church's regular blood drives include the short phrase "Give Blood, Give Life." Why? Because blood *is* life. Sin, by contrast, is death. Sin brings condemnation. Sin separates. Sin takes life. Sin is so serious that there can be no forgiveness of it without the shedding of life-giving blood (Hebrews 9:22). In obedience to His Father and in His great love for us, Jesus shed His blood at the cross that we might be made alive in Him. His blood brings forgiveness, draws us near, purifies us, gives us true life. We must trust Jesus, believing that His blood, shed on our behalf, is enough to cover our sins and make us clean.

- 1. Do you ever struggle to believe that Jesus' blood has cleaned you, and that nothing you can do can change that? How does Scripture address any fears you may have in this area?
- 2. Do you readily trust the promise that once redeemed by His blood, you are heir to all of His promises? What are the implications of this for your daily life?
- 3. What promises from Scripture do you struggle to believe? Ask the Lord to help you remember that as a daughter or son of God, you are guaranteed to inherit the riches that He promises to his children, the hope of eternal life.
- 4. In light of the blood He shed over you at the cross, spend some time praying that the Lord would give you a simple, childlike faith to truly believe all that He has said regarding you.

### **DAY THREE**To Trust Him More

Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him! How I've proved Him o'er and o'er. Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus! Oh, for grace to trust Him more!

### Read & Reflect

Psalm 34:8, Psalm 103:12, Deuteronomy 7:9, Job 13:15, Lamentations 3:22-23, Mark 9:24

The world around us is constantly changing, and not always for the better. What or whom can we depend upon? Psalm 119 gives use this assurance: "Your word, Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. Your faithfulness continues through all generations." The Word of God reveals the character of God, and only He is truly faithful. We can trust that God will be true and will not ever will He cease being sovereign, holy, or good. We can trust that the Lord will not alter. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Because He's proven himself to be trustworthy, we can place our trust in Him, without reservation, with every aspect of our lives.

- 1. Do you have trouble relinquishing control to the Lord out of fear or pride? How does this play out in your life?
- 2. Where does your life demonstrate that God is faithful and trustworthy? In what moments or situations do you clearly recognize His sustaining presence in your life, giving you peace and comfort?
- 3. Why do we often falter in trusting the Lord when He has proven himself to be trustworthy time after time? Why do we need God's grace in order "to trust Him more"?
- 4. Take a moment to pray and ask the Lord for supernatural help in trusting Him, to bring to mind all the times He's been faithful to you, even when you've doubted Him. Pray that He would give you the grace to trust Him more and more.

### **DAY FOUR**From Self to Cease

Yes, 'tis sweet to trust in Jesus, Just from sin and self to cease Just from Jesus simply taking Life and rest, and joy and peace.

#### Read & Reflect

Proverbs 3:5, Psalm 20:7, 2 Corinthians 12:9, 1 Peter 1:3, John 3:30-36

The opposite of trusting the Lord is trusting in one's own self. This is sin, that we would rely on our own strength or understanding to traverse life. When we choose to do things apart from God, we are believing the lie that we do not need Him. Trusting in our own strength is ultimately mistrust of Jesus and His work at the cross. To trust Jesus is to give every situation to Him and to be completely swallowed up by the joy and the peace that arises from knowing that He is in control, not us. As we trust Him and believe Him at His Word, we rest in the knowledge that He is sovereign and walking with us through the highs and the lows of life.

- 1. Can you think of times when you have tried to handle situations by your own strength? How did it turn out? What would it look like to depend on God in those situations?
- 2. How is the Lord glorified in our weakness?
- 3. How have you experienced life, rest, joy, and peace in Jesus? What is it about His grace that is sufficient for your life?
- 4. Take a moment to pray and ask the Lord to show you areas where you might be striving to control circumstances on your own, apart from God. Ask Him to allow you to relinquish control and to trust him with every part of your life. Pray that He would empower you to cling to His unwavering promises and to fill you with peace, joy, and rest as you believe Him at His Word.

### **DAY FIVE**In Your Presence

In You I find my hope,
In You I find my peace,
In Your presence, Lord, my joy is made complete.
My heart will gladly sing
Of all You've done for me
Give me grace to trust Your love for me.

#### Read & Reflect

Psalm 52:5-8, Psalm 16:10-11, John 14:23-27, 1 Peter 2:4-10

There is no other place but the presence of the Lord where we can truly and deeply experience a joy that surpasses human understanding. He is our mighty Rock, unshakable and unmoving. When we come to the place of rest from striving, and surrender our cares to Him, He promises to fill us with peace. This is not a peace that is merely circumstancial, but one born from the knowledge that our God is sovereign and in control of all things. And in Him, our Fortress and Refuge, we cannot be shaken.

- 1. What does it mean to be in the presence of the Lord? How do you experience His presence? Why does being in His presence produce joy, peace, and hope?
- 2. Do you find it difficult to surrender your worries and fears into God's hands? Where do you tend to try to find peace apart from Him? Is there anything you believe you can accomplish apart from God, that you believe He cannot do? How does God's Word address this?
- 3. Ask the Lord to reveal to you any areas you may be hoping in things other than Him. Pray for a deeper awareness of His presence and the grace to trust Him with all of your cares and burdens. Ask Him to fill your heart with overflowing praise and thanksgiving for the peace that He has promised you in His Word.

## **DAY SIX**All Things New

You make all things new, You have overcome. Though my sin was crimson red, You washed it white as snow.

### Read & Reflect

Ezekiel 36:26, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:1-10, Romans 6:5-11, John 1:9-13, Psalm 103:8-12

What an amazing miracle, that a dead person would be brought back to life. In the natural order of our fallen world, every living thing moves towards death as soon as it becomes alive. Moving in the opposite direction—from death to life—is completely unnatural. Yet God says, "In Christ, all things have become new." Because of the gospel of Jesus, we are not just cleaned up, bettered, polished, or improved upon. In Jesus, we are fundamentally changed. We were completely dead in our sin. But the instant we put our faith in Jesus, we passed from death to life and were made alive in Him. What a incredible and humbling truth—we are made new in Christ!

- 1. Do you sometimes struggle to believe that you are a new creation in Christ, that the old, with all of its ugliness, has passed away, and that all things have been made beautifully new? How do the promises of Scripture comfort you in that struggle?
- 2. In what ways do you need to "put off the old man with his deeds" (Colossians 3:9), and put on the "new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness" (Ephesians 4:24)?
- 3. Take a moment to ask the Lord for victory over sin in your life, for greater belief in the promise that you are no longer under the rule of sin. Thank Him for doing the work on the cross, for the blood He shed that covers you. Praise Him for making a new creature out of you, and for promising that He has forgotten all your sin!

### DAY SEVEN To the End

I'm so glad I learned to trust Him, Precious Jesus, Savior, Friend And I know that He is with me, Will be with me to the end.

### Read & Reflect

Matthew 11:28-29, Isaiah 43:2, 1 John 2:25, Numbers 23:19, Psalm 89:34, Romans 8:28

How do you, as God's child, learn to trust the Lord? Quite simply, we cannot trust someone we do not know. Though many things vie for our trust, God is the only One truly worthy of our trust. He never lies and never fails to fulfill His promises. Ever. Trusting the Lord often requires us to walk through situations we cannot be in control. We will face pain and trials. But because of God's trustworthiness, He redeems those trials to produce a deeper reliance, peace, and trust in Him. To the extent that we do not know God, we will not trust Him. But as we get know Him through His Word, and as we experience His faithfulness through trials, we will see that He is worthy of our trust, and our trust in Him will grow daily.

- 1. Where in your life have you learned to trust the Lord? Can you remember a time when you experienced the peace that comes from casting the weight of your cares on Him?
- 2. Do you believe that God will remain faithful to you "to the end"? How does God's past faithfulness affect the way you face future trials?
- 4. What is beyond the "end" of life, for those whose trust is in the Lord?
- 5. Take a moment to pray and ask the Lord to deepen your trust in Him. Ask Him to fix your eyes on eternity with Him, and for the strength to endure all trials until His return. Ask Him to fill you with hope, peace, and rest in Him. Thank Him for being faithful to complete the good work He has begun in you.

### Notes & Reflections

### RESTON BIBLE CHURCH 45650 OAKBROOK COURT, DULLES, VA | INFO@RESTONBIBLE.ORG WWW.RESTONBIBLE.ORG

