

The Century Club

100 of the Most Hedonistic Texts in the Bible

In the early 1990s I was a member of the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at UCLA. Our community had been strongly influenced by the excellent Biblical teachings of Dr. John Piper, among them the concept which Piper terms "Christian Hedonism." Piper's premise is that the deepest, most lasting joys and pleasures are found only in God (Psalm 16.11). None of the "fleeting pleasures of sin" can ever compare to the deep, lasting joy and eternal reward that God gives through Jesus Christ to those who love him (Hebrews 11.25-26). So, to be a true hedonist (that is, a seeker of pleasure), one must be a Christian! Seeking joy and pleasure in anything but God will ultimately prove shallow and short-lived by comparison. The sin of the so-called "hedonists," who live for the pursuit of *sinful* pleasure, is *not* found in their desire for happiness, but in their pursuit of happiness in the wrong place, in anything other than God (compare, for example, Psalm 16.4 with Psalm 16.11). In the words of the prophet Jeremiah,

*Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods?
But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit.
Be appalled, O heavens, at this, be shocked, be utterly desolate, says the Lord,
For my people have committed two evils:
They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters,
And hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water. (Jeremiah 2.11-13)*

One such "broken cistern" is a drinking game, popular on many college campuses, which is called "the Century Club." The goal of this drinking game is to consume 100 shot glasses of beer in 100 minutes - one per minute, on the minute, for 100 minutes. Those who are still conscious after 100 shots of beer in 100 minutes become members of the "Century Club." Years ago, my best friend John Teter and I got into a conversation about this drinking game, and how unfortunate it is that those who do not know God should resort to such weak and pathetic means of seeking happiness. The idea came to us to re-invent the Century Club in the spirit of Christian Hedonism, replacing the "broken cistern" with the "fountain of living waters." The new Century Club would reflect the truth that there is a far greater joy to be found in God than that which is found in drunken dissipation, or in anything else: "*You have put gladness in my heart more than when their grain and wine abound*" (Psalm 4.7). We decided to compile a list of the 100 most "hedonistic" texts in the Bible, the sole criterion for inclusion being how soaked the text is with the prospect of a believer's joy in God. Then, we would gather together to read these texts aloud, one per minute, on the minute, for 100 minutes - and rejoice greatly in our all-satisfying God! We pray that reading and meditating on these texts will also inspire you to worship, regardless of how many minutes you spend on each one!

It was quite a challenge to compile our top 100 texts from among the myriad Scripture verses promising joy in God! Obviously, we had to make many judgment-calls to narrow it down to only 100 passages, and the list reflects our own opinion. Select additional texts which express a thought comparable to the text cited are noted as "*see also's*" throughout the list. Should you feel we have neglected a truly hedonistic passage that ought to have been included, or wonder about our rationale for including a given text in the list, feel free to contact us. We would be happy to consider other texts that may have escaped our notice, and perhaps update the list.

For the *joy* set before us,

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1. Is anything too difficult for the Lord? (**Genesis 18.14**)
2. And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. (**Genesis 50.20**)
3. The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means leave the guilty unpunished..." (**Exodus 34.6-7**. For further reference to the "name" of God, see also Exodus 20.5-6, Deuteronomy 7.9, 1 Kings 8.23, Nehemiah 1.5, Nehemiah 9.17, Psalm 86.15, Daniel 9.4, Joel 2.13, and Jonah 4.2.)
4. All the commandments which I command you this day you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give to your fathers. And you shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments, or not. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know; that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord. (**Deuteronomy 8.1-3**, see also Deuteronomy 6.24, John 6.35)
5. There is none like God, O Jeshurun [*Israel*], who rides through the heavens to your help, and in his majesty through the skies. The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms. (**Deuteronomy 33:26-27**; see also Psalm 91, Proverbs 14:32, Nahum 1.7)
6. You know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one thing has failed of all the good things that the Lord your God promised concerning you; all have come to pass for you, not one of them has failed. (**Joshua 23:14**)
7. Those who honor me will I honor. (**1 Samuel 2.30**; see also Matthew 10.32, Luke 12.8, John 12.26)
8. The eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that he may strongly support those whose hearts are completely his. (**2 Chronicles 16.9**)
9. For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at last he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then from my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. (**Job 19.25-26**)
10. You have put gladness in my heart more than when their grain and wine abound. (**Psalm 4.7**)
11. I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you... Those who choose another god multiply their sorrows... In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (**Psalm 16.1; 4, 11**)
12. The ordinances of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. (**Psalm 19.9-11**)
13. It was you who took me from the womb; you kept me safe on my mother's breast. On you I was cast from my birth, and since my mother bore me you have been my God. (**Psalm 22.9-10**)
14. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (**Psalm 23.1-6**; see also Ezekiel 34.15)

15. One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple. **(Psalm 27.4)**
16. O taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are those who take refuge in him... Those who seek the Lord lack no good thing. **(Psalm 34.8, 10)**
17. Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds. Your righteousness is like the mountains of God, your judgements are like the great deep; you save man and beast, O Lord. How precious is your steadfast love, O God! All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light. **(Psalm 36.5-9)**
18. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. **(Psalm 37.4)**
19. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world and all that is in it is mine. Call on me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me. **(Psalm 50.15)**
20. The steadfast love of God is better than life!... It satisfies the soul as with a rich feast. **(Psalm 63.3, 5)**
21. Nevertheless I am continually with thee; you hold me by my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing upon earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. **(Psalm 73.23-26)**
22. I am the Lord your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide and I will fill it... I would feed you with the finest of the wheat, and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you. **(Psalm 81.10, 16)**
23. For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the Lord God is a sun and shield; he bestows favor and honor. No good thing does the Lord withhold from those who walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, happy is everyone who trusts in you. **(Psalm 84.10-12)**
24. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits--who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the Pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good as long as you live. **(Psalm 103.2-5)**
25. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is God's steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgression from us. As a father has compassion for his children, so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him. **(Psalm 103.11-13)**
26. Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy. Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves. **(Psalm 126.5-6)**
27. The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The Lord is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made... He fulfills the desire of all who fear him, he also hears their cry, and saves them. **(Psalm 145.9, 19; see also Nehemiah 9.17)**
28. The prospect of the righteous is joy, but the hopes of the wicked come to nothing. **(Proverbs 10.28)**
29. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. **(Isaiah 35.10; see also Isaiah 51.11)**

30. Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary, and his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. **(Isaiah 40.28-31)**
31. But now, thus says the Lord, your Creator, O Jacob, and he who formed you, O Israel, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine! When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you... Since you are precious in my sight, since you are honored, and I love you..." **(Isaiah 43.1-4)**
32. Listen to me,...all...who have been borne by me from your birth, carried from the womb; even to your old age I am he, even when you turn gray I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save. **(Isaiah 46.3-4)**
33. For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you. **(Isaiah 54.10)**
34. For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch. The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord will give. You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My delight is in her, and your land Married; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. **(Isaiah 62.1-5)**
35. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. **(Isaiah 64.4)**
36. For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. Plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes. **(Jeremiah 29.11-14)**
37. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you. **(Jeremiah 31.3;** see also Isaiah 49.15)
38. Behold, the days are coming says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant which I shall make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. **(Jeremiah 31.31-34,** see also Leviticus 26.12, Ezekiel 34.15, Ezekiel 37.26-28, Zechariah 8.8, 2 Corinthians 6.16-18, Hebrews 8.8-12)
39. I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for all time, for their own good and the good of their children after them. I will make an everlasting covenant with them, never to draw back from doing good to them; and I will put the fear of me in their hearts, so that they may not turn from me. I will rejoice in doing good to them, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul. **(Jeremiah 32.39-41)**

40. But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." (**Lamentations 3.21-24**)
41. I passed by you, and saw you flailing about in your blood. As you lay in your blood, I said to you, "Live! and grow up like a plant of the field." (**Ezekiel 16.6**)
42. The Most High is sovereign over the kingdom of mortals. (**Daniel 4.17**)
43. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. (**Daniel 12.3**)
44. I will take you for my wife forever; I will take you for my wife in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. I will take you for my wife in faithfulness; and you shall know the Lord. (**Hosea 2.19-20**)
45. When Israel was a child, I loved him... It was I who taught Ephraim to walk. I took them up in my arms; but they did not know that I healed them. I led them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love. I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks: I bent down to them and fed them. (**Hosea 11.1-4**)
46. Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of your possession? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in showing clemency. He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities under foot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will show faithfulness to Jacob and unswerving loyalty to Abraham, as you have sworn to our ancestors from the days of old. (**Micah 7.18-20**)
47. The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (**Habakkuk 2.14**)
48. Though the fig tree does not blossom, and no fruit is on the vines;
Though the produce of the olive fails and the fields yield no food;
Though the flock is cut off from the fold and there is no herd in the stalls,
Yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will exult in the God of my salvation.
God, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, and makes me tread upon the heights. (**Habakkuk 3.17-19**)
49. The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival. (**Zephaniah 3.17-18**)
50. Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house; and thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing. I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil; and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the Lord of hosts. Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the Lord of hosts. (**Malachi 3.10-12**)
51. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets before you. (**Matthew 5.3-12**; see also Luke 6.20-23)

52. ... and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. (**Matthew 6.4, 6.6, and 6.18**; for the full context of this promise, see Matthew 6.1 - 6.24)
53. Now if that is how God clothes the wild flowers growing in the field which are there today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, will he not much more look after you, you who have so little faith?... Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these other things will be given to you as well. (**Matthew 6.30, 33**; see also Matthew 10.31, 32)
54. If you then, evil as you are, know how to give your children what is good, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him! (**Matthew 7.11**; see also Luke 11.11-13)
55. Come to me, all who labor and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light. (**Matthew 11.28-30**)
56. The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field which someone has found; he hides it again, goes off in his joy, sells everything he owns and buys the field. (**Matthew 13.44**)
57. Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother. (**Mark 3.35**; see also Matthew 12.46-50, Luke 8.21)
58. Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come, eternal life. (**Mark 10.29-30**; see also Matthew 19.29, Luke 18.29-30)
59. The Son of man also came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (**Mark 10.45**; see also Matthew 20.25-28, Luke 9.48, Mark 9.35)
60. Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the marriage feast, so that they may open to him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes; truly, I say to you, he will gird himself and have them sit at table, and he will come and serve them. If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those servants! (**Luke 12.32-38**)
61. And he said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours." (**Luke 15.31**)
62. For of his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (**John 1.17**)
63. He who has the bride is the bridegroom; the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice; therefore this joy of mine is now full. (**John 3.29**)
64. On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, "If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" (**John 7.37-38**; see also John 6.35, John 4.13-14)
65. I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life. (**John 8.12**)

66. I am the gate for the sheep... Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. (**John 10.7, 9-11**)
67. I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. (**John 11.25-26**; see also John 3.16-17)
68. Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself that where I am there you may be also. (**John 14.1-3**; see also John 14.23)
69. Peace I leave with you; my own peace I give to you, I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. (**John 14.27**; see also Philippians 4.6-7)
70. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my own joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. (**John 15.9-11**)
71. When a woman is in travail she has sorrow, because her hour has come; but when she is delivered of the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a child is born into the world. So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father, he will give it to you in my name. Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. (**John 16.21-24**)
72. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all men life and breath and all things. (**Acts 17.24-25**)
73. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (**Romans 8.1**)
74. ...you have received the spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba, Father!" it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God. (**Romans 8.16-19**; see also 1 John 3.1)
75. All things to work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. (**Romans 8.28**)
76. If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how will he not also with him freely give us all things? Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is he who died, yes, rather he who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... But in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (**Romans 8.31-39**; see also Romans 5.8-10)
77. "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him." (**1 Corinthians 2.9**)

78. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive... What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power... Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven... Listen, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality... Then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death, is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" (1 Corinthians 15.22, 42-43, 49, 51-55; see also 2 Corinthians 5.1-4, Luke 20.38)
79. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4.17-18)
80. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; everything old has passed away, behold, everything has become new! (2 Corinthians 5.17)
81. I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe... (Ephesians 1.16-19; see also Ephesians 1.4, 3.14-21)
82. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come he might show the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourself -- it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. (Ephesians 2.4-8)
83. Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace... And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God... (Ephesians 2.12-14, 17-19; see also 1 Peter 2.9-10)
84. And I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1.6; see also 2 Timothy 1.12)
85. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. (Philippians 1.21; see also Colossians 3.3-4)
86. I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in him... (Philippians 3.8-10)
87. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus shall we always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4.16-17)
88. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. (2 Timothy 4.8)

89. But when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared, he saved you, not on the basis of deeds which you had done in righteousness, but according to his mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that being justified by his grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. **(Titus 3.4-8)**
90. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. **(Hebrews 4.16)**
91. In the same way, when God desired to show even more clearly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it by an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God would prove false, we who have taken refuge might be strongly encouraged to seize the hope set before us. We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus, a forerunner on our behalf, has entered, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. **(Hebrews 6.17-20)**
92. He is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. **(Hebrews 7.25)**
93. By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called a son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered abuse suffered for the Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to the reward. **(Hebrews 11.25-26)**
94. Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who, for the joy set before him, endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. **(Hebrews 12.1-2)**
95. But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood which speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel. **(Hebrews 12.22-24)**
96. He has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." So we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?" **(Hebrews 13.5-6; see also Matthew 28:20)**
97. Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow. **(James 1.17)**
98. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while you may have to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold which though perishable is tested by fire, may redound to praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him, and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. **(1 Peter 1.3-9)**
99. These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. **(Revelation 7.14-17)**

100. See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; and they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." (**Revelation 21.3-5**)

I rejoice at thy word like one who finds great spoil. (Psalm 119.162)

*Happy are the people to whom such blessings fall;
Happy are the people whose God is the Lord! (Psalm 144.15)*

*He has granted to us his precious and very great promises,
that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion
and become partakers of the divine nature. (2 Peter 1.4)*

*Since we have these promises, beloved,
let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and of spirit,
making holiness perfect in the fear of God. (2 Corinthians 7.1)*

*God hath strewn all the way from the gate of hell where thou wast,
to the gate of heaven whither thou art going, with flowers out of his own garden.
Behold, how the promises, invitations, calls, and encouragements like lilies lie round about thee.
Take heed, that thou not tread them under thy feet. (John Bunyan)*