



Come Together

Written by Dr. Katrina D. Forseth

Isaiah 1:18

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

About the Author



**Dr. Katrina Forseth,
CEF of Illinois
State Director**

Dr. Katrina Forseth, has been serving on staff as a missionary with Child Evangelism Fellowship® in the USA for over 30 years. For the past 23 years, Katrina has served as the State Director of CEF® of Illinois, Inc. overseeing the staff and the ministry which reaches over 9,000 children annually statewide through its CEF ministry outreaches.

Katrina received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Bible-Theology from Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Illinois; a Master of Arts Degree in Christian Education at Columbia International University in Columbia, South Carolina; and recently completed her Doctorate of Biblical Studies in Theology from Master's International University Divinity School in Evansville, Indiana.

Katrina loves God's Word, studying, and teaching God's Word through CEF teacher training classes and other teaching/ministry settings, including a weekly radio program called, "*Telling Future Generations.*" Katrina enjoys writing Bible study devotionals from her personal study of God's Word to share with others. *II Thessalonians 3:1 says, "that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you."*

Katrina has served on short-term mission trips to Africa—including Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania over a period of several years. She has also served on summer mission trips to England, Estonia, and also Barbados along with her husband, Kermit Forseth.

Katrina serves as an adjunct instructor for the "*Perspectives on World Missions,*" an accredited college and seminary level course from the U.S. Center for World Missions. Katrina has organized missionary trips overseas, serving as the missions trip coordinator. In recent years, CEF of Illinois, Inc. has sent two missionary teams to Trinidad and they are planning future summer mission trips overseas to Uganda in East Central Africa.

Katrina and her husband, Kermit Forseth, live in Peoria, Illinois USA with their two sons, Caleb and Samuel. Kermit's parents were missionaries in Bolivia, South America where Kermit lived for many years and Kermit is also a graduate from Moody Bible Institute as a Missions major. The Forseth family has traveled to Africa on a family missions trip to Kenya and Uganda serving the CEF national missionaries in those countries.

Acts 1:8

"But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."



Come Together

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Purpose

Hudson Taylor, the founder of China Inland Missions in the 1800's, was often fond of saying, "God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply." That's true! But what is also true is that working for God in our own strength and in our own way will found to be lacking every time. There is no other way to start the day than to commit ourselves to be devoted to our God. After all, is this not what the purpose of devotions are?

Each day God's people stray from their God and each day God's people need to come back to their God. Coming to God is a privilege, but it is also a necessity. If we fail to come to God to be strengthened in our inner man through the Word of God and through the Spirit of God, how can we find the strength to live our days as God intended? In our own selves we cannot, but through God we can.

It is my prayer that these 45 day devotionals might be a blessing to you in your life. God's Word received in God's way will never lack God's supply. These devotionals are designed to be only a springboard. Let God's Word, not my words, speak to you. Take time to pray, take time to read the Scriptures, and take time to sit and soak in what God is saying through His Spirit. Come to God and let God come to you. He will, for He has promised that He would. He's just waiting for you to come.

In Christ and for the building of His Kingdom,

Dr. Katrina D. Forseth
State Director
CEF of Illinois

Dedication

*“My heart is overflowing with a good matter:
I speak of the things which I have made touching the king:
my tongue is the pen of a ready writer” (Psalm 45:1).*

This is my heart's desire, and this is the only reason why I believe that the Lord wanted me to write these devotionals. I do love to study God's Word. I long to hear from my Lord every day and to seek His guidance and direction in my life. Many times, my heart is just overflowing with His Word, and I want to simply share what the Lord has taught me with others. I only desire to speak of those things which would focus people's attention upon God, our Savior and King. I do not claim to be a writer, but I cannot help but to write and to speak of those things that God through His Word and His Spirit has emboldened upon my heart. My only desire, other than to glorify the Lord, is that somehow, these 45-day devotionals would be a blessing to you. It is my prayer that the Lord would use them in His will and in His way to further His kingdom.

I want to dedicate these to the Lord and to my family and friends who have cheered me on and prayed with me and for me through all these writings. I especially, want to thank my CEF State Office Staff family, for making the printing and putting together of this 45-page devotional book even possible! You are the BEST! It is a joy to work with you every day in the harvest field serving the Lord!

Finally, I want to dedicate these to the CEF family in Illinois, for whom they were written. Let's come together this summer to be right with God and right with one another! Once we have done this, there is nothing that can stop us from reaching the generation to come for the Lord.

Zechariah 4:6, “... Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.”

In Christ and for His Kingdom,

Dr. Katrina D. Forseth
State Director
CEF of Illinois, Inc.

COME TO YOU

(By Katrina D. Forseth written for Summer Missionary Training School)

I'm here to come to You.
Won't You come to me?
I'm here to be with You,
Oh, won't You be with me?

I'm here to know the truth,
That in You I am complete.
Come and be my life to me.
Come and be my everything.

Verse 1

I worship You my God and King,
Who gave His life for me.
I worship You my everything,
Who knows the truth inside of me. (repeat chorus)

Verse 2

I give to You my everything.
I lay it all down.
I give to You my offering
Of a life lived for Your crown.

Bridge

And God above, You know me all too well.
And God of love, in You I am fulfilled. (repeat chorus)

Verse 3

I worship You, I give to You
A life surrendered to Your will.
I long for You, I'll live for You.
Come and bring me back to You.

Chorus

I'm here to come to You.
Won't You come to me?
I'm here to be with You,
Oh, won't You be with me?

I'm here to know the truth,
That in You I am complete.
Come and be my life to me.
Come and be my everything.

John 17:17 *"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."*

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Day 1

Check it out for yourself first!

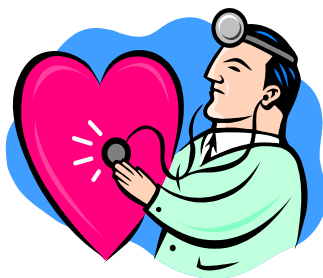
Read the following Bible passages:

Revelation 3:14-19

Isaiah 1:2-6

Isaiah 1:10-20

Proverbs 4:23



Heart Conditions

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Psalm 51:17).

If God were to check your spiritual heart pulse, what would the tests show? If God had a heart thermometer, where would the temperature-gauge land? The Lord is our ever-loving Father, but He is also our heart doctor. God is constantly checking our hearts and looking closely at our souls' condition. God is concerned that our hearts always stay closely connected and are consumed with only Him. God bluntly admonishes us to keep our hearts in check, otherwise we will go off track and wander away from our God (Proverbs 4:23).

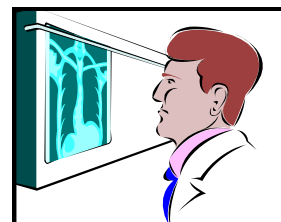
The church of Laodicea wasn't making God's heart too happy. Laodicea was lackadaisical. They weren't white hot, but neither were they ice-cold. They were lukewarm and it made God want to lose His lunch. God wanted to spit them out of His mouth! What was their problem? That's just it, they didn't think that they had one! In fact, they said to God, *“I have need of nothing”* (Revelation 3:17).

Whoa, wait a minute! It's time for a time-out here. Whenever we think that we are not needy and need nothing from God, that's when we need Him the most! God has one message for His children who think they have it all together, *“Repent!”* God said to His church, *“You don't know what you are talking about! You are wretched, miserable, poor having nothing to offer, blind to your real condition, and shamefully naked”* (Rev. 3:17). The people thought they had it all together and were cool in their relationship with their Creator. They thought they had the hang of all this Christian living stuff and were just coasting with their God. That's what they thought, but that wasn't the reality. God looked deep down within and gave them His doctor's diagnosis, *“You're not fooling Me! Your heart is completely sick!”*

The church in the book of Revelation needed an eye-opening revelation, just like the house of Judah needed to see themselves the way that the Holy One sees. God looked at His people and saw their soul's condition: blatant rebellion spurred on by unrepentant sin. God checked them up and down and came to His conclusion, *“The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint”* (Isaiah 1:5). From the tops of their heads and to the soles of their feet, their souls were sick and there was no soundness within, only open and gaping sores of sins (Isaiah 1:6). The worst of the sins was their masking of living right with God by their outward religious acts. God is the same God of the New Testament as He is the God of the Old Testament. What was the Holy One's reaction? *“It makes me sick!”* God tells the kingdom of Judah exactly how He feels. The Maker never minces words. *“I take no delight in your offerings, you are trampling dirt into my holy court, it's vain and of no purpose, it's sin, and my soul hates it”* (Isaiah 1:11-14). God's people were sick because of their inner and outward rebellion and because of their religious side-show. Their religious rites were a riot act in the eyes of the Lord, and needed to be dealt with radically. God had only one word, *“Repent!”*

Let's stop and think for a moment before we write off these people as hard-hearted rebels and throw away the key. God's word is clear. Judgment must begin with the house of God and it must first begin within our own hearts. Is it possible that God's people today are guilty of the same thing? Do we think that we are really all that different? *“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man”* (Mark 7:21-22). Did you catch that? All these things come from within and defile us. Within what? Within our wicked sinful selves. The Bible knows no other antidote for such a heart disease, but this, *“Repent!”*

God has a great message for our hearts today, *“Come clean. Come and repent.”* God calls us to repent of our hearts' shallowness and sin's shadiness. God calls us to stop playing the church game and to get our hearts rightly aligned with Him. God not only has a great message, He has a great promise. *“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool”* (Isaiah 1:18). Would you say that your heart is long overdue for an overhaul cleaning? Then come, repent, and let your heart be right with your God today.



If God were to take an X-ray of your heart, what would it look like? Is it hard or pliable? Is it chock full of sin or are there a couple of arteries plugged? Ask the Great Physician to restore your heart to be rightly

When You Come Before God... Come With Your Heart Wide-Open for Spiritual Surgery.

Heart Conditions

1. Search your heart and ask yourself some tough questions. God already knows your heart condition. The problem is that YOU might not! Which one of these best describes you?

Have you been playing the church game? It looks like this, *“I go to church, I mouth the words, I know the stories, and I keep my nose clean (at least the outside). Hey, that’s all that God wants, right?”* WRONG!

GOD SAYS, *“Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place”* (Revelation 2:4-5).

Have you been harboring some sin in your life that you don’t want to give up?

GOD SAYS, *“Be sure your sin will find you out... Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered”* (Numbers 32:23 and Psalm 32:1).

Have you been half-hearted in your walk with God?

Remember what GOD SAYS, *“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth”* (Revelation 3:15-16).

Has your heart been getting stronger in seeking and loving your God more each day?

GOD SAYS, *“Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord... And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart”* (I Chronicles 16:10 and Jeremiah 29:13).

Questioning Your Heart Leads to Cleansing of Your Heart Before God.

Day 2

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

Acts 1:1-8

Luke 11:9-13

John 16:13-14

Romans 8:5-6



The Holy Spirit is Everything!

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Which of these statements is true? Leadership is everything. Timing is everything. Empowerment is everything. The truth is that they each mean nothing and can accomplish nothing left on their own. Leadership, timing, and empowerment must intertwine and come together as a three-fold cord that is bound and wrapped in the person of the Holy Spirit. Jesus knew it and His disciples experienced it, but God’s people just aren’t getting it.

Did you ever watch one of those hard-selling “infomercials”? Did you “buy into” their pitch—hook, line, and sinker? There are numerous spiritual “infomercials” that are being tossed around in the Christian community today. Most Christians do want to leave a godly legacy. Most Christian ministries do want to be successful in making an impact for Christ. But the answer for personal and ministry success isn’t bound in a leadership book, a timing technique, or a self-confidence pep-talk. Ministry done God’s way will always work. Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Missions said it like this, “*Ministry done God’s way will never lack God’s supply.*” God supplies all that we need to do His ministry through the person of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, for life and for ministry, is our everything!

How would you feel if you were one of the disciples? Jesus told them that He was about to leave, but that He was entrusting to them, His faithful followers, the most awesome job in the world. The assignment was nothing less than reaching the whole earth, every obscure corner of it, with the gospel message of Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8). Were His followers up to the task? No! Are we? No! Remember, on our own, we can do nothing (John 15:5). But if we abide in Christ and ask for His Spirit, we will receive all that we need (John 15:7 and Luke 11:13). With the Holy Spirit, we can do all that Jesus commands (Acts 1:2). We can, through the Holy Spirit, do everything!

Are you feeling as if you don’t know which way to turn? Have you wondered where the strength comes from to lead? How do you know what decision to make and which ministry task and turn to take? You don’t, but the Holy Spirit does. The Holy Spirit is the leader. “*And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed*” (Deuteronomy 31:8). The same One who went before the children of Israel as a pillar of a cloud by day and as a pillar of fire by night (Exodus 13:21), is the same One who will lead your way and light your path each day if you let Him. God has promised, “*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*” (Romans 8:15). Jesus is our Commander and Chief. Jesus has promised us that He will continue to give us our marching and ministry orders through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:2). But as you wait for God’s lead, are you growing impatient? Are you staring up into the sky or staring down into your “day-timer” and “daily planner” and becoming distressed at the approaching deadlines? You may not know what you need to do next, but that doesn’t mean it’s time to jump ahead of God! God is asking—no, God is commanding that you wait... just wait. Wait for what? Not wait for a what, but to wait for the who. Wait for the Holy Spirit to show you the way and the when. This is the promise of the Father that we have in Him (Acts 1:4).

Through all the waiting and the following of God’s leading, never lose sight of the empowering purpose of the Holy Spirit. The proclamation of the gospel is the heart of everything and all that we do for God (Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit is our life, our breath, and our very being. We can’t make a move without Him (Acts 17:25)! We were not designed to live without God and we were not designed to minister without the Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is our everything. Without Him, we are nothing and we can accomplish nothing. But with Him, we can be guided to make the right move at the right time, to reach our world with the right power of the Gospel message of righteousness offered only through Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 5:20-21)! Only one question remains—are you aligned right with the Holy Spirit so that He can empower and infill you right now?



Reaching our world for Jesus Christ is never dependent upon our abilities and strength.

The power to win the world to Jesus is only found in the Spirit of God.

Leadership, Timing, and Empowerment Mean NOTHING Without the Holy Spirit!

The Holy Spirit is Everything!

HOW TO WALK AND LIVE IN THE SPIRIT

1. **The Holy Spirit wants to infill you with His presence and power so that you can accomplish God's purpose for you this day. But the Holy Spirit cannot come upon you if you are unclean and unconcerned about abiding in Christ today.**

Ephesians 4:30-32 *"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."*

Talk to the Lord. Ask Him to search your heart and show you anything in your life that is grieving the Holy Spirit. Confess your sin to the Lord. Claim Christ's cleansing through His shed blood (I John 1:7 and 9). Now ask for the Holy Spirit to come and rest upon you, infilling you with Himself.

2. **Now walk. Walk in the Spirit and follow His lead. Watch and be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's prodding and pricking along today's path. Stay in an attitude and a constant mind-set of prayer and dependence upon the Lord. Say, "YES" to the Spirit and say, "NO" to sin.**

When you fall to the lusts of your flesh, pick back up and begin again through Christ's Cleansing blood. Walk and live in the Spirit today!

Galatians 5:16 and 24-25 *"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh... And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."*

**God's Commands Concerning the Holy Spirit:
"Be Filled... Grieve Not... Walk... Follow and Live!"**

Day 3

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

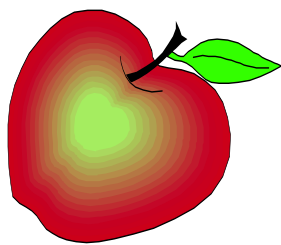
Genesis 2:16-17

Genesis 3:1-6

Romans 5:12

I John 2:15-17

Psalms 17:5-8



The Apple of Your Eye

“Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye” (Proverbs 7:2).

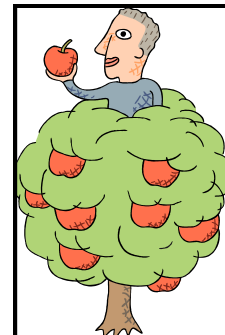
Why do old stories always work? There is no story that is older than the garden story. Come on, you do remember! God said one thing, but that slimy serpent Satan said another. The result? The people were greatly deceived and then they reached out and took that forbidden fruit and greatly disobeyed their God. The story isn't just a story. Its' real effects are felt to this day. Our great, great, into almost infinity great grandparents fell and the rest, as they say, is history. Just as apples beget apples, sin begets sin.

Did you ever wonder why you have a perpetual attraction to sin? Sin is a magnet. It has the power to lure, draw and woo you over the line of God's clear-cut law. Why? Because sin has now become the “apple of your eye.” Before sin came into the world, God was the apple of Adam and Eve's eye and they were the apple of God's eye. God was their one desire and they were His joy and great delight. Adam and Eve were God's most precious treasure. God walked and talked with His adored creation, and they adored and communed with their great God (Genesis 3:8). It was a daily thing. It was sweet, it was good, it was pleasant, and all was just right. Then it happened. The apple switched. Read the story again, *“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat”* (Genesis 3:6).

Did you see the great apple switch? Instead of their eyes fixed upon God, God's Word, and following God's will, the deadly pleasurable fruit was now holding all their infatuation. Satan had turned their thoughts from dwelling on God to self so that he could implant the seed of sin and take a strong-hold in their hearts. Adam and Eve swallowed the serpent's story and people are still swallowing the same story line today. *“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ”* (II Corinthians 11:3).

The apple core of sin is questioning God's goodness and the “why” of His commands, but the seed of sin is desiring to please ourselves instead of our Lord. Humans are built with natural drives, desires, and deep needs. But when people seek to meet their needs in their own way and not in God's way, look out! *“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world”* (I John 2:16). Imagine that you are at a cross-road. You have God's clear Word on one hand and the apple of desire on the other that has caught your eye. Which will you choose? You know what you should choose, but will you? The only way that you will make the right choice is by asking yourself “who's the apple of my eye?” Is it God's Word or my desire? What does God say? *“Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye”* (Proverbs 7:2). If your desire is to please the Lord and not yourself and then stand firmly upon God's command, you will make the right choice. Remember Zechariah 4:6 that says, *“Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.”*

Did God still love Adam and Eve when they chose wrongly? Yes. Does God still love us when we cave in and mess up? Yes. Is God pleased with us? No, but God still loves us. The Psalmist cried out, *“Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings”* (Psalm 17:8). Often times our first reaction after realizing our fall into sin is wanting to run and hide from God. Does that story line sound familiar? We hide because we are ashamed. We fear shame because we sense we have become unloved. Nonsense! God, Himself, comes and steps into our world to seek out His children who are hiding. God comes to confront us with our sin, to let us know of the coming consequences, and then comforts us with His offer of unending life and love. Jesus came to “seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). Because of Jesus' sacrifice, the seed and the power of sin is broken when we come to Jesus as our Savior. No matter how many times in life we fall for the apple switch, God still loves us and we, His children, will always be the apple of His eye! This is the one story that will never get old!



Don't question God's goodness and don't give into your apple of temptation.

Trust in God and God's true Word. Come and taste and see that the Lord is good!

What's the Apple of Your Eye? God's Word or Your Pleasure?

The Apple of Your Eye

1. **Overcoming sin, especially a strong-hold towards a certain sin is NOT easy! Look again at Proverbs 7:2-3.**

*“Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye.
Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart.”*

A practical application for keeping God’s law as the focus of your heart and eye is to write down what God’s Word says about your “apple of temptation.”

2. **What’s one or two areas in your life that you really struggle in having the victory over sin? Be honest and write it down.**

3. **Do you want to do something about this, or do you want to keep on trying and falling for the same apple switch and into sin again and again? No? Then do this right now!**

Find an index card and write down what God’s Word says about your area of struggle. This is your Biblical basis. Then, write down what you lose when you choose to hold onto your apple of sin and say, “NO” to God. These are your consequences. Keep this card with you at all times. Let it be as a tool bound on your fingers to keep God’s commands.

4. **You cannot do this alone. You need God and God’s people. Who is a trusted friend that you can go to and ask him or her to hold you accountable in this area? Ask God, by His grace and strength, to give you the victory over this sin.**

Get Serious About the Strong-holds of Sin Or They Will Take a Serious Hold On You!

Day 4

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

Exodus 14
Psalm 118:6
Psalm 121
I Corinthians 10:13



Seeing Through the Sea

“And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD... By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land... (Exodus 14:13 and Hebrews 11:29).

Moses' back was up against the sea. He had nowhere to run and nowhere to hide. The Egyptians knew it, the Israelites knew it, and God knew it. In fact, God had planned it that way. It was God who had directed and orchestrated all the events to unfold on God's ordained timetable. Why? So that God, and God alone would get the honor and all the glory! Look again at the biblical account and don't miss the point that God is seeking to drive home. It was God who had instructed Moses to take the turn into the wilderness and to encamp by the Red Sea (Exodus 14:1-2). That was a bad move militarily from man's perspective. High, impregnable cliffs with one winding way in and out and an impassable sea that was much too deep to wade across. Anybody up for a long swim? It was also God who had hardened Pharaoh's heart to pursue his former slaves to the Egyptian army's own future demise (Exodus 14:3-8). Everything that was happening, God had pre-determined.



The most comforting thought during the times of tumultuous storms at sea is knowing that God is in control of every roaring, pounding wave and that He has drawn a line forever in the sand which says, “This far, and no further!”

The Egyptians were in hot pursuit and they quickly caught up with the sitting and shocked Hebrews. Pharaoh licked his chops, the trumpet declaring attack sounded, and Pharaoh's army started marching towards them. What do you think of Moses' chances? Is the deck stacked against him enough? It's as if God said, “No, not quite. We still need to add another problem to Moses' leadership dilemma.” Then the people, Moses' own people, who had seen God's clear hand of power and deliverance turned on their God appointed leader. Their fear caused them to be faithless. Their faithless hearts caused their minds to begin fretting. Then their mouths, ah, that mouth raised up as one among the people, began to spout off and to call for the subversion to Moses' rule and to God's plan to go into the promised land.

What would you do if you were Moses? Do you jump into the sea? Do you preach a calm and an appeasing sermon? Do you do an inventory check on your people and weapons and count the odds of survival? What do you do? Moses did the only thing he could do and that he knew that he should do. Moses went to God. Moses' looked at the situation and saw the sea. Then his faith looked through the sea and saw God's promise of salvation. Moses had seen the answer and he called out to the people to put courage back into their hearts. *“Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will show to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever”* (Exodus 14:13). The rest is history. It was the Egyptians who went for a swim that day that they never recovered from, while the Israelites took God's guided tour and walked on dry land. One group lived through faith, while the other side died trying to fight against God. And God? He got all the glory, all the praise, and all the honor that He so greatly and at all times deserves (Exodus 15)!

What's the faith lesson for us? First, we need to see that all trials and testings that God allows into our lives are ordained by God. When life is tossing you around, it's comforting to know that God knows and that God is at the controls. Trust Him! Have you ever seen this verse before? Jeremiah 5:22, *“Fear ye not me? Saith the LORD: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?”* Picture that wall of water. The waves are tossing, threatening to tumble down on top of you. The sea is in turmoil and is making a tumultuous roaring noise in your ear. Yet, God has drawn a line in the sand where you stand and has decreed the boundary of your God ordained trial. It can only go so far, and come no further when your heart is right with your God.

Second, God is through the sea of trials seeking to strengthen your faith. Faith-stretching isn't always fun. Let's be honest here, it isn't, but it is so needed in our lives! Why? Because we are weak and need to set our eyes on God and to see through the eyes of faith. Don't miss the final point of the Exodus sea story. The bottom-line, *“And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses”* (Exodus 14:31). Do you need to strengthen your belief and trust in God? Get ready for another sea stretcher and see the sea through the eyes of trust and faith!

Remember When You Are Up Against the Sea, “The Lord is on My Side... I Will Not Fear” (Ps 118:6).

Seeing Through the Sea

1. What trials are you going through right now that are straining and stretching your faith?

2. Search your heart, is there anything in your life that is not right with God? Don't always assume that trials come to build your faith. God may be trying to get your attention for you to see your sin! Ask yourself some pointed questions:

***Did I do anything to CAUSE this trial that was sin on my part?**

***Have I sinned against the Lord and against others in RESPONSE to this trial?**

***Check your MOTIVES and ask the Holy Spirit to do a deep sweeping heart check every day as the trial lingers on.**

3. If your heart is clean before the Lord, then ask this question, "Lord, what do you want to teach me through this? What is it that you want me to see in my life that needs to be strengthened?"

Here's a helpful place to start, read II Peter 1:4-10 that lists character traits that God is seeking to build into your life. Ask God to show you what He is longing to do in you and through you.

**"If these things be in you, you will abound and be fruitful...
if you lack these things, you are blind and cannot see afar off (II Peter 1:8-9).**

Day 5



God's Grocery Cart for Growth

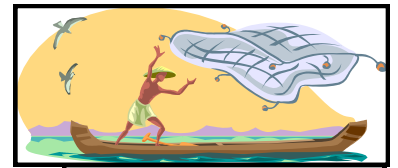
Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

**John 21:1-22
II Peter 1:1-14
Romans 5:1-5**

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity” (II Peter 1:5-7).

The Christian life is all about adding, stretching, and multiplying. God never wants our spiritual life to level-off and plateau. God wants His children to continuously grow! Imagine you have a shopping cart and you are in God's store-house for spiritual growth. What aisle of growth foods do you begin with first? Are you at a lost where to start? Don't be, because God has a plan and He knows exactly where you need to begin. Start with your faith!



Who are you living for? Are you following Christ, or are you living for yourself?

Are you throwing your life down for Christ or are you wasting time casting your own nets and coming up empty?

The apostle Peter wasn't always a person of awe inspiring faith. Remember his fast-losing faith the night of Jesus' arrest? Peter was caught three times denying and then lying about his faith. Peter became so despondent even after Jesus' resurrection that he thought about throwing his Jesus calling away, and revert back to his former career of fishing and casting nets (John 21:3). Jesus showed up, got Peter's attention, and then asked His faith-shaken disciple three riveting questions. "Peter, do you love me?"

Ah, that's where faith begins, doesn't it? Our love for the living Lord Jesus who gave Himself all for us! Whenever you feel your faith sinking away from you, stop, go back and then remember your first love for Him. *"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I John 4:10).* Take time each day to stoke and to rekindle your faith, always remembering your first love for Him (Revelation 2:4-5)!

But do not stop with just faith, go on and add to your faith daily. Growth is a partnership. God does it and we diligently pursue it. Peter commands, *"add to your faith virtue"* (II Peter 1:5). The outgrowth of a live faith is living a pure life before God and others. *"Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity"* (II Timothy 2:19). The number one thing that can set you on the permanent sideline for uselessness for Christ, is cracks of sin in your life left unchecked, unconfessed, and uncleansed. Virtuous growth is based on our growing knowledge of the Holy One. Are you growing daily in your pursuit of knowing your God? You can know without growing, but you cannot grow without knowing. Be a God chaser! Go after your God and let your one cry be like that of the apostle Paul's, "I want to know Christ" (Philippians 3:10)!

One of the deepest ways to know Christ, is to share in His sufferings which produces the fruit of self-control and patience, that in the end leads to godliness. *"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing"* (James 1:2-4). God wants your character to match the very character of God. God is gracious, full of compassion, slow to anger, and is great in mercy (Psalm 145:8). You and I are to be no less. The end result of our growth towards godliness is brotherly love and charity. *"And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins"* (I Peter 4:8). Don't be deceived, this is the deepest growth level that God is desiring to bring each of His children to, *"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"* (Luke 23:34). This is God's will for you to reflect in all that you think, say and do the very love, the unconditional love, of Christ. *"The greatest of these is charity"* (I Corinthians 13:13).

So let's put all of our groceries in our growth cart together: a heart full of faith, diligently adding virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. But what is the purpose of a full grocery cart without the wheels of a servant's attitude to make it move for the benefit of others? Without a servant's mindset towards others, we won't get down the growth aisle very far. Isn't this what Jesus was saying to Peter that day on the beach? "Peter, do you love me? Then feed my sheep" (John 21:15-17). Spiritual growth is never to stock up on God's goods for ourselves. We grow in our love for Jesus and our likeness of Jesus for others to know and love Him too. This is God's plan and God's food chain for our spiritual growth in Him.

The Deepest Level of Growth is to Love God and to Love Others... No Matter What!

God's Grocery Cart for Growth

1. Two times in II Peter 1, Peter tells us to “give diligence” to these areas in our life:

- *Faith
- *Virtue
- *Knowledge
- *Self-Control
- *Patience
- *Godliness
- *Brotherly Kindness
- *Charity

Which one of these areas have you been really struggling in? Why do you think that is?

2. One of God's greatest tools for growth is to **STRETCH** us beyond our human limits, so that we will become broken and dependent upon the Lord completely. This is God's pathway to growth and the only way to produce fruit and food for others.

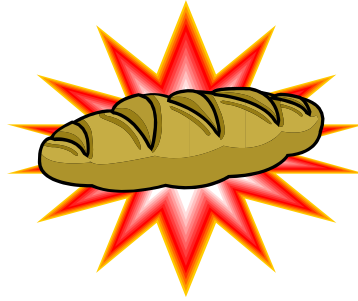
Look at this verse from Hebrews 12:11. What is God doing in your life to stretch you, exercise you, in a weak area in your life right now?

Hebrews 12:11

*“Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous,
but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth
the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them
which are exercised thereby.”*

Diligently and Daily Grow in Christ, So That Others Can See Christ's Likeness in You!

Day 6



Hungry for God

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

John 6:26-35

Ecclesiastes 1:8-18

Ecclesiastes 2:1-17

Psalms 63

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Matthew 5:6).

Have you ever been so hungry, that you don't even know what you are truly hungry for? You're famished and you haven't eaten all day. You swing all the kitchen cupboards and the refrigerator door wide open. Anything and everything is fair game. You stuff, you swallow, and your stomach swells up a few expanded inches. You're full. You've satisfied your hunger—for now. Your need for food cried out so loud that you gave it your full attention. It didn't matter what you met your need with. The what and how you sufficed your drive doesn't count, only that you did. Right? Wrong!

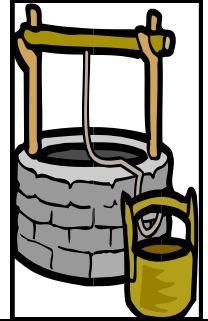
A crowd of people had grouped up and gathered around to the other side of the sea to seek after Jesus. The Lord saw right through to their hearts. He knew exactly why they had come. The people were hungry. But the people weren't hungry for God, they were hungry for some more free food and wanted Jesus to be their king and free their land. The crowd had come to be satisfied on their own terms and in their own way. The people wanted their daily bread and butter. Jesus' counter offer of bread was different. Jesus wanted to give them the TRUE bread and the TRUE life. He offered to them eternal life and an abundant life that only flows from a life filled with Him. *“I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst”* (John 6:35).

Why is it that we have to learn the hard way about the only bread and drink that can satisfy? Why do we allow our hearts to become so crusty and hardened like a brick of bread? Why do we desire to fill up our souls and our lives with anything but God? The Lord has some strong words for His people who seek to meet their needs apart from the living God. *“For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of the living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water”* (Jeremiah 2:13). Could it be that we are guilty of the same thing? Have we forsaken God? Have we sought to dig our own wells to meet our own deep needs? The problem is that our wells are broken. They have cracks in the foundation and can hold no water, no satisfaction, and no sustaining life.

Wells? What wells? The list of wells is nothing new because there is nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9). King Solomon, the author of Ecclesiastes, had it all, tried it all and lost it all, until the day he woke up and came back to his senses and back to his God. King Solomon sought the well of wisdom and knowledge. It came up an empty bucket. He turned to the well of pleasure—all kinds of pleasure—women, wine, and living it up with surrounding laughing friends. But the buzz and the beauty of the moment never lasted. Then king then threw himself into projects—great building projects. Something that would last beyond his years, right? It turned to rubble. He amassed money, servants, and great possessions. He had all kinds of treasures, but his heart was an empty box. Looming death became a reality. Living life apart from God is so pointless. The conclusion? It is only well with those who live life looking to God. To those who choose to spend their life looking away from God, life and the coming after life won't go so well (Ecclesiastes 8:12-13).

How's your heart? Can your soul say and sing matching the song, “It is Well with My Soul?” No? Then look deep within and look at the true problem. Are you hungering for more of God? Are you thirsting for your living Lord? Or are you seeking after other wells that can never satisfy? The ancient theologian, St. Augustine, said it most eloquently, “Thou hast made us for Thyself and our hearts are restless until we find our rest in Thee.” But maybe “the Doughnut Man,” the popular children's songwriter, said it best, “Life without Jesus is like a doughnut, like a doughnut. Because there is a hole in the center of your heart.”

Hunger for your God today! Chase after Him. God has your daily bread and all that your soul needs. Let your heart find it's rest in being filled with Him. God is your bread and water. He is your milk and your meat. He is all that you need!



What well are you drawing from today? Is it God's well of life or the empty and broken well of self and soul?

Come back to your God. Only God can satisfy your deepest needs and your inner thirst for true life.

Are You Hungry? Hunger and Thirst For Knowing God More Today!

Hungry for God

1. **Life lived without God in the center of your life is like a dream. It is unreal, unsatisfying, and leaves your soul empty and longing. Look at what God says about living life apart from Him.**

“It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite...” (Isaiah 29:8).

Has there been a time in your life that you have experienced this? When?

2. **What are some empty dreams—empty wells, that you find yourself pursuing?**

You say, “I don’t understand the question.” Then ask yourself this? “What do I look to in order to meet my needs outside of God and God’s ways?”

There is nothing wrong with enjoying life, enjoying the labor of your hands, and enjoying the gifts that God has given to you, and the people that He has blessed your life with.

BUT, is your enjoyment with these “things” become more consuming than your enjoyment in being with your God? What are you more hungry for? For these things or for God?

3. **What is one area in your life that needs to be fixed? Talk to God about it. Surrender this need in your life over to Him. Trust Him to meet your need in His time and in His way.**

God Allows Us to Sense Our Needs So Deeply, That We Will Fall Down Upon Our Knees to Seek and Hunger More After Our God.

Day 7

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

Psalm 30

Psalm 40

II Corinthians 5:17-20



Living Again!

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (II Corinthians 5:17).

It's always darkest before the dawn. Life tends to become more bitter before it gets better. Why is that? Why do we have to hit rock bottom before we can bounce back to life again? Is it simply the cycle of life, the way our Creator made us? Or is it something deeper? Maybe, just maybe, it is the only way for God to get our attention when our loss for life's reason is shipwrecked and going down.



That's the testimony of George Bailey from the famous Christmas flick, *“It's a Wonderful Life.”* Remember his story? His life, from his perspective, wasn't so wonderful. Everything was going wrong. His prison-like job, his inept Uncle of a co-worker, his wife and noisy, bothersome kids, his drafty old house, the school teacher's irate husband, and even Suzy's precious petals. Life was falling apart and George couldn't paste it back together again! He felt like Humpty-Dumpty sitting on a wall. Life was cracked, life was beyond repair, and life was meaningless. He saw no hope. George tried to drive through his pain. He crashed. George tried to drown his pain in a brown bottled glass. He landed flat on his face in a snow bank. George, in utter desperation, ran to the brink of the bridge. He had only one consuming thought, but he still had one prayer left, “God, if your up there, help me!”

Do you feel like your life is shipwrecked and that you are sinking down?

Call out to your Captain. Only He can save you and put your life back on His course.

Help! That's the turn-key word for God to move upon. Humans are strange creatures. We try to handle life all by ourselves. We think, “Well, if I just suck it in and hold up my chin, everything will be fine.” We are trained from child-hood to play the “tough-guy” role. We hold it all inside and think that nobody will know. God knows. God knows all about it. He knows our pain, he knows our hurts, and he sees every tear that we cry. God wants to step in and help, but we must first be brought to an end of ourselves for the door to be opened for God to work. You see, God loves us too much to leave us the way we are. Sometimes God's love for us must become tough-love. God lets us sink down in despair of life, so that He can lift us up and restore us to life again.

Isn't that what the psalmist said? *“I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my foot upon a rock, and established my goings”* (Psalm 40:1-2). Often times God has to break us to re-make us. God has to close in the walls before He can show us the way through. God has to put us in the darkness of a cocoon, before he can spring us to new life again. George Bailey was put in a cocoon. He saw life from a new perspective. His response, “I want to live again. I want to live again. Please, God, let me live again!”

Are you in a cocoon? Do you feel like you have spun your life shut? Are you shut out from the light, shut out from others, and shut out from the Lord of life? No matter how dark and no matter how long you've hung precariously there, God is there. He's waiting for you to stop wiggling. He's waiting for you to surrender living your old life your way. God has something so much better in store for you. You want to keep on crawling through life, but your Creator wants you to sprout wings and soar! God wants to make you into a new person. Your Creator wants to give you a new perspective for living. Your God has a new plan and a new path for you to follow for life.

You see, life isn't about you. Life isn't about your circumstances. Life is about you living in a right and a real relationship with your God and living out of that relationship with God for others. Did you catch that? You are to live rightly reconciled with God for others to be rightly reconciled with Him. *“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation”* (II Corinthians 5:18). Life is not about living for yourself and life isn't about what people can do for you. Life is what God wants to do in you for His praise and others' joy. That's the George Bailey secret to a wonderful life and that's God's wonderful plan for you! Come and let God do His work in you. Let God open your eyes and renew your heart, so that you can live again for Him and for others.

We Are the Reason He Came and He is Our Reason to Live!

Living Again!

- 1. Take a look at your life that you are living. Is your life's worth wrapped up in people, things, and accomplished goals? What would someone say about your life by watching you 24 hours a day for a week? More importantly, what would God say?**

** My life is all about living for myself, doing what I want to do. My pleasure, my joy, and my fun:*

** My life is all about accomplishing things and tasks. One big "To Do" list:*

** My life is all about people. People make my life go around. I feel empty and lost without people:*

** My life is all about getting stuff. Having more makes me happier:*

** My life is about loving God and learning more about my God so that I can grow to love Him more:*

** My life is about helping others to know God. Loving on them and helping them remain connected to God:*

- 2. No one is perfect. We all have imbalances and areas where we've tipped the scales on. What is one area in your life that you need to tone down and what is one area in your life that you need to build up to be more in balance?**

If God Ran the Movie Reel, "This Was Your Life"... What Would it Look Like?

Day 8



Following By Faith

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

Hebrews 11:1-16
Genesis 6:9 and 22
Genesis 12:1-4
James 2:17-18, 26

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1).

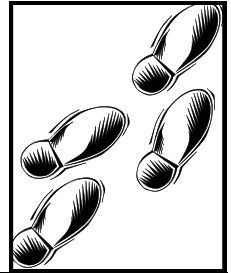
“Craziness, that’s what it is! Pure craziness. It’s absurd, it’s insane, and it all goes against the grain. This does not make any sense! God, are you sure that you know what you are asking?” Have you ever had thoughts like that? If you have, then welcome to the club! The “Living by Faith Club.” You’ve never heard of it? You must have. Maybe you have been a long standing member and you didn’t even know it!

Do you remember that scene from *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* where the actor Harrison Ford is scrambling for his life to pass the three great tests to get the holy grail, the cup of Christ? (Remember now, this is just a movie). Actually, Indy isn’t scrambling for his own life, he’s scrambling for the life of his dad, the senior Jones. Indy ducks and rolls. He’s through the first hair-splitting test. That was a close shave! He steps unsteadily through the second one as he retraces his Hebrew “ABC’s.” Then he comes to the edge of the cliff and to the end of his quick thinking resources. He rechecks the manual. The book’s directions says to leap, but he doesn’t see anywhere to land! Back in the cave, his father is saying, “You must believe, my boy. You must believe.” It’s a leap of faith!

God often calls his children to take a leap of faith to deepen their walk in following Him. The list of faith membership leapers fills the Bible from cover to cover. Remember, Noah? The people thought he was crazy. “Probably too much time in the sun. It must have gone to his head, you know.” No, Noah wasn’t crazy. Noah was just doing what God had said! *“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith”* (Hebrews 11:7). Noah moved and took action even though he could not see or understand completely what God was saying. Noah did this one blindfolded! Yes, he had received the clear-cut plans. Yes, he knew that he wasn’t hallucinating. Noah knew that he had heard directly from the Almighty. Then that was it! Beyond that, Noah didn’t know. Not only did Noah build the planks, he got on the boat and trusted in God that this whole thing was going to float! The result? He saved his whole house and became heir to all the promises that God had been holding in store for him.

Sometimes the things that God asks do not make sense. You could spend your whole life reasoning with your reasons why it’s insane to follow and obey, but that will get you nowhere. You cannot follow God apart from faith. It’s impossible! *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him”* (Hebrews 11:6). Couple of things to highlight here. 1) When you are up against a wall, you must come to God and believe in Him. Not in yourself and your nifty abilities. Not in others either. They can throw you a prayer rope, but they can’t take the faith leap for you. You must put your trust in God and believe God’s Word and His personal word to you. 2) You must believe that God wants to reward you and to give you what is best. What if Abraham would have said “No” to God and dug his heels in his home of Haran? No promise land for him, no family, no nation, and no blessing! You see there is another side to rewarded faith. The lack of following faith has consequences. It’s not a case of either go or no go. It’s a clear-cut line of either obedience or disobedience. If you choose the latter, you’re the loser of God’s plans for your best.

One more thing. You must be active and not passive. You cannot sit back and say, “Ok, I hear you God. So do it!” Faith moves! You must diligently and daily seek after your God and follow His revealed will to you in every area every time. If Indy didn’t take that leap of faith, a life was at stake. If you don’t follow God by faith, your life and the lives of others will be directly affected. The choice is yours. Life isn’t often like the movies, but sometimes the bridge to the other side will only be revealed when you take that first step of faith. Step out and obey God and follow Him by faith. God will take care of the rest.



Remember this, when you are following the Lord by faith:

God will never ask you to go anywhere where He will not be.

Your Creator, the Designer of your life, will walk beside you every step along the way.

Faith is Not Faith Until You Move Out Upon God’s Clear Word and Obey!

Following By Faith

1. First things, first. Have you surrendered your whole life to the Lord? If there is any area that you are holding back, God will not rest until He has it. God wants it all! He wants all of you surrendered to all of Him. Then and ONLY then, can God reveal His perfect will to you.

Romans 12:1-2 “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship... Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Is Jesus the LORD of your life? Is there anything that you are holding back from Him? Deal with this right now with your God.

2. Trust in God’s plan for your best. God knows the future. He knows what He is doing and He sees the end in mind for your good and not for your hurt. Tell God that you trust Him. Tell God that you will actively follow Him and His plan for your life.

Hold this verse close to your heart through your faith-leaping tests:

Jeremiah 29:11-14

*“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD,
plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.
Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.
You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.
I will be found by you, declares the LORD.”*

What area in your life is God asking you to trust Him with? Commit it to the Lord and trust in Him.

There is Only One Lord and One Leader for Your Life , and It’s Not You, It’s God!

Day 9

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

John 1:35-42

Luke 5:1-11

John 21:15-22

Acts 4:8-13



One Step Obedience

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Confused? You say that you don’t know which way to turn or what steps to take next? Are you clueless in knowing God’s clear will for your life? If this describes you, you’re in good company. Seldom in the Bible did God ever reveal His total will for anyone all at once. In fact, not even one Bible character example comes to mind. It seems that the Lord never hands over His complete will for His children to read in one sitting. God only allows His followers to know what they need to know when they need to know it. This one thing is clear that God gives out His plan to His people—one step at a time!



That’s what happened with Peter. Peter’s career as a fisherman was set. He thought he knew the reason why he got out of bed before the break of dawn each day. “Got to go fish!” Fishing was Peter’s life. It was who he was and what he did. Yet, there is a question that needs to be asked. Was Peter comfortable with his life or was he longing for something more? The Scriptures are silent. What we do know is that Peter was a seeker. Andrew came running to his brother Simon to tell him the news. “We found him, the Christ, the Messiah. Come on, you’ve got to come and see!” Peter went to Jesus and Jesus took one look at Peter and began to change everything, starting with his name!

If God is rocking your boat, He may be seeking to get your attention.

Did Peter leave all and follow Jesus right then and there? No, it seems that Peter reverted back to what he only knew—fishing. The first time, Peter came to Jesus. The second time, Jesus came to Peter. A large crowd had gathered by the lake. Jesus needed a better platform and Peter had the boat. Peter was part of the gathering, but it looked like he had little intention of getting too close to Jesus. Jesus locked eyes on Peter and asked him for a little push. (Hmm, just who was pushing whom here?)

The Lord wants to rock your world with His plan for your life.

Peter complied. He may even have had a sense of pride. “Look, that’s Jesus! He’s teaching the people from my boat!” Jesus preached to the people, but that wasn’t the only reason why he had come that day. Jesus came to see Peter and to show him the next step. Jesus left off speaking and looked again at Peter to give him the follow-up command, “Let’s go fishing.” Peter winced in reluctance. Peter wasn’t a happy camper and it showed. “I don’t want to go. I’ve already been out there and there’s nothing! I’m tired and don’t feel like it. But, because you say so, I’ll do it.”

You see, Peter’s boat was Peter’s life and Jesus was sitting right in the middle of it! Not only did Jesus want to be in the center of Peter’s life, Jesus wanted to give direction to it and that was a little bit too much for Peter. Aren’t we all like that? We will look at Jesus from a distance. We are even willing to go and talk to Him, to meet Him, and to let Him change us—a little. Then Jesus starts getting close and He begins to ask us to do things—little and big things that are different and make us uncomfortable. We start to balk and want to bail out. Then we finally get it. Jesus isn’t asking, He’s requiring. It’s not a request, it’s a command! Jesus is moving us closer to Him so that we will move closer to obeying His will and following His perfect plan for our lives.

Wouldn’t it be great if all we needed was a gentle nudge from Jesus to obey? Maybe you’re like that, but for some of us we need much more! Jesus had to break Peter’s money-making net and to sink his life’s ship to get Peter to shape-up. The Lord will stop at nothing to break down His beloved children until they are willing to obey. God had so much more in store for Peter than fish. God wanted to use Peter, a plain fisherman, to bring glory to God and others to God. God had a master plan for Peter and God has a plan for each of you. Jesus wants to come to you. He wants to come and sit right in the middle of your life boat. Jesus wants to be the Captain. He wants to guide, He wants to direct, and He wants to show you that next step. Only one question remains—are you willing?

Peter was broken and he humbled himself before the Lord. He knew he was a sinner and he knew he didn’t measure up. Yet, he had heard the Master call. He got up and forsook all, then followed Jesus, one step at a time. Jesus is asking you to do no less. God has a plan, God has a will, and God knows the next step. Come and follow your God and His master plan for your life. You don’t know where to start? Here’s a clue, just take the next step that He shows you.

One Step at a Time. That is How God Reveals His Will, One Step at a Time!

One Step Obedience

- 1. Here's a question to ponder. What would have happened to Peter IF he hadn't obeyed Jesus by pushing the boat out further or by agreeing to go fishing again with Jesus? What can happen in your life if you fail to take that next step of obedience that Jesus is asking of you?**
- 2. A few years later in Peter's life, he tried to bail out and go back to fishing again (John 21). Jesus went after Peter and asked him just one question three times, "Peter, do you love me?" Why is our love for God tied to our obedience in following God? (See I John 5:3)?**
- 3. If loving Jesus is obeying Jesus, then what is one area in your life that you can show Jesus that you love Him by obeying Him?**

**Are You "Fishing" for Your Life's Reason? Surrender it All to the Master.
Follow Him and Obey Every Step Along the Way, Then Your Life Will Be Blessed!**

Day 10

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

Romans 7:14-25
Galatians 5:16-18
II Corinthians 10:3-5
Romans 8:1-10



To Do What's Right

*“For to will is present with me but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do”
(Romans 7:18-19).*

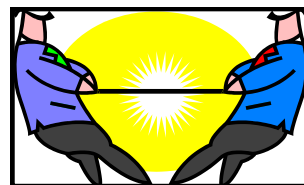
It's a daily tug-of-war. *“Two natures beat within my breast. The one is foul and the other blest. The one I feed will dominate and win the daily test.”* In case you didn't know it, World War III is already happening. Everyday, there is a battle waging deep within your soul for full control. Ever since the day you said, “Yes” to Jesus Christ, your sin nature and your arch-enemy Satan have been screaming, “No!” You belong to God, there's no questioning that. God knows it, Satan knows it, and you know it. His Spirit is alive and at work within you. The Holy Spirit is affirming and daily confirming that you are God's child and that you belong to God. That's not the issue. The issue is not who you now are, but who will you now live for. Will you live for God and do what is right, or will you live for yourself and do what you want to do, right or wrong? That is the question and that is what living this life is all about. The coin has been tossed, you've picked your side, and now the game of the battle of the wills has begun.

Don't you love the Bible? The Bible never hides its' heroes gross flaws and falls. The Scriptures are bluntly and brutally honest. Noah floats on a boat by faith one moment, and then the next floats on little bubbles of fermented grape juice in great disgrace. Remember David, the shepherd boy turned king? No one in Scripture had a by-line like David's, *“A man after God's own heart.”* David loved His God! David loved God's Word and David loved to do God's will. He never wanted to make a move without his God... until that one day. David's eyes locked onto something that he wanted. The more he looked, the more the desire to have and to hold grew and took a strong-hold in his heart. Then his mind kicked in, *“Hey, I'm the king. I don't have to answer to anybody. I can do what I want when I want and right now, I want!”*

That's the way sin works. One minute you can be right with God, walking in His light, and everything is bright and just right. Then it happens. You begin to blink and wink at sin. The desire to do wrong grows, the roots run and take hold, and then the bud of sin is birthed in the soul. The pattern for sin never changes. Sin begins from within. *“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren”* (James 1:14-16). That's how sin happens, and that's how it happened in David's life. David didn't wake up one morning and say, *“I'm going to commit adultery today and then murder to cover-up my tracks.”* No! Sin is a progression that happens step by step and inch by inch. It's always the slow steady slide that will gradually pull you to the other side. Sin begins when your feet are not firmly planted on God's rule book of life and when your heart and mind are not stayed upon following Christ. That's why setting your mind on heavenly things and yanking over every thought to the controlling side of Christ is your only life-line to do what is right (Col. 3:1-3 and II Cor. 10:3-5).

If you think that you are not capable of any of the BIG sins, think again! God says that if you think that you do not sin or cannot sin, you are only tricking yourself and setting yourself up for another one of Satan's sin-traps. Even the apostle Paul said, *“But for the grace of God, there go I.”* Every believer is capable of every sin under the sun. Stop thinking you're too spiritual to fall. You aren't! The question is what will you do when you are tempted to sin again? Will you do right or will you do wrong? Kick that bucket right now out from under your feet of standing on your own strong will. If you are depending on the strength of your sheer will power, you will fail! Godly King David did, a whole host of Bible others did, and so will you.

Wait, there is good news! You don't have to do wrong, you can do right. In your own strength? No! In Christ's strength? Yes! *“Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Romans 7:24-25)! The battle is on and the tug-of-war has begun. Whose side will you be on today when the day is done? Remember when you start to lose your grip and your ground in life—who is pulling for you! Through Christ Jesus, you can do what is right!



There are three words to remember in your daily struggle with sin to do what is right.

Repent... of any sin.
Replant... your feet on God's solid Word.
And then **Yank...** every thought over to the obedience of Christ.

God is on Your Side... So Walk in the Spirit and You Will Do What Is Right!

To Do What is Right

1. **Think again about the three key words to win the daily “tug-of-war” over sin. REPENT, REPLANT, and YANK.**

What are some areas in your life that you need to REPENT of that you know are not pleasing to God? Don't just think of the “black and white” issues. Take a hard look through the convicting power of the Holy Spirit at the “gray” areas that God calls sin!

What does God say about these things in your life? God's Word is your only plumb-line of righteousness. How do you measure up? Write down what you know God is saying to you through His Word and through His Holy Spirit. REPLANT your feet on God's solid Word.

Now YANK! Yank over any thought that is NOT pleasing to God. Every time the thought returns, yank it back into full surrender before Christ. Jesus Christ is to be the Lord of not only your life, but also of all your inward and wayward thoughts.

Do What is Right by Obeying the Spirit and You Won't Fall to the Desires of Your Flesh.

Day 11

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

Luke 6:27-38
1 John 4:19-21
1 Peter 2:22
1 Corinthians 13



The Love Test

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love” (1 John 4:7-8).

Are you ready to take the true love test? You say, “I don’t have a problem with loving. I love God and I love people. I get along with most anybody.” Loving God and loving others may indeed come easier for some, but each one of us comes up way short when we stand against Jesus’ measurement of pure, authentic love that always loves in word and in deed.



Don’t you love Jesus’ laser-like words that cut straight through the heart of the matter of love? *“Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you”* (Matthew 5:43-44). The real test of love is not loving those who love you. Even sinners who don’t have the love of God in them do that! Love is going the second mile when you already went out of your way for the first one. Love is blessing others who deserve to be blasted. Love is giving when you have zero hope of ever receiving back what you gave. Love is vulnerable. Love doesn’t duck and run. Love leaves itself wide open to get decked again. Love is forgiving and giving to the begrudging and the ungrateful. Love is being merciful to the merciless. Love is loving with the Father’s love. Love is of God.

If you love those who love you, so what? Even unsaved people do that!

True God-centered love is loving the unlovable and those who don’t deserve to be loved. This is loving with the love of God.

You say, “How can anyone love like that? That kind of love is beyond any human’s ability!” That’s right, it is! Only God can love like this through you to others and that’s the whole point! *“The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us”* (Romans 5:5). You say that you don’t have the strength to love that person anymore? God will strengthen you and enable you to love the unlovable, no matter what they have done.

Remember Joseph? His hate-filled brothers threw him into a pit and were going to leave him for dead. Instead, they pulled him out and sold him out for chinks of coins in their hands. Years later, the tables were turned. Joseph had the perfect shot to get back at his brothers, but he refused to take it. Joseph forgave and gave to his brothers all the remaining days of his life. *“But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not; I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them”* (Genesis 50:20-21).

How could Joseph have found the strength to love, to forgive, and to go on? Joseph knew his God and he knew that the purpose of loving others with the love of God was to save other people. Isn’t this why Jesus had the strength to love us enough to even die for us? *“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8). Most followers of Jesus know John 3:16 by heart, *“For God so loved the world...”*. But do they know 1 John 3:16? Do you? *“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”* Jesus laid down his life for us, so that we could be saved and find our life solely in Him. So we, God’s people who are filled with the love of Christ, must lay down our lives for one another, just as Christ laid down His own life lovingly all for us!

Those without Christ, need to be saved from their sins. They must see and hear of Jesus’ love for them through you! Some need to be saved from the scars of unhealed wounds of anger, abuse, and rejection. They need to see and know God’s unconditional love and His unlimited grace and acceptance through you. Some need to be saved from bad habits that have overtaken and enslaved them, but they can only break free if you speak the truth to them in love. Love saves. Love heals. Love accepts. Love holds life together for others when it has all come unraveled. Love is the greatest gift that God wants you to give to others so they will know of the Father’s great love for them. One last question on Christ’s love test. Who does God want you to show love to for Him today? Remember, no matter how dark and how deep the pit of life gets, that love in the end never fails!

“And now abideth faith, hope, love... but the greatest of these is love” (1 Cor. 13:13).

The Love Test

1. **How's your heart of love right now? Could you pass the love test found in I Corinthians 13?**
"Love is patient, love is kind, love is not jealous, or boastful, is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way and is not irritable or resentful. Love does not rejoice at wrong but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love knows no end" (vs 4-8).

What are some non-loving feelings that you are having right now and to whom is it directed?

Check your heart? Why are you feeling this way? What's the source of it? Is there unforgiveness, bitterness, or resentment? Ask the Lord to search your heart and to show you the things that are unloving in His eyes.

2. **Write out a prayer to the Lord for Him to fill you with His love for others today.**

May You Know the Love of Christ and Be Filled With All the Fullness of God Today!

Day 12

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

Matthew 6:25-33

Matthew 7:7-11

Romans 8:15

John 14:1-3



Seeing the Father

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?” (Matthew 7:11).

How do you see your father? Is he kind, loving, and approachable or is he hard, somber, and seems always preoccupied with little time left for you? How you view your dad directly affects your ability to relate with him. Proximity in relationships is always determined by perspective. If you feel that you are always welcomed and are loved unconditionally, you will never hesitate to phone home no matter what the time the clock on the wall says. You can even show up on your dad's doorstep looking like a drenched cat. You are loved, accepted, and wanted no matter where you have been or what you may look like. Your father loves you and you will always be his child.

Sometimes it's hard to see our father's love for us when our vision gets blurred by wrong views. Take Jesus' story of the prodigal son for instance. The impatient son couldn't see his father's loving protection and provision because all he could see was a sack-full of a way to sheer fun. The young son couldn't see the wisdom of waiting. He wanted all his Christmas toys and Easter candy right now! Even after the son came to his senses he still had a wrong perspective of his father. He feared his father and felt that he had gone too far for his dad to forgive him and take him back. Wrong views of the father are so dangerous. They can send children away from their father's heart or they can keep the children from coming home. The only answer is found in our Father's word, *“And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers”* (Malachi 4:6).

It's no coincidence that when Jesus taught his disciples how to pray he began by saying, *“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.”* God's children must see the High and Holy One as their Heavenly Father who loves them and who wants to listen to them. If we fail to see the Father as our good and kind loving Father, our relationship to him will be severely hindered. Listen to the words of the psalmist, *“I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live”* (Psalm 116:1-2). Does that sound to you like a person who knows that his Father is listening to him out of His great love for him? You bet! Only when the child of God sees the father heart of God will he want to come to his Father and pray. The Father wants His children to come to Him with all boldness and with all their fears and tears. God wants His children to come to Him with their hearts and arms opened wide ready to receive all that they need from their Abba Father—their Daddy. The Father wants to come along-side of His children to help, strengthen, uphold them, and to meet their every need.

Did it ever occur to you that your Father wants to bless you and not curse you! The longest recorded sermon of Jesus begins with no less than nine pronouncements of blessings. *“Blessed are the poor in spirit... blessed are they that mourn... blessed are the meek... blessed are they that hunger and thirst for righteousness... blessed are the merciful... blessed are the pure in heart... blessed are the peacemakers”*... and a double-blessing upon the persecuted for Christ's sake (Matthew 5:3-11).

Even Jabez in the Old Testament cried out, “Oh, that you would bless me” and God's word says that, “God granted him his request” (1 Chronicles 4:10). Why then do God's children often think that their Father is out to “get them?” Why do they fear their Father? Why do their hearts often fail to fully trust and rest in their Father's arms? Why do they feel that God is going to come and take away all whom they love and leave them stranded and all alone? Because they have not looked intently into their Father's eyes and seen anew His unfailing love for them. Our Father is good and He has promised that He will work all things together for our good, even those things that seem now too hard to understand. More than that, Jesus has promised that He is coming to take us back to the Father's home so that one day all His children can be with Him and the Father can be with them forever and always. See the Father today and see His great love and His special designed plan for you.



How's your view of your Heavenly Father today?

Trust Your Heavenly Father. And Even Through the Times When You Cannot See His Hand... Trust the Father's Heart!

Seeing the Father

- 1. Write down how you see your Heavenly Father?**
- 2. One way to find out if your view of the Father is correct is to think about what you fear most that your Heavenly Father would do or allow to happen to you. What are your deep fears?**
- 3. Take all your fears and lay them down before the Father. Remember that He is good, He knows all your needs, wants to give you good gifts, and wants to bless you. Surrender your fears to the Lord and trust your Father.**

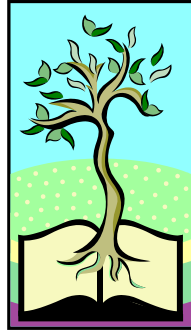
**“One God and Father of all who is above all and through all and in you all.”
(Ephesians 4:6)**

Day 13

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

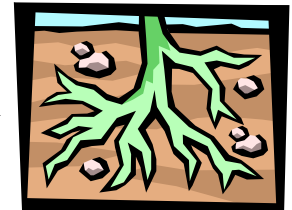
**Mark 4:1-20
Luke 6:43-49
Psalm 1**



Roots, Rocks and Trees

“But his delight is in the law of the LORD and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season...” (Psalm 1:2-3).

There is a simple formula to remember in fruit farming. Good roots produce good fruit and bad roots bring nothing but unfruitfulness. Good fruit and bad fruit can never mix, although some groves and grocery stores for the fruit section often give it a try! The condition of the root determines if the fruit is destined to bloom or to rot, but the condition of the soil affects the direction and the strength of the root.



Good fruit or bad fruit, which will it be? It all depends on the condition of your roots and the soil of your heart!

Remember the parable of the different soil types found in people's hearts? The seed of the Word of God was the same in all four soils, it never changed. Some soil was fallow ground. The seed that landed on that soil was snatched away before it even had a chance. Some soil was rocky. The roots wanted to grow and deepen, but there were too many hardened stones in the way. The roots gave way to the rocks, lost strength, and became shallow. The result? No root, no fruit! Some soil was packed with thistles and thorns. There were too many distractions and other look-alike, deceptive plants that were after the same soil. The good root got choked out and became unfruitful. Only one soil was ready to receive the Word. Only one soil was free from rocks and corrupt, thorny roots. Only in one soil did the good roots go down deep and bring forth good fruit, season after season again.

That's the picture of what the Lord Jesus wants to do in you for every season of your life. God wants you to bear fruit for Him. *“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you”* (John 15:16). Jesus made it clear that a good tree brings good fruit, but nothing good can ever come from a corrupt tree (Luke 6:43). That leads to only one remaining question. What is the condition of your roots? Are your roots deepening in your growth towards Christ-likeness and Christ-centered living every day? Are your roots getting watered and fed on the rich Word of God? Or are your roots shallow, weakened, and dried up? Is there too many rocks and thistles of sin in the way that is stunting the roots' growth? How is the soil of your heart? God's Word is good and God wants you to grow! You have the root of the Holy Spirit working continuously in you to deepen and to strengthen you. What is getting in the way of your growth and stopping God's plan for your fruitfulness?

God wants you to be a tree for Him. Strong inwardly, planted deep on the sure Word of God and the solid Rock of Jesus Christ who is your Savior and Lord. The more you dig into God's Word daily, the deeper and taller you will go and grow. The more you hear and do God's Word, the more you will change and reflect the likeness of Christ. God wants you to be fruitful outwardly. God is the great Gardener and He is never satisfied with some fruit. God wants more and more fruit, all for His glory and for the blessing of others, for all the days of your life. *“The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;”* (Psalm 92:12-14).

Wayward roots and natural rocks both hinder the growth process and produce corrupt trees with no fruit. Yet, there was one man who hung on a tree 2,000 years ago that changed all of that. The old law said, “cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree,” but Jesus, God's Son came to reverse the curse forever. *“But the LORD thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the LORD thy God loved thee”* (Deuteronomy 23:5). Now, through Christ, you can have the tree of life and produce good fruit for the Lord for the rest of your life. Remember to check your roots daily and to make sure that they run deep in Christ and strong in His Word. Don't wait for tomorrow, begin the path to fruitful growth today!

Rocks, Paper, Scissors is a Game... Roots, Rocks, and Trees is About Real Life!

Roots, Rocks, and Trees

1. **Examine your heart. Are there any roots of sin and rocks of habits that are hindering your growth to be like Jesus and to live for Him? Everyone has them... big or small. What are yours?**

2. **Claim God's promise that He has provided through Jesus Christ's payment for sins:**
"None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live" (Ezekiel 33:16).

*** Confess your roots and rocks of sin to God and ask Him to remove them from your heart.**

***Claim the promise of your past... your sins are forgiven and God will mention them no more. Write out a THANK YOU prayer to God for what He has done!**

***Call over a godly friend and share with him all your hidden rocks and ask him to hold you accountable to not let those past roots grow back again. Who will hold you accountable for your path of growth?**

Roots of Sin May Run Deep... But God's Love and Forgiveness Runs Deeper.

Day 14

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

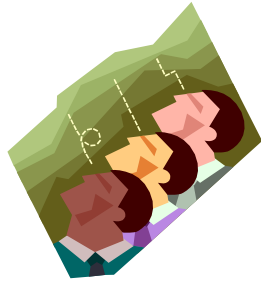
John 20:29

1 Peter 1:8

John 1:29

John 6:40

Revelation 1:7



Seeing Jesus

“Sir, we would see Jesus... Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me” (John 12:21, and 44-45).

Seeing is believing and believing is seeing, right? Wrong. Not when it comes to seeing who Jesus is and coming to the full understanding that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Over 700 years before the birth of Christ, the prophet Isaiah accurately penned people’s problem with seeing and believing. *“Go, and tell this people, hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed”* (Isaiah 6:9-10).

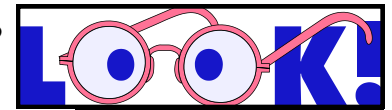
From the very moment of Christ’s coming to earth, people wanted to see Jesus. The shepherds came running down from Bethlehem’s hills to see their proclaimed Savior. The wise men went way out of their way west to worship. At the temple, Simeon and Anna took one look at the Christ child held in Mary’s arms and knew that God’s promise had at last come to pass.

But not everyone who wanted to see Jesus wanted to see Him for the right reasons. Remember King Herod? Sure, he wanted to see Jesus. God’s Word says that “he diligently enquired” from the wise men. But Herod didn’t want to give the child Jesus a gift of gold or a glittering crown, he wanted to give Jesus the edge of his sword. Thirty some years later, another King Herod ruled the Jews. He wanted to see Jesus too. Herod was perplexed with an age old question, “Who is this Jesus?” Is he one of the prophets or even John the Baptist risen from the dead? Is he a miracle-worker or only a great hoax? King Herod would have to wait his turn to see Jesus. God knew King Herod’s heart, but Herod’s desire to see Jesus would have to be put on hold.

Others wanted to see Jesus too. The disciples saw Jesus and left all and followed. Many individuals heard, saw, and believed. Zacchaeus climbed a tree just to see Jesus. Blind Bartimaeus stopped a whole crowd with his cry out to Jesus to see. The religious ruler, Nicodemus, came to see Jesus by night, to find out how he could be made right with God. On the day of Jesus’ triumphal entry into the city, it seemed as if the whole world had come out to see. The Jews wanted to see Jesus, the Greeks wanted to see Jesus, and even the little children lined the streets with praises and waving palm trees—all because they wanted Jesus to see.

The Pharisees wanted to see Jesus too—they wanted to see Jesus dead! Judas Iscariot wanted to see Jesus take on the religious rulers along with the Romans, so he rolled over for a few coins. The High Priest wanted to see Jesus answer the lying charges. Jesus saw right through and in silence refused. Pilot didn’t want to see Jesus or the truth, so he sent Jesus to Herod. King Herod was happy. He had wanted to see Jesus for a long time. This was his chance. “Do something for me,” Herod requested. Herod wanted to see a magic trick, but Jesus saw his mocking heart. Herod saw nothing because he had never wanted to truly see Jesus. The crowd then had one last chance to see Jesus. They chose instead to see a condemned criminal set free and sentenced the Christ to be cruelly crucified. Jesus was then lifted up high on a cross for the whole world to see. Why? So that those who would see the Son, would see their sin, believe on Jesus, and have everlasting life through His shed blood.

The thief on the cross saw Jesus and was assured of paradise. The Roman soldier whose hands had been stained with spotless blood saw that Jesus was indeed God’s Son. Doubting Thomas saw and believed in Jesus as his risen Lord and his God. Saul of Tarsus saw Jesus and his life’s mission was turned around upside down. Countless others have seen Jesus and their lives have been forever changed. What about you? Have you seen Jesus? Have you met Jesus as your Savior and Lord? If you have seen Jesus, what are you doing to help others see Jesus? Remember that no one can see God the Father, until they have seen God the Son. Before they can see the Son, people first need to hear and to see Jesus living in you. One day, every eye will see Jesus coming in the clouds with all power and glory, but how people see Jesus now will determine how they will see Jesus then. What can you do to help people to see Jesus, before it is too late?



*Have you seen Jesus?
When others look at
you, can they see the
Lord Jesus living
through you?*

Seeing Jesus is Seeing Him for Who Jesus Truly is... The Son of God.

Seeing Jesus

1. When you think about Jesus and who He is, what do you see? Who is Jesus to you?

2. Think about these two verses...

II Corinthians 3:2-3 "You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ... written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts."

Hebrews 12:14 "Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord."

Is there anything in your life that is hindering others from seeing Jesus in you? Are you living in the flesh or are you living in the Spirit? There are two sure signs of self-filled living: A lack of peace with others and lapses of unholy living in your life.

Is there anyone that you do not have peace with in your life that is displeasing to God?

Is there an area of your life that is unholy in the eyes of Holy God?

Remember, if you are out of sync with others... you are out of sync with God. If you are out of sync with God... you can be sure to be out of sync with others and others will not be able to see the Lord Jesus in you.

**Think About It... You May Be the Only Bible That Some People Ever Read.
Could Others See Jesus By Looking at You?**

Day 15



Prayer Changes Things

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

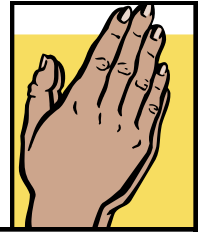
Luke 9:28-32

Matthew 26:36-46

James 5:13-18

Matthew 6:6-13

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16).



Imagine the scene. Your Master and your Mentor asks you and a couple of other close friends to climb up a mountain with Him. This is not about a hike up a high hill, but a time to refocus on the Holy One and all that in life really matters. As you see your Lord pray, you are awe-struck with the incredible changes taking place. His face is changed. His clothes are changed. His appearance is no longer that of a mere man, but that of the majestic and glorious Son of God!

What changed Jesus and transfigured Him before His followers eyes? Prayer. The gospel of Luke records the sole changing ingredient, *“And it came to pass... he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening.”* C.S. Lewis portrayed in the movie, *“Shadowlands,”* made an intriguing statement. When one of his colleagues asked about his dying bride, Joy, and how he was able to handle it all, he responded in one word, “Prayer.” “I can’t help but to pray. Prayer flows out of me as a constant need. Prayer doesn’t change God, it changes me.”

There is something about the mystery of prayer that God’s children will never understand this side of heaven. Prayer changes things because there is power in prayer. Oftentimes, the greatest change is not an outward change, but an inward change that only God can do through time spent alone with Him in personal prayer. Through prayer and staying face to face with God, Moses was changed from a hot-temper murderer, to the holy and humble messenger of the only High God. Through prayer, Joshua found his strength to stand and saw the walls of Jericho come tumbling down. Through prayer, Elijah was renewed and restored to his calling. Through prayer, Daniel gained deep insights and understanding into the ways and the works of God. Through prayer, the apostles gained boldness to again preach the Word of God without fear. How was all this done? Through prayer.

Think about it. Before Jesus went to the cross, how did the Son of God spend His life’s last few hours? By talking to His Father in prayer. Why? Was Jesus really trying to change the Father’s will or was Jesus seeking to bring His own will into complete submission and harmony with the will of the Father? Jesus knew that His hour had come and this is why He had come from heaven to earth in the first place. One more time, Jesus called His inner circle of Peter, James, and John together to pray with Him and for this trying hour. His friends were not the greatest prayer warriors in the world—that’s an understatement! Again and again, their eyes grew heavy and they fell asleep. They failed to pray for themselves and the situation, and it showed. When the armed guards came marching, the once faithful friends of Jesus went running. They had no strength to stand, so instead they scattered in scared-running shame. Not Jesus. Through prayer and deep uninterrupted communion with His Father, He was strengthened to go through it all, all the way to the last hill of the cross. Jesus was able to become the world’s sin bearer and burden bearer that next day, because He had already laid bare His burdens to the Father’s heart the night before.

That’s the beauty of prayer. Through prayer, burdens are lifted. The Psalmist knew the prayer changing connection. *“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice... Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved”* (Psalm 55:17 and 22). Is there someone weary and worn-out? Is there someone sick with suffering? Is there someone sad and lonely with their loss? Is there someone struggling under the load of sin? Then pray because prayer changes things. Through prayer, you see life from God’s perspective. Through prayer, God provides the strength you need to carry on. The apostle Paul in Philippians says it best, *“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the*

When problems come, how much time do you spend praying for others and for circumstances outside of your control?

Remember, the first person that God wants to change through prayer is you!

Prayer Changes Things From the Inside Out!

Prayer Changes Things

1. What do you think of this statement, “A Christian is no greater than his prayer life?” If you were to mark out your walk with God based on your prayer life, how strong would it be?
2. What does your prayer life look like? How much time do you spend in prayer each day and for the average week? How much time do you spend in personal prayer and how much time do you spend praying in corporate prayer with others? Write it down.
3. What changes do you need to make in your life to make room for more time spent in prayer?

Remember God’s promise when it comes to time spent in prayer... it’s never wasted!

Matthew 18:19-20

“Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

**If Prayer Changes Things... What Changes Do You Need to Make
for More Room in Your Life for Life-Changing Prayer?**

Day 16

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

Mark 6:30-36

Mark 1:29-39

Philippians 2:3-8

Philippians 2:19-21



Seeing People

“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd” (Matthew 9:36).

Can't you hear their groans? “People, more people. Don't they ever stop coming? Why can't we have some time by ourselves without people?” Finally, the inward murmurings erupted into outward words from a loss of patience and building frustration, “Lord, send the people away!” It seemed the disciples had forgotten something. The twelve ministers-in-training were so consumed with thinking about their own wants and their own needs that they missed the point that Jesus wanted them to see. Ministry and people go together. It seems that the disciples fell for the common malady found among ministers, “Ministry would be great if it weren't for people!” We laugh because we understand. These same feelings that they felt are found in our own fallible hearts.

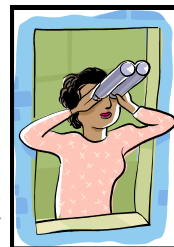
Before we quickly move to judge, it is only fair to ask a question. Didn't the disciples have a right to feel this way? They had just returned from their first short-term missions journey for Jesus. They were so excited! They wanted to tell Jesus everything and all that they had both said and done. They wanted Jesus' ear. They wanted some face time with Jesus. They wanted to be with Jesus alone without the crowds of others coming and crowding in. There was nothing wrong with what the disciples wanted. In fact, it was Jesus' idea for them to go to a desert place away from the people. Why? So that his missionaries could rest in Him and get ready for the next missions trip. “Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat” (Mark 6:31).

There is a great danger in ministry always in motion. A person can get so peopled out that they lose their heart for people. It can happen to anybody. It happened to the disciples and it can happen to you. There is only one sure way to see people the way that God sees them. Stay plugged into the Father and let the Lord constantly refill your heart for Him and for His people.

That's exactly what Jesus did. Just a few chapters back in Mark, we find a snapshot of Jesus' busy ministry life. Even after the sun had already set, people were still knocking at Jesus' door. Not just a few people, but the whole city wanted something from Jesus! Jesus gave and gave again. He preached, He touched, He healed, He walked, and He talked. By morning, Jesus had to have been physically beat. Did Jesus take a day off and sleep in? There are times when we need to do just that because it is the most spiritual thing that we can do. We must take time to “Come apart before we fall apart.” We are only human. Yet, there are other days when we must carry on. How can we when our physical and emotional strength is drained and gone? There is only one way. By reconnecting to the Father's heart and seeing Jesus' will for us in how to live for Him and for others each day. Jesus modeled it for us, “And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed” (Mark 1:35).

What's interesting is that Jesus didn't get to rest in His Father through prayer for very long. Soon impatient Peter was tapping him and handing him the morning's memo, “Everyone is looking for you.” Notice that Jesus didn't say, “Oh, great!” Instead, He said, “Let's go!” Jesus had gotten fueled up by filling up with His Father. Because Jesus had seen His Father, Jesus could now see people and minister to them. Jesus' heart melted for people when He looked at them. He saw people as sheep who had deep needs and whom desperately needed a shepherd. When Jesus looked at people, He had compassion for them because Jesus loves people!

As followers of Jesus, we are to have the Lord's same heart for people and no less. Yes, people are like sheep. They are often smelly, stubborn, and do stupid things. Remember though, we are all like sheep and people have probably thought the same thing about us too! The only way that we will be able to make room in our heart to see people the way Jesus does is to make room in our schedules everyday to first see Jesus.



How's your view of people? Look at people through the eyes of the Lord Jesus. Only through Him can you see people correctly with your eyes focused on Him.

See People Only After You Have Seen Jesus First!

Seeing People

1. The apostle Paul points out the problem of seeing people so clearly.

Philippians 2:4

“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

There is only one reason why we become agitated, frustrated, and fed up with people. We are focusing on ourselves and failing to look at people through the eyes of Jesus.

Take a few moments and do an evaluation of the people in your life. Ask yourself this one thing for each person. How am I looking to my own thing with this person instead of concerning myself with their needs first?

My Family:

My Friends:

My Church:

My Neighbors:

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5)

Day 17

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

Exodus 16:1-4, 35

Mark 6:7-9

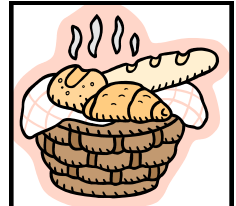
Mark 6:37-44

Luke 24:29-32



Lessons From the Loaves

“Give us day by day our daily bread” (Luke 11:3).



From the very beginning, God has used bread as the symbol of His provision. Adam didn't bring forth bread from the earth, God did. That's why before one morsel of bread is shoved into our mouths, we need to first offer it back to God as a thank offering. Isn't that the problem though? How can we, God's children who are only here because of divine creation, forget to thank the Lord for His constant provision? It's so easy to fail to remember that our Maker is also our daily Baker.

There is no clearer picture of God's faithfulness to supply His children's every need than the forty years of Israel's wanderings in the wilderness. In less than three months after Israel's exit from Egypt, the people began to whine and complain that they had nowhere to dine. They were thirsty and then they were hungry. It was a never ending cycle. The Lord saw their curdling attitudes and heard their mouths murmur and growl. The issue was not their empty stomachs and their longing for Egyptian fine-filling food. The issue was their trust in the Lord that what God Himself had promised, God Himself will do. Day by day, the Hebrew children saw God's faithfulness to provide. Day by day, God's people saw that the key to being daily satisfied with all that was needed in life was to start every day off by doing it God's way. The next generation learned from God's heaven sent wonder bread to trust in God for their every need—every day!

No wonder that Jesus told His disciples that they could take no bread with them as they stepped out in faith to obediently serve Him. God wants His servants to be dependent upon Him for everything. Independence in ministry has killed more ministers and missionaries than thousands of flying bullets and arrows. When you become independent of God in ministering to others, you are done ministering. Go ahead and try to do ministry in your own strength. It will get you nowhere. Only as God's servants are dependent upon God do they have something to give and something to offer to others.

Let the Lord break His Word open to you every day. Let it soak in and fuel you for another day as you serve Him.

Remember, what you need daily is not filling bread, but the living Word of God!

Why didn't the disciples get it? After they returned from their missionary ministry high, why did they fall flat on their faces and fail? “You give them something to eat,” Jesus said. The disciples looked flabbergasted. “What? You have got to be joking Jesus! There is nowhere to buy bread and even if we could, the cost is outrageously too high. There is just no way to get enough bread to give to all these people!” There is one way. Surrender to Jesus what you do have and trust Him for all the rest. That's exactly what the widow of Zarephath did for the prophet Elijah, and that's what the nameless little boy did with his little compact lunch. They gave it all to the Lord and through them, God provided for the needs of everyone, including them!

Jesus wasn't done with the lesson yet. Jesus put the bread in the disciples' hands and commanded them to go and give it to all the others. The people got their food directly from the disciples, who got their first broken pieces of bread directly from the hands of Jesus. This is the picture of how ministry should be. The minister of people needs to get his daily bread from Jesus. Without it, his bread in his hands grows stale and runs out, leaving him nothing in his hands left for others. Right before Jesus returned to heaven after his resurrection, Jesus reminded Peter and the disciples of their mission, “Feed my sheep.” Problems arise in ministry when God's feeders forget to get their food from Jesus first, before they focus on feeding others. Our appetite for God's Word should never waver. God's Word is our daily bread. Without it, we have nothing to offer to a hungry world.

Do you believe that God is able to provide above and beyond all that you could possibly ask, think, or imagine? The disciples did. They personally took up twelve baskets left over from the bread feast. Twelve, why twelve? Could it be that Jesus wanted to remind His disciples one more time that God wanted to use each one of them to feed and minister to others, if they would only trust in Jesus to meet all of their needs in ministry? Maybe. Or maybe Jesus wants to remind each of us, that when we, like the little boy, surrender all that we have to Jesus that Jesus will meet and go beyond our every need.

Learn to Recognize the Lord's Hand By Watching Him Give You Your Daily Bread.

Lessons From the Loaves

1. Remember your history of God's provision! The Israelites were so foolish to not trust that God could and would provide for them in the wilderness. How could they forget their own history?

God had sent Joseph into Egypt ahead of the family to provide for them and all the people in the land during those 7 years of famine. However, they did forget and their record of faithlessness and distrust is recorded in God's book for all to read.

What about you? History does not have to repeat itself. Stop and remember how the Lord has faithfully provided for you. Write it down as a record of God's faithfulness to you.

2. Luke 24 records an interesting event that included two travelers and a stranger. Who was this stranger sitting across from them at the table sharing the Scriptures? It was only when He blessed and broke the bread, then their eyes were opened and they saw and recognized their Lord!

As followers of Christ, we need to learn how to recognize the Lord when He blesses us by breaking open the Bread of His Word in our hearts.

What are some things that the Lord has recently taught you from His Word? What understanding of Scripture has God been burning and blessing your heart with?

God's Word is Never Stale. It's Always Fresh, Because It Is the Living Word of God!

Day 18

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

**Luke 7:36-50
Psalm 40:11-13
Psalm 2:12
Romans 10:13-15**



The Most Beautiful Words In All the World

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” (Isaiah 52:7)

She was afraid. Her sins were so many and so very deep. Why would this man be any different from all the rest? Why would this one receive her and openly accept her, when everyone else seemed repulsed by her very presence? She saw her sin and she was sick of how she had been living. No more! Her penitence was real. She wanted to change, but she had no power to do so on her own. The guilt of it all laid heavily upon her heart and mind. The weight of the scenes from her past had become like an unrelenting disease. She knew she couldn't take another step forward, until she first fell down before His feet and showed Him her heart's desire to purely love. She was ready to obey, ready to do whatever it takes, and she was ready to surrender everything to her new Master.



The message of peace can only be carried by those who have found peace with God.

She found Him. He was right there before her. Waiting as it were just for her all along. She couldn't even bare to look upon His face, only at His feet. She was so unworthy. She grasped the Master's feet and showered them with her repenting tears. The many hairs of her head reminded her of all her failures, yet she offered every one of them unto her God. She then began to kiss the Son's feet. She wanted to show her Lord that her heart belonged only to Him. Then she took out the gift. Perhaps the only gift that she could give, but certainly the best gift that she had to offer. She poured out the precious perfume upon her Savior's feet as a symbol of her heart pouring out in love to the Lord. Jesus didn't flinch. Jesus treasured the moment of a sinner turning to full salvation. He adored His child coming home to Him and unveiling all of her heart before her Lord. Then Jesus spoke the most beautiful words in the world to the once wayward woman, *“Thy sins are forgiven you... go in peace.”*

“Go in peace.” Those words have to be the best words in the whole world! Through Jesus, people can have peace with their past and peace as they go into their future. Think about it. How many sections in the hospital would be closed, how many counselors' offices would sit empty, how many bars would go belly up, and how many pharmaceutical companies would go bankrupt if only people could find lasting peace? Peace isn't a feeling. Peace is always grounded in red-blooded reality. Peace from God and with God is available because Jesus made a way for peace through His cross. *“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself... For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us”* (Philippians 1:20 and Ephesians 2:14).

Why does sin have to separate people from God and people from one another? Because of shame. Remember the woman with the issue of blood? She was tired of it all, but she still wanted to see Jesus. She didn't want to come to Jesus in front of all the masses, she wanted to just touch Jesus herself and be healed. At that very moment when she reached out to Jesus and touched but the hem of His garment, the righteousness and the power of God flowed. Listen to what Jesus says, *“Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace”* (Luke 8:48).

There it is again! It's the best news in the world, “Go in peace.” Peace is what the people of this world need. Peace is what everyone longs for deep within their soul. That's why the Gospel message of forgiveness of sins is called the Gospel of peace. Those who have fallen before Jesus' feet and have found true peace, must now dedicate their own feet to proclaiming Jesus' message of eternal peace.

God wants others to know His love. God wants others to be set free from their sins. God wants people to have peace in their hearts that only God can give. God wants His children that know Him to be His peace agents to a world that is lost and peace-less. There is only one barrier that blocks the hearing of the beautiful words of peace. Where are God's messengers of peace? Who will go out of their way to reach out to others, just like the Savior went out of His way to allow the unreachable to

God Gives Us Peace So That We Can Now Go and Proclaim His Peace to Others.

The Most Beautiful Words in All the World

1. **The woman who wept at Jesus' feet is nameless. However, in the very beginning of the next chapter of Luke 8, we find this written,** *"And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him, **And certain women**, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance"* (Luke 8:1-3).

What's the point? One of those women who ministered unto Jesus, could have been this woman who had just been forgiven of her sins and was told by Jesus to now, "Go in peace."

Could it be that this woman who had experienced God's peace now wanted to be one of Jesus' messengers of peace and to share with others the best news in all the world?

Application: No sin is too great that God cannot forgive. No person's past is too marred that God cannot use them to minister for Him.

2. **Is there anything in your life that you have no peace about? Remember, God is the author of peace. Jesus is the Prince of Peace and the Wonderful Counselor. Whatever it is that is causing you to lack peace—surrender it before Jesus' feet. Let His presence that never leaves you remind you that He has forgiven you of all your sins... past, present, and future.**

Bask in God's peace. Accept God's peace that He longs to pour as perfume over your whole heart.

Remember, you are clean, you are accepted, and you are precious in His sight!

**May the God of Peace Hold Your Heart Close to His Today
So That You Would Know His Perfect Peace!**

Day 19

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

Luke 8:22-25

Hebrews 11:1

Hebrews 11:8-16

Psalms 23:6



To Get to the Other Side

“Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth” (Luke 8:22).

Jesus set the clear direction. “Let’s go everyone. We are going to go over to the other side.” His followers obediently got in the boat and together, with Jesus, they launched out and began to sail across to the other side of the lake. All was well. All was peaceful and serene. They had the Lord’s presence right there presently with them. What could possibly go wrong?

It wasn’t too long before the sailing turned to toiling. A great storm had risen up and taken even the former seamen by surprise. The disciples moved quickly from frustration to fear. They wrestled with the raging sea, while their Master had drifted sound asleep in the back of the boat. Jesus was resting, while they were working and rowing for their lives! Doesn’t the Savior care? Yes, He does!

How many times have you found yourself in the same boat of trouble and distress as the disciples? You know that Jesus told you to get in the boat, so you did. You heard His clear direction and you believe firmly that you are doing exactly what the Lord told you to do. So where did this storm come from? What happened to the smooth sailing path of following God’s will that you had pictured? Why this sudden storm and why doesn’t God jump in and bail you out?

It’s a faith test. Remember what Jesus said to His disciples after they woke Him up in the midst of the storm? Jesus took one look around and muzzled mother nature by giving one command, “Peace, be still.” The wind shut down and the roaring waves shut up. “Whoa! Who is this guy? Even the wind and the waves obey Him!” The disciples were astonished at what they had seen, but Jesus was more astonished and almost incredulous at their lack of unseeing faith. The storm didn’t sting them anymore, only the Son of God’s words did, “Where is your faith?”

What is faith? *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”* (Hebrews 11:1). Faith isn’t faith in nothing. Faith is faith in that which we can put our trust. God many times increases His children’s faith by allowing them to see His strong hand. Other times, God puts His people through the faith stretcher test and asks them to trust Him and His word alone. Abraham had to take God at His word. He had no idea what lay in store for him on the other side, but he believed God’s word concerning the promised land, the promised people, and his own promised son. It took Abraham awhile, but he finally got it. Abraham learned that God was going to get him there, without Abraham’s own self-effort. The only thing that God required for Abraham to have was faith.

It seems though the disciples had forgotten Jesus’ faith giving words to them. “Let us go over to the other side.” Isn’t that what Jesus had said? Jesus didn’t say, “Let’s go out into the middle of the lake and drown!” There’s a lesson for each one of us to learn. We need to take God at His word! God will take us to the other side. So why are we rowing, struggling, and stressing, when Jesus wants us to be resting? Why can’t we just trust that what the Lord said, He Himself will do?

The Captain of our ship knows exactly where He is going and He will get us there. It’s interesting that when the disciples first started out, they were sailing. There were no signs of toiling and rowing. It’s only when the storm hit that their method of crossing changed to frantic effort. Remember it got them nowhere. It seems that Jesus allowed them to come to an end of themselves before He stepped in to stop the storm. God wants His followers to learn they cannot get to the other side on their own. Is there a storm in your life that is causing you to worry and be wide-eyed with fear? Stop the panicking and stop the insane working that gets you nowhere. Stop and look at the Lord Jesus. He is there with you. He has promised and He will see you through, all the way to the other side of the shore.



*Rest in the Lord
and wait patiently
for Him... then you
will have peace like
a river.*

*Trust in the Lord
and believe His
promised Word
spoken to you.*

Why Row Across When You Can Sail Across? Trust in the One Who Controls the Wind.

To Get to the Other Side

1. **What are you struggling with right now in your life? Is there anything that is causing you to become distressed and feeling as if you are going down?**

2. **Claim God's promise to you:**

Isaiah 26:3-4

*"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee:
because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever:
for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength."*

3. **When life's tasks and "To Do" lists become overwhelming, remember God's promise that He will get you through to the other side. What things do you need to commit to the Lord today?**

**"Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass...
Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself" (Psalm 37:5 & 7).**

Day 20

Check it out for yourself first!

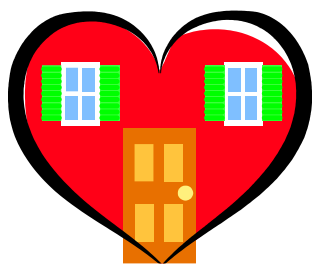
Read the following Bible passages:

John 14:16-26

Ephesians 3:14-21

Ephesians 4:4-6

1 John 2:24-3:3



The Only Place to Dwell

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20).

The disciples had many questions that night. It was as if all the puzzle pieces of the past three years were finally coming together. They understood now that Jesus was the only way to the Father and that the Father and the Son were one. They also heard of another that Jesus called, the “Comforter.” From the very beginning, Jesus explained that the Holy Spirit is not some outside mystical force, but one who comes to dwell within. Judas, the faithful other one, was still not clear. “Lord, how will you reveal and make yourself known to us and not unto the world?” Jesus’ answer is threefold. The Triune God, Father, Son, and Spirit will come and make their abode in the believer’s heart.

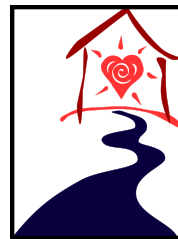
That’s a stunning statement isn’t it! Think about it. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you have God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit living in you! How can this be? Even the profound and theologically precise apostle Paul said the indwelling presence of God was a mystery among all mysteries. *“Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you the hope of glory”* (Colossians 1:26-27).

There has been some debate over the accuracy of the beloved evangelistic phrase, “Ask Jesus into your heart.” The words are not magical and left without further explanation, they are lacking in the needed Gospel content to lead someone to trust in Christ, be it a child or an adult. Yet, the statement is biblical. At the moment when a sinner turns to the Savior, Jesus Christ does come to dwell within. There are no better descriptions than what happens at the time of salvation than a child saying, “Jesus just came into my heart!”

Where does the Scripture say that? Many places, here are just a few for thought. *“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father”* (Galatians 4:6). *“In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit”* (Ephesians 2:22). And the favorite, *“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith... that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God”* (Ephesians 3:17 and 19). Paul’s prayer at the end of chapter three in Ephesians is so powerful. The Father, Son, and Spirit come and dwell within so that each believer in the church of Christ can be filled with all the fullness of God. That’s why God is able to do things in and through the believer that could never have been thought possible or even imagined. Why? Because it is the power of the Almighty God who is working within each heart, so that each life would bring glory to God!

This has been God’s plan all along. In the Old Testament, the believers were instructed to love God with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength. They were told to love their neighbor as themselves and to keep a whole host of other laws, big and small. One break of the law, meant a broken relationship with God. A sacrifice for sin was always required. The truth was that the people of God couldn’t do it! They couldn’t live up to being the people of God, because they had no power of God from within to obey. They needed a heart transplant, a new heart, and God knew it. *“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them... and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God”* (Ezekiel 36:26-28).

Think about it. Of all the places that God could have chosen to dwell, He choose to dwell in our hearts. Jesus loves His children and His church so much. He doesn’t want to talk to His people by standing on the outside looking in, He wants to come in and commune from the inside, from within the heart. Jesus doesn’t care what the condition of our hearts’ houses look like. He already knows. Jesus wants to come and fellowship as our closest Friend, and to form us into being just like Him.



Jesus loves us too much to stay without, so He comes in to dwell within to be with His child forever.

The Only Place That God Chooses to Dwell is Within Our Hearts!

The Only Place to Dwell

1. Do you know Jesus as your Savior? Does Jesus live within your heart? If so, write down briefly your testimony of how you believed on Jesus and invited Him to come into your heart to be your Savior. If you haven't received Christ, what are you waiting for? Now is the time!

2. How is your heart today? Is it dirty and full of hidden closets of sin? Where is the Savior? He wants to daily fellowship with you. He wants to come in and clean up your heart's house. He wants to sit down and talk with you, as friend to friend. Open up all your heart to the Lord Jesus today and let Him in. He's waiting.

The Precious Blood of Jesus Can Daily Purify and Purge Our Heart From Sin.

Day 21



The Time is Come

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

Galatians 4:4-5

Luke 9:51

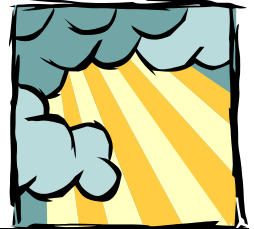
Acts 1:6-11

Revelation 1:1-8

*“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly, Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus”
(Revelation 22:20).*

God’s timing is perfect. God’s clock is never slow or out of sync with His divine plan. God’s time-table has always been right and it always will be. God created time. *“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”* (Genesis 1:1). Did you ever wonder what is this, “In the beginning,” stuff? It’s the beginning of time, earth bound time. It’s the beginning of God’s unfolding plan to bring glory unto Himself through His creation for all eternity.

The Gospel of John begins by jumping us back to the beginning of time to understand the Author and the purpose of time. *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made”* (John 1:1-3). God had a plan to redeem the world before the beginning of the world. That’s a mind boggling thought, isn’t it! What’s even more beyond human comprehension is the separation of the God-head for a brief span of time. At just the right time, God the Father sent God the Son to step down into the world to become the Son of Man. God did all this so that mankind could be made right with his God for all time.



*Be patient. Strengthen your heart.
Devote yourselves unto prayer, for the coming of the Lord is drawing nigh (James 4:7-20).*

For three years, He had been traveling. The itinerant minister had no home to speak of and nowhere to lay His weary head. His mission was almost complete. He had spoken of God’s coming kingdom everywhere He had been. He knew His time had now come. His purpose for His life was clear. *“For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them”* (Luke 9:56). Jesus, God the Son, came to save lives by laying down His own life so that others might live. Jesus turned His direction and steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, so that He could be nailed to His God ordained cross. The hour of darkness had come. Blood was shed and the debt for all sin was paid for all. Three days passed. It seemed as if all time stood still. As the darkness of night gave way to the rays of breaking daylight, the grave opened up and God came out! What a day of rejoicing for all creation! Forty days later, the Son of God returned to be reunited with His Father and to be restored to the glory that He had always had from the beginning. The task of purchasing eternal redemption and the promise of future resurrection were now sealed and secured. The gates of heaven were opened, the key to death’s door was taken, and was now held in God the Son’s hands for all time in eternity.

What time is it now? Today is the day of offered salvation! Now is the time to trust in Christ, not later. Just like the days before the flood that destroyed the whole world were numbered, so are the days before the coming day of the Lord. *“God... now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained”* (Acts 17:30-31).

Just who is this One who is ordained to judge the world? He is the Great “I am”, the Almighty One, the Lord, the One who always was from the beginning, the One who was pierced, who died, and who is alive forevermore! The One who is coming to rule and to reign is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God! He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. The One who is, who was, and who is to come.

Are you ready to meet Jesus? Some day the clouds will part and be rolled back as a scroll. Every eye will see Him. Will you shout for joy or will you weep and wail because of an unwilling heart? Will you see Him as your longed for Savior or as your Judge? Those who know the Lord have nothing to fear. To know Christ is to know eternal life. If you have trusted in Christ, your name is recorded forever in the Lamb’s book of life. Nothing can blot out your name and take away your place with God. You are Christ’s and He is yours.

The end of God’s Book in Revelation spells out the two destination alternatives for all mankind. One is hell and the other is heaven. God wants His people to be with Him and not to spend an eternity without Him. Three times in the last book and chapter, Jesus Himself, gives an urgent message, “I am coming quickly.” Three times, Jesus calls out to people to come to Him before it is too late. The time is coming when Jesus will come. Until He comes, stay ready, keep His Word, and stay focused on your task to call others to come to Christ before He comes. The time is at hand (Rev. 1:3)!

Don’t Fear... God Will Not Delay. Christ Will Come at God’s Ordained Time.

The Time is Come

1. The book of Revelation was written to the church, God's people. Jesus had a message to His church. "I am coming quickly... but you are not ready!"

Some churches (God's people) had lost their first love. Some had gotten caught up in doing things for God instead of daily growing in their love for God. Some churches fell into doctrinal error. Some churches fell to sin and to the temptations of the world. Some grew cold. Others grew spiritually sick and blind and no longer saw their deep need for God each day.

If Jesus were to write a letter to you about how you are ready or not for His coming, what would He say? What would Jesus commend you on? What would Jesus say are the areas that you are coming up short on and need to repent?

2. Now it's your turn to write your letter of prayer and repentance back to Jesus. What do you need to change in your life and in your heart in order to be ready for His coming?

Let Your Life Be a Letter of Praise to God as You Are Preparing for His Coming!

Day 22

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

Genesis 2 and 3

Revelation 2:7

Revelation 22:1-5 and 14

Ezekiel 48:35



The Making of Paradise

“And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43).

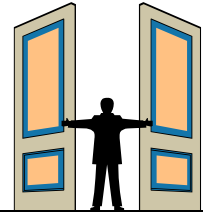
The attainment of paradise is everyone’s pursuit. Every person pictures their longed for paradise in their own way. For some, it’s beach front property with waving palm trees and balmy seas. For others, it is a white picket fence in the country and the wallet containing their many photographs of the picture perfect family. For some others, it’s a million dollar mansion and the combination to their bank’s safe that is life’s key to paradise and financial security. Many just long for contentment, comfort and peace. They want inner peace and world peace. Stop and think about it for a moment. Isn’t all of life built around building towards one’s dream for paradise? At birth, the seeds of desire for paradise are born. Did you ever wonder why the world puts such an emphasis on education, degrees, and success? They are said to be the tools and the means to achieving paradise. Somewhere along life’s path, every person strives to reach that point in time when they can stretch out their arms towards the sky and shout out for all the world to hear and say, “Now this is paradise!”

The problem is that people cannot capture or recreate their own paradise, only God can. God already did once. God created the Garden of God, the Garden of Eden, and planted His divinely created people smack dab in the middle of it to live in it and to be with Him forever. However, there was someone else who was in the Garden of God’s good creation. A being who once knew and experienced every moment of perfect paradise with God. God’s Word tells the story. The created being’s heart was lifted up and became prideful. The cherub who was created to bring glory unto the throne room of God wanted the very throne of God for himself. There was only one possible outcome. The created one was kicked out of paradise and lost forever the privilege of the presence of God. *“Thus saith the Lord God... Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God... Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth... Thou was perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee... and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub... Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground” (Ezekiel 28:12-17).*

It wasn’t too much longer before the man and the woman both followed suit. When their eyes were opened to their choice of disobedience against God’s command, they immediately realized that their own plan for paradise gain had now turned to become paradise lost. The tree of life still stood in the midst of the Garden. This disruption of God’s plan for paradise would not be allowed to stand. The man and the woman were driven out of the Garden and the paradise that they once knew disappeared. Yet, a seed was planted and ordained by God to grow. From the seed of the woman would come one who would crush the head of sin and Satan and open the gates to paradise and to the tree of life once again.

Thousands of years later, there was another tree. The fruit that came forth from that tree was the precious life giving blood of the Son of God. What was God doing? God was making a way to paradise for man. Day turned to night, then night gave way to day. The bridge to paradise was now possible to cross. The thief on the cross may have been one of the first to enter into paradise with Christ, but he will not be the last. For all who come to the Son— by the drawing of the Father and the quickening power of the Holy Spirit, may come into the paradise prepared for them and to be in the presence of their God forever. When will God’s people ever learn? Paradise is only paradise when God is there!

The day is coming when God will again make a new eternal paradise for His people, a new heaven and earth and the new Holy City of Jerusalem. The city of paradise will be beyond incredible because the Lord is there. Jesus spoke of this coming paradise. *“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:2-3).* Now this is true paradise, to be with God and with God’s people forever. There is no paradise without God, and there is no path to paradise apart from Jesus. There is a cost to paradise, but the cost to enter in is free because of the cross. At His appointed time, Jesus stepped down from His paradise to stretch out His arms across the sky to open the door to paradise for all the world to know and hear, “Now this is paradise, knowing Christ!”



The entrance into paradise is now open.

Will you accept God’s plan of paradise that He made for you, or will you insist on making your own version of paradise?

There is Only One Description of Paradise—to Be With God and His People Forever!

The Making of Paradise

- 1. Everyone has their own picture of paradise on earth. What is yours?**
- 2. How does your picture of paradise compare to God's plan of paradise that He is making for you? Do they fit together or is there something wrong or missing from your picture?**
- 3. Surrender your plan for paradise unto God's plan. God does know what is best for you!**

I Corinthians 1:9

*“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,
neither have entered into the heart of man,
the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”*

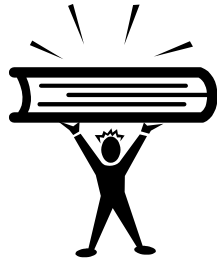
Your Future Belongs to God. Trust Him, God Does Know What He is Doing!

Day 23

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

**John 21:15-24
Revelation chapters 1-3**



Hold On!

“I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come” (Revelation 2:24-25).

It all began years ago after breakfast one morning on the beach. Jesus turned to two of His disciples and let them know that they each had their own divine assignments to carry out for Him. Peter and John had been together for many years, maybe even since childhood. They had grown up practicing the same profession. They were fisherman and they both were in the family side of the business. They were even called to follow their Savior on the same day and they both responded in exactly the same way. They immediately left everything behind to follow their Lord. Now, after Christ's resurrection, Jesus had a message for both of them to hold onto. Without mincing much words, Jesus told Peter that he would grow old, go where he had never wanted to go before, and then give his life away for his Lord. Just a matter of days before, Peter had told Jesus that he was willing to die for Him. Now Jesus was calling Peter's marker. Jesus gave Peter no other option. His message to Peter was the same as it was in the beginning, "Follow me."



The only way to hold on each day is to stay in God's Word. Without the Word of God as your daily compass and strong anchor, your life will surely give way.

Peter was willing, but then he started looking around at what the Lord's will might be for the others. That's always a big, no-no! Peter then singled out his long time friend and ministry partner, good ole' John. "But Lord, what about him?" Jesus' answer is interesting and it raised all kinds of questions that fueled discussion among the disciples. *"If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me"* (John 21:22). Tradition and church history tells us that Peter moved from being the minister entrenched at the church in Jerusalem, to the traveling missionary who began the church in Babylon. Peter switched from being a man full of impulsive action, to being a man full of impacting words. The one who had heard the Words of life from the Lord, was now spending his days speaking the Words of life unto others. Peter finished his life, much like his Lord. Peter was crucified on a cross, but requested from the Roman soldiers to be crucified on the cross upside down out of humble unworthiness unto His Master.

John's life ended differently. It seems that he was the only disciple of Jesus who wasn't martyred. He died in his old age being imprisoned on the island of Patmos, *"for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ"* (Revelation 1:9). John knew that this is what the Lord had willed. The Lord Jesus commissioned John to write a special book for the seven churches in Asia. In each of the letters to the seven churches, one message rings out loud and clear. Hold on, hold fast, and strengthen that which remains for the time of the coming of the Lord is at hand!

If Jesus were to send a hand-written message to your church today, what would it say? Would He speak words of comfort and commendation, or words of condemnation? The church of Ephesus had great works, but they had lost their grip on their first love for God. The church of Smyrna was holding firm and being faithful in the face of persecution, even unto death. The people of God in Pergamos were holding fast to the name and the faith in Christ, but a few had fallen and stumbled into temptation and compromise. Too much of the world had become part of the church. Thyatira was being tested and tried in their heart by the purifying eyes of the Lord to settle the question of who would reign. God will never condescend for being second place in our lives. One day at Christ's coming, Jesus will rule the nations. Until then, Jesus wants to reign in our hearts with our hearts firmly latched onto Him until He comes. The church in Sardis was dead. A few were alive, but they needed to strengthen that which remained and hold fast as a spotless bride. Philadelphia was right on track. They held fast to the Word of God and to their calling to be the people of God. A crown awaited them on the other side. Then there was back-slidden Laodicea. They had stopped pursuing a daily fellowship with God because they didn't think that they needed God. Jesus had only one desire, "Let me come in and commune with you, for without me you cannot hold fast and overcome each day."

The message for the people of God today, is the same message to the seven churches, and to the Lord's apostles, Peter and John. God wants His people to hold onto His Word spoken to them, to follow Him, and to be faithful unto Him until He comes. There is only way to be ready for the Lord's coming, to be covered in Jesus' blood and to be committed to keeping His Word. If there was one message that the Lord Jesus would have for His churches today it would be this, "Hold on, follow Me, for I am coming soon!" Don't make the mistake that Peter did at first. Stop looking at others. Look at Jesus and hold on!

Stay Ready for His Coming... Keep the Faith, Keep the Word, and Keep Watching!

Hold On!

1. **Revelation chapter 2, describes the Lord Jesus as walking in the midst of His churches, who are like candlesticks shining as a testimony for the Lord. If Jesus were to evaluate your life and your light shining for Him, what would He find?**

Which one are you most like?

Matthew 5:14 and 16 “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

Revelation 2:4-5 “Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works: or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”

2. **What is keeping you from holding out your light for the world to see Jesus through you? Are you afraid to hold forth your light, or is something such as sin holding you back?**

3. **If God’s people hold on until the end, what does the Lord promise to those who overcome?**

Revelation 2:7

Revelation 2:11

Revelation 2:17

Revelation 2:26-28

Revelation 3:5

Revelation 3:12

Revelation 3:21

We can overcome and hold fast because Christ already overcame and holds the keys to our daily and eternal victory! (Revelation 1:17-18)

Day 24



From the Inside Out

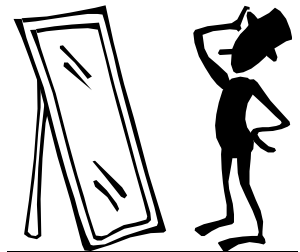
Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

Mark 7:1-23
Psalm 24:3-6
Isaiah 61:10
James 1:21-25

*“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting”
(Psalm 139:23-24).*

Did you know that Hindus and Christians have one point of faith in common? Yes, they do. Have you ever heard this pseudo Christian phrase that, *“Cleanliness is next to godliness?”* It was quite shocking one day to walk into a Hindu temple and find this statement engraved upon the wall for the curious passerby to see. The thoughts came racing, “Why that’s a North American saying, perhaps from the pioneer days! What’s it doing here in a Hindu temple?” Then the disconnected thoughts and the differing religious view points came together and began to make sense. “Wait a second, the Hindus and the Bible believing followers of Jesus Christ are talking about two different things!” The one is focused on the cleanliness condition of the outside, while the other is focused on the cleansing that only comes from the inside out!



Have you stopped and taken a look today into the mirror of God’s Word?

How can you see what is wrong within and without unless you intently listen and look to God and His Word?

The right wing Jewish faith in Jesus’ day were not far away in their religious view from the far out eastern religion of the Hindus. That’s a shocking statement! How could that be? The Jewish were fiercely monotheistic declaring that, “There is only one God.” The Hindus are instead polytheistic. They believe in and worship many gods. How many? Oh, around 33 million different deities are given god status! Yet, at this one point over the issue of cleanliness, the Jews and the Hindus collaborated and coincided, while Jesus on the other hand collided with them. Jesus had heard and seen enough. *“Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also”* (Luke 11:39-40)? It was like talking to a brick wall. Their doctrine and their teaching of men’s traditions had been ingrained within them for decades and centuries stacked upon centuries. When would they get it? Yet, a better question to ask is, “When will we?”

God’s Word is precise and clear. Only those who have clean hands and a pure heart before God can stand with God. Only the generation of those who have come to God to be made clean with God can reach out and seek God’s face (Psalm 24). Therein lies the problem. Who is clean enough to stand before Holy God? No one! Then who can stand with God in His holy hill and live with God in His high and holy home of heaven? No one! *“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life”* (Revelation 21:27). No one can climb the high hill of holiness through self-cleansing, so Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, walked up the hill to shed His blood so that we could be cleansed of all our sins. Through Jesus, God’s people have new clothes. Their garments are spotless. They are made white, clean, and righteous for one reason, because of the blood of the Lamb!

God’s cleansing begins from within, but it moves to cover all that remains, including that which is without. You see, God isn’t satisfied with just the inside cup of our hearts. He wants our handles on the outside clean too. *“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded”* (James 4:8). Ah, there it is! The Bible verse that most likely birthed the quotable quip, *“Cleanliness is next to godliness.”* God wants our actions of our outside to match a purified inward heart. “Impossible,” you say! On your own, that’s true, but not with God!

God has given to His people two power tools for cleansed hearts and hands, the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. When God’s people start getting splotches of sin and dirt on them, the Holy Spirit steps in at the right moment, convicts, and leads them to the path of repentance. Thank Jesus for His cleansing blood! *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 1:9). With cleansed hearts, we can now hold the Word of God up to our lives as a mirror. God can begin to show us those areas in our lives which still need a deep cleaning. Never turn and walk away from the Word of God’s mirror. Submit to God’s daily process of cleaning. It’s the only way to remain clean, from the inside out!

God’s Power Tools for Daily Cleansing... The Holy Spirit and the Word of God!

From the Inside Out

1. Even disciples of Jesus get dirty. They don't need to jump into the tub of salvation to get scrubbed again, only their feet need a daily clean sweep. Look at what Jesus said to Peter, *"He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean..."* (John 13:10).

What dirt is on your feet today that needs to be cleansed? Show Jesus your feet and let Him clean you up!

Psalm 32:5

*"I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid.
I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD;
and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah."*

2. God isn't satisfied with our condition of cleansing until He sees His image reflected in us. As you spend time asking the Holy Spirit to search your heart and as you allow God's Word to soak in upon the stains of sin, ask the Lord this question in prayer...

Lord, what areas in my life are a poor reflection of You? Show me, God, the things in my life that need to be cleansed and changed, through You.

The Secret to Cleansing... Look Into God's Law and Continue Therein (James 1:25).

Day 25

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

I Corinthians 1:10-31

Matthew 11:25-27

I Corinthians 2:1-16

I Corinthians 3:18-23



The Wisdom of God

“Christ... the wisdom of God... But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (I Corinthians 1:24 and 30).

“Are you the wisest in your class?” I was stunned at the question. I shook my head, “No, no absolutely not.” My mind began to then trigger a long list of names with mine nearer the middle than the top, “No, there is Andy, Beth, Tracy...”. My relative who had a strong and a sincere walk with God suddenly interrupted my train of thought. “No, that’s not what I asked you. I didn’t ask you if you were the smartest in your class, but the wisest.” For an eighth grader, I was dumbfounded. “Huh, what do you mean? What’s the difference?” I didn’t know. Do you?



The wisdom of God is wrapped up in the cross of Christ.

Only life lived in light of the cross makes sense out of life.

I find great comfort now in understanding the difference between being smart and being wise, and the utterly unfathomable gap between the so called wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God. I love these verses that I believe are written in the Bible just for me! *“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen...”* (I Corinthians 1:27-28). Now there’s a list that no one in their right mind would intentionally choose to be on... foolish, weak, ordinary, and despised. Who wants that! Yet, God in His wisdom, chose people like me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him, with their whole life. Why would He do that? Let’s look at what the Bible says. Why make up reasons when you don’t have to? There is no need to second guess. The reason is so simple, even for the simple-minded, *“That no flesh should glory in his presence”* (I Corinthians 1:29).

The church in Corinth was getting a bit carnal. They were squirming over who their allegiance should be towards. Should they be followers of Paul, of Apollos, of Peter, or of Christ? They were confused. The apostle Paul dipped his pen in his ink well, pulled out a fresh piece of parchment, and began to write to set them straight. “That’s a foolish question! You belong to Christ! You didn’t come to believe because of the mere words of men, but because of the power of God!” It’s totally mind-blowing to think that God secured the way from all eternity past to save all those in Christ who would believe on Him for eternal life by sending His Son to die on the cross! Paul said that all of men’s wisdom or even of his own wisdom amounted to nothing. *“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified”* (I Corinthians 2:2).

Think about it for a moment. The apostle Paul was a very bright man. He was a student of the law, being tutored by the famous doctor Gamaliel himself. He was a Jew among Jews and a Pharisee among Pharisees. Yet all this learning made him almost miss the boat of God’s unfathomable grace. God had to temporarily blind him and knock his chip off his shoulder to get him to see the truth. The only truth that matters in the whole world is that Jesus is God and that through His death and resurrection we can now have eternal life! Paul was indeed a polished spokesman for the Gospel. His reasoning capabilities were brilliant. Yet the author of the in-depth Gospel presentation of the book of Romans said that his message could be wrapped up in just five words.

“Christ died for our sins!” That’s all you need to know because Christ is the wisdom of God! Only life lived in light of the cross makes sense. Even if all the world’s wisdom could be condensed into one person’s brain, it wouldn’t be enough. The wisdom of the world is not the wisdom of God! Man’s wisdom and pathways of reasons fall short of meeting man’s most basic need—the forgiveness of sins. Only the cross of Christ completes the broken bridge between God and man.

Then, only after spiritual birth (salvation) through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, the child of God can grasp the wisdom of God. The Spirit reveals the Son, the Son reveals the Father, and the Father reveals the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life. The Holy Spirit’s job, however, is not done. The Spirit is there as our “paraclete”—to come along us—to teach us the deep things of God, the wisdom of God, and to show us how to understand and compare spiritual things with spiritual. Not for our own selves alone, but to help other believers to grow and mature in Christ.

There is a vast difference in being smart and in being wise! I’m glad that the cross of Jesus Christ has nothing to do with I.Q.’s, but has everything to do with God’s calling and His great love. *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8). Now that’s the wisest truth that the world can ever know. Do you know it? If so, be sure to faithfully tell it!

The Wisdom of the World is NOT the Wisdom of God!

The Wisdom of God

1. Think about it. Why does the Bible seem foolish and make no sense to non-believers?

I Corinthians 2:14

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

If you take out the Gospel message of Jesus Christ, “Christ died for our sins and arose again,” you have ripped the whole Bible out of context! The Bible makes no sense without this truth at it’s center. You cannot teach the Bible without this truth. If you try, you will end up teaching a FALSE RELIGION and not a TRUE RELATIONSHIP!

Have you been guilty of teaching just Bible knowledge apart from the Gospel message? Remember, every truth of Scripture is rooted in the cross of Christ!

2. You don’t believe it? Here, try this quick scripture truth search experiment:

-Why should we be kind to others and to forgive them (Ephesians 4:32)?

-Why should we serve one another and think of others needs before our own selves (Philippians 2:4-8)?

-Why should we give our bodies and our very lives to Christ as an offering to God (Romans 12:1)?

**You Say That You Don’t Understand the Scriptures?
Ask the Holy Spirit... He’s Your Helper and Your Teacher!**

Day 26



Detour or Delight?

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

James 1:17
Psalm 37:4
Psalm 1
Psalm 19:7-10

*“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart...”
(Jeremiah 15:16).*

What do you delight in? What brings you the greatest joy in life? God has given to His people so many things to bless their lives with. Family, friends, laughter, a stroll at sunset, and waking to the awesome glow of a morning sunrise are all gifts from God for His creation to enjoy. Human beings, however, have a serious flaw. We have a strong tendency to treasure the gifts, instead of the One who gave the good gifts. From the very beginning, humans turned to worship the creature over their Creator. They wanted to use the God-given gifts for themselves to further all their wants, needs, and desires. This is the flashing red light signaling the sure sign of a soul in trouble. Whenever our joy and delight is found ultimately in anything less than God, we know that we are treasuring the wrong treasure.



What’s your treasure that you delight in each day?

Anything less than God and the Word of God will be to your soul as a worthless treasure box.

Do you believe that God wants to bless you? Yes, He does! He does want to fill your life with joy, peace, happiness, and good things. This is the kind of God that God is! I’m so glad that God is God and there is no other beside Him! Jesus said, *“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly”* (John 10:10). Jesus came to fill our lives with joy, not just a little joy, but deep abiding and overflowing joy. So where does the joy come from? From learning how to delight in God and in His Word as our daily source of joy!

David, the shepherd and psalmist, spent many solitary hours with God and learned how God could be his unending delight and joy. Solitude. That word alone makes many shudder and sad. How can joy be found in being shut out from others and listening to an unseen God? A Chinese man listening intently to the missionary sharing about the love of Jesus interrupted the messenger’s message, “Show me Jesus and the Father and I will believe you.” For the unsaved and uninhabited soul, worshipping idols made more sense than worshipping a God who is a Spirit. Yet that is exactly what the Father longs for and desires. God wants us to worship Him, to want Him, and to delight in Him. God wants His children to be still and to know that He is God and that His Word is true. God has a promise for those who have found this secret joy of abiding in the unseen God, *“Whom having not seen ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory”* (1 Peter 1:8).

One day we will see our God and our Savior face to face and we will know that He is. God will be our God and we will be His people. He will be with us and we will be with Him forever. This is unending joy, to know God and to be known and loved by God throughout eternity. So why do we have the human habit of looking to other things to fill our joy? Because of a trio of reasons... sin, sickness of the soul, and sorrow.

Psalm 1:1, in principle warns against people who want to do what they want to do, instead of what God would have them to do. They may think that they have found the “in crowd” and have life all sown up. In the end, they discover the ugly truth. Life is meaningless lived without God at the center. Their life was like chaff, blown away by the wind and amounted to nothing. They missed out on unending joy because they deliberately chose to take a detour and traded their daily and eternal treasure for earthly moments of pleasure. This is not God’s plan.

The psalmist on the other hand, discovered that true delight comes from daily knowing His God. He also discovered the only balm of healing available to restore his soul that had been marred and scarred by the course of this life—the Word of God. God was his delight, but the Word of God was his source of strength and joy. The psalmist wanted God’s Word to break over him every day to mend him to be all that God had designed for him to be. The psalmist couldn’t even bear for another day to break. He wanted God’s Word to pour over his needy soul day and night. Daily he prayed, *“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law”* (Psalm 119:18). God and God alone was his delight and God’s Word was his daily treasure. Nothing else would do and nothing else could deter him from the joy that he found. What about you?

“The JOY of the LORD is Your Strength” (Nehemiah 8:10).

Detour or Delight?

1. Psalm 1, lays out the two keys to living life God's way. Without this, a detour off of God's plan for our lives will surely be in sight for those who ignore God as their one delight.

KEY 1: SURROUND YOURSELF WITH GODLY PEOPLE

Psalm 1:1 "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

Question: Who are your closest companions that you spend time with? Do they pull you towards God or do they deter you away from God?

KEY 2: SUBMERGE YOURSELF IN THE WORD OF GOD

Psalm 1:2 "But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

Question: How much time are you spending with God and in His Word each day? Is it something that you want and delight in doing, or is it a daily dread?

2. Read again Psalm 19:7-10. How is the Law of God described and what does God's Word mean to you?

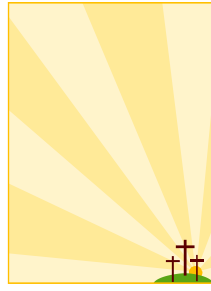
Let God and God's Word Be to You Your Daily Delight and Source of Joy.

Day 27

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

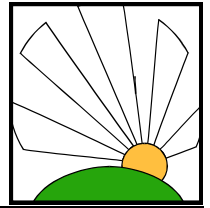
Luke 24:13-53
Psalm 30
Hebrews 12:2-3
Isaiah 25:8-9



The Resurrection of Joy

“Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away” (Isaiah 51:11).

It was a Sunday afternoon. The sun was out, the birds were chirping, and all of creation seemed to long to join in the celebration song of life. Yet inwardly, the skies of the human heart were dark shades of gray. Heads were downcast and hearts were heavy. Shock had now given way to deep sadness. Eyes were incessantly wincing to hold back the stream of unrelenting tears. Where was the hope? Where was the joy? There was none to be found.



Two friends came together to find comfort. As they walked and talked, they tried to reason things out. Nothing made sense! Finding hope in a hopeless situation was beyond their ability to grasp and reason. Then entered the stranger. The stranger was no stranger to them, but their human eyes were held back so they were unable to know who the man was that strode along beside them. It was Jesus! The resurrected and the living Lord had come to draw near to them, to listen to them, and to heal their hurting hearts.

It's not just a song, it's a daily truth to be sung to the sad-filled soul; “This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118:24).

“What are you talking about and why are you so sad?” the Lord asked. Jesus seemed to be full of questions that day. Just a few hours earlier in the garden, Jesus asked Mary Magdalene why she was crying. Does Jesus know when His followers are sad? Does God really see every tear that His people cry? Yes, He does! Human hearts are very fragile things. Look at a baby. From the moment of birth and the doctor’s first whack on the infant’s back, crying flows out and is a normal part of human life. Oh, we think as we get older that we can somehow master our emotions and overcome the things that sadden us and move us to tears. Forget it! If that’s what we think, we are only fooling ourselves and masking over our God-given tear ducts. Even the Psalmist declared, *“Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?”* (Psalm 56:8).

The question to be considered for the human heart is not if, but how. Let me ask you this question, “How do you cry?” There are two ways to cry. One way is to cry for oneself and the other is to cry out to God for His healing and renewed hope. One is a pathway to bitterness that leads to bondage and the other is a pathway to resurrected joy. That’s what happened on the road that day to Emmaus. God saw pain filled hearts and wrenching emptiness of souls stricken with sadness. God came near, God spoke, God touched, and God restored and assured them of unending joy!

The path to joy is threefold. First, God opens our hearts to fill us with His Word and so burn away all our fears and tears. Only God’s Word can meet our pain of sorrow and sadness head on. *“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts”* (Jeremiah 15:16). Secondly, God steps into our darkness and removes the scales from off our eyes so that we can clearly see Him. Seeing Jesus! Nothing stops the heartache and the tears, until we see Jesus and see His hands outstretched to us desiring to only bless us. The two mind-weary travelers that day were shocked with joy at the sight of Jesus. Their hearts had been infused with God’s Word and with the testimony of their own eyes. They in unison declared to one another, “I’ve just seen Jesus!” Seeing Jesus and His great love being poured out for us and knowing that He knows and calls us by name will surely begin to dry up our flow of tears!

Thirdly, Jesus not only opens our hearts to hear, our eyes to see, but also our mind’s understanding to comprehend. We must see our sadness and view our pain from God’s perspective. “My child, I know how you feel. I was rejected too. I was wronged, I was maligned, and I was let down by my closest friends. I was abandoned and mistreated, even unto death. Yet, I laid all my rights down and endured it all, just for the joy of seeing you. You being with me for all eternity.”

Life is not painless, it is pain-filled. Yet, with God’s alive Word, seeing Jesus’ unending love for us, and an eternal perspective of temporary trials, we can have joy. The two companions raced back to share their resurrection news with the group of others. Their message was the same message that we have available to us each day, “Jesus is alive and our hearts are filled and overflowing with His joy!”

How Do You Spell JOY? Jesus, Others, and Yourself Last!

The Resurrection of Joy

1. Is there something that is making your heart sad right now and downcast? What is it?

2. Call out to God in prayer. Tell Him how you feel, He already knows. Remember that God is your hope, your help, and your health. Lean hard on Him. Find in Him your resurrected joy.

Psalm 42:3-11

*“My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?
When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me...
Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me?
hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.
O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee...
Yet the LORD will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night
his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life...
Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?
hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.”*

Remember Through Times of Tears that God is Your Hope, Your Help, and Your Health!

Day 28

Check it out for yourself first!

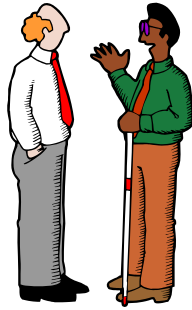
Read the following Bible passages:

John 4:25-42

Mark 5:15-20

Psalm 107:2

Isaiah 55:11



By Word of Mouth

“And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” (1 John 4:14).

It's priceless. No amount of the world's best avenues available for advertisement can possibly compare. It's still the best way in this “dog eat dog” business world to get your message out and your product for purchase known. Word of mouth advertisement tops them all. No commercials, no bulletin boards, and no fancy web sites can ever replace it. Why is that? It's the trustworthiness of the messenger's message wrapped up in personal experience. It's one friend telling another friend what they just have to have and to know and to experience for themselves. What the business world is simply confirming today is what God has said and set up in His Word all along. The greatest and most wonderful message in the world is meant to be shared from person to person by word of mouth.



Jesus was on a mission that day. He had a schedule to keep and a place and time to be. He journeyed long and far to keep the meeting day. He sent his disciples away to meet the physical need of hunger, while he waited for the one who was starved for spiritual truth and forever satisfying water. It was an intriguing interpersonal conversation. Slowly, the woman's eyes and her heart of understanding were opened. She knew now that the one standing in front of her was no ordinary man, He was the Messiah, the Son of God! He knew everything about her and still held out to her the offering of eternal salvation. She took it and ran with it. She ran right back to her home town and gathered up a group of her former acquaintances and so called “friends.” She had one message that she spoke with her own mouth, “Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ” (John 4:29)?

Take time to share your faith today. Remember that eternity is a long time for others to be without Christ.

A crowd of people came out to see. They wanted to hear and to see for themselves if what the woman had said was so. The disciples saw the people coming too, but Jesus knew that their eyes were dull in seeing the souls of people ripe for harvest. The Bible then records an interesting statement, “And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did” (John 4:39). Why did the citizens of Samaria believe in Jesus? Because they knew the woman. They knew her past and they knew where she lived. They even had her telephone number. The people believed because they saw the truth of who Jesus Christ is through the transformation in the Samaritan woman.

That's how the system is designed to work. One person sharing with another person his personal encounter with Jesus Christ and how knowing Jesus has changed his life. That's why the madman become missionary was so effective. Jesus knew he would be and so He sent him back home. “Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee,” (Mark 5:19). The personal word of mouth message may take awhile to sink in, but the power of the undeniable truth of the message will not be without effect. Was the new home missionary successful in getting the message of Jesus out? A resounding, yes! When Jesus returned back into the area of the former possessed madman, a crowd of people from the whole city were waiting for Him and they gladly received Jesus. The word of mouth message of one had impacted a whole city and a whole corner of the world who before had no knowledge of Christ.

Jesus' command is clear. We who know Christ are commissioned to tell others who have yet to hear about Christ. If we fail to communicate the truth of Christ, who will? “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? (Romans 10:14). This is the message that we were born again to share. It's the reason why we are here on earth and not in heaven. When will we see that life is not about us, it is about giving out the greatest message of life unto others? When will we see that the harvest fields are ripe and that there are so many who have yet to hear about Christ and His offer of eternal life? This word of mouth message has the power to turn the world upside down. Yet the message doesn't begin with a big city wide campaign or with a great firework bang. It begins with one testimony and one witnessing word. Let it begin with you. When was the last time that you shared your word of mouth message of Jesus Christ with one other?

“Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD and my servant whom I have chosen” (Isaiah 43:10)

By Word of Mouth

1. *“...we all are witnesses”* (Acts 2:32). These were the apostle Peter’s words in his first sermon to the questioning and wonder filled crowd on the Day of Pentecost.

However, it would be wrong to view the original disciples as the only called and chosen witnesses. The truth is that each one of us are called to be Christ’s witnesses. We may not have seen with our own eyes the risen Christ, but we can each testify how Jesus Christ has raised us to new life through His gift of sins forgiven by His blood and an eternal forever salvation because of His resurrection.

THINK ABOUT IT!

We may not all have the GIFT of an Evangelist,
but we are all called to DO the work of an Evangelist!

I Timothy 4:1 and 5

*“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ...
watch thou in all things, endure afflictions,
do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.”*

2. Remember, the power is not in you or in your words. The power to change a life for Christ is in the power of the Holy Spirit working through you and in the dynamite power of the Word of God.

I Corinthians 2:4

*“And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom,
but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.”*

Romans 1:16

*“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ:
for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth...”*

Don’t Be Timid... Share Your Testimony... and Let God Use You to Turn a Life Around!

Day 29

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

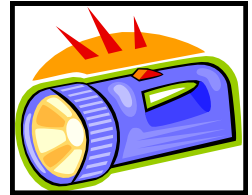
**Judges 7:15-21
II Kings 4:1-7
II Corinthians 4:1-7
II Timothy 2:20-22**



Jars of Clay

“If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work” (II Timothy 2:21).

What can you do with an ordinary jar of clay? Carry things and keep stuff self-contained. Good start, but don’t stop there! Never underestimate what a plain old piece of pottery is capable of performing when placed in the service of the Master potter’s hands. A few hundred broken and smashed jars of clay have been known to put a vast army to flight as numerous as the sand by the sea. One average-sized looking jar filled with but a smidge of oil miraculously multiplied behind closed doors. The one jar filled up many other jars full and overflowing, all because of one’s obedience to the prophet’s word. What’s the lesson? Don’t keep your eye on the jar, it’s broken and unimportant. The secret ingredient is never in the jar. The secret is in the willing servant who holds out his surrendered life’s jar to the Master’s will.



Is there anything blocking the light of Jesus in your life from being seen by others?

Let nothing cut off or short circuit your connection to God each day.

Each one of us as a saved child of God is called to be a chosen vessel by the mercy of God. Our Master and Creator has had a plan for us from the very beginning. He knows the path that He has chosen for us to walk and He has prepared in advance the service that He had designed for us to do. *“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them”* (Ephesians 2:10). The Scriptures could not be more clear. We are not saved by our good works, but we are saved to do the good works that our Lord and Savior has ordained for us to do.

“We have this ministry,” said the apostle Paul. What was Paul’s ministry? Read all of II Corinthians chapter 4 for yourself. Paul never describes his ministry as we would in our own modern Christian ministry era. He doesn’t give himself bloated and glowing long titles, like, “I’m an apostle, called by God, to take the Gospel to the Gentile world.” Paul doesn’t list off his spiritual gifts or his God ordained realm of authority in chapter 4, by saying, “Yes, I frequently receive direct revelations from God and I oversee and am responsible for all the churches and the pastors in Asia Minor.” No, this is not how Paul, the servant of Jesus Christ, describes his ministry. Instead, Paul states his life purpose like this, *“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us”* (II Corinthians 4:6-7).

Earthen vessels, jars of clay, and ordinary pieces of pottery are all designed to hold something. As children of God and chosen servants of God, we too are designed to hold something, but something very extraordinary—the light of knowing the Lord Jesus living in our lives. Jesus told us that He is the light of the world and that it is only through Him that we have the light of life (John 8:12). We are not called to take the light of Jesus and to hide it under a bushel, keeping it out of sight and away from others to see. Rather, we are commanded to break our earthen jars of clay daily, to die to our self, and to let the light of Jesus Christ shine through. We are called to be pure lights, shining brightly for Him. Why? So that others will see the face of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, and come to know the living and the eternal God through us!

This is our ministry and this is our calling. In light of this awesome task, what are we to do? We need to live for God and not for ourselves. We must purify our hearts and hands, flee from forbidden lust-filled sin, and pursue all that is righteous and holy in the eyes of God. It’s a tall order to fill, but this is a huge ministry that God has entrusted to us. It doesn’t matter if you are a high school student struggling through geometry or a seminary student preparing for a life-long preaching ministry. God has given to each of us a ministry.

God has called us to make His name known to a lost world by letting the Gospel message of Jesus Christ shine through our lives. Satan will do all he can to convince us that we are a worthless lump of clay and seek to fill our lives so full of sin to put out our Gospel light. Don’t fall for it! Don’t let your light be hid! Let it shine and shine until Jesus comes and takes you home. One day this earthly jar of clay will be shattered, our Maker will remake us, and we will stand in the eternal light of God’s presence forever. Until then, let your light shine pure and bright so that others will see God!

“Ye are the light of the world... Let your light so shine...” (Matthew 5:14 and 16).

Jars of Clay

1. ***“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not,”*** said the apostle Paul. Ask yourself the following questions?

-Did you do anything to deserve to be entrusted with any ministry for God?

-Do you have the strength in yourself to do this ministry for God?

The answer to both of these questions, is NO! It's all because of the mercy that we have received from God. It is because of His mercy that we are saved, it is because of His mercy that God even gives to us a ministry to do for Him, and it is because of His mercy that we are enabled to minister for Him each day and not faint. Keep your ministry for God today in the right perspective. It's all because of God and it's all because of His mercy in your life.

2. In order for your light of Christ to remain bright and clear, a response to the ministry that God has called you to is required on your part.

Read these verses again. Is there anything in your life that you need to get rid of to be a pure light shining bright for Jesus Christ?

II Corinthians 4:2

“But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.”

II Timothy 2:22

“Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”

This little light of mine... I'm going to let it shine... pure and bright for Jesus!

Day 30

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

Ruth 3:6-18

John 6:1-14

Luke 8:35

Luke 10:38-42



Sitting At His Feet

“And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word” (Luke 10:39).

It’s the position that portrays humility. It’s the openness of a needy heart, waiting and willing to receive. It’s a sign of one’s covenant of commitment to the other. It’s a signal of total surrender of one’s heart, mind, body, and soul to his mentor and to his master’s discretion. It’s not surprising in our culture today that this simple symbolic act of sitting is missing. When was the last time that you saw a student sitting absolutely still before his instructor’s feet, soaking in every word? Not even little kids in kindergarten class do that! From knee high up, we are taught to stand up for ourselves and not take anything from anybody sitting down. Our culture applauds speaking your mind and setting those in authority over us straight. We frown on silent submission towards others and call those that do, “door mats,” and deem them unable to think for themselves. Is this right? Could it be that God’s people need to look again into God’s Word and acquire anew the discipline of sitting?

Ruth was Naomi’s daughter-in-law. She obeyed her mother-in-law’s seemingly absurd suggestion without question. Ruth sneaked in and laid down at Boaz’s feet all night. Her message of submission and her request for covering and redemption were received. When Ruth told Naomi all that had transpired, Naomi had one word of advice for her anxious and awaiting daughter, *“Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day”* (Ruth 3:18). She was right! Ruth’s sitting still at Boaz’s feet had set the next day’s events in motion. By the end of the day, Boaz had obtained another man’s shoe which signified his right to buy the land and to take Ruth to be his lawfully wedded wife. There’s a new mode of marriage proposal for you—obey your mom and sit still!



Sit down and be still before your God.

Listen to His voice, look into His Word, and let God have His way in your life this day.

Sitting still. It’s an intriguing concept because it’s often the last thing in our 21st century that God’s people want to do. We are a “fix it ourselves” generation. We are an “analyzing” generation. We are a “let’s go get on the phone and talk to everyone else about it” generation. We are not a “go to God and be still” generation. Yet, this is exactly what we need to do. God must shake His head in sad dismay at all our running about to and fro. God has one message for His people today, *“Be still, and know that I am God”* (Psalm 46:10). It’s not that we don’t want God or that we don’t sense our need to be with God. It’s just that we have a hard time taking the time to be still and to wait for our God to move to meet our deep needs.

A large crowd had gathered around the hillside at the feet of Jesus. The people were hungry for miracles and for the soon revelation of the “could be” Messiah. Jesus saw their hungry hearts and knew their true needs. Jesus wanted to tell them something, but before He could do that, He needed to show them something that they would never forget. The people needed food, real food, like meat and potatoes. Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, could only find one lad with a lunch bag with five barley loaves and two small fish. Andrew had a question for Jesus that revealed his lagging faith, *“but what are they among so many”* (John 6:9)? Jesus then did an interesting thing. It’s not a small by-line for the casual Bible reader, for it is recorded in all four gospel accounts in the feeding of the 5,000 story. Jesus commanded the people to sit down. This great crowd was instructed to sit down at the feet of Jesus and to wait for Jesus to act. Can’t you just hear their string of thoughts? “What in the world am I doing this for? I could be on my way home by now! There’s no way that Jesus could possibly meet my need. I’m too hungry, my needs are too great, and there are too many people. This sitting down stuff and waiting is a waste of time!”

Have you ever felt this way? You have heard all your life that you can talk to Jesus about anything anytime. Jesus is just a whisper of a prayer away. Yet, in your deepest darkness, the one person that you need to talk to, you blatantly shut out. Your excuse, “Jesus can’t meet my needs. He might listen, but He can’t and won’t really help.” If you feel this way, Jesus’ miracle of the 5,000 fed has a message for you. Stop running and wondering what to do next and just sit down. Sit down at the feet of Jesus and put your full trust in Him. He can meet and satisfy your every need. Not just for today, but for all your tomorrow’s. His filling manna is available for you. He’s waiting, what are you waiting for? Rise up today first thing, and sit at His feet.

The Only Way to Have a Right Mind is to Sit Down and Be Right With Jesus Today!

Sitting At His Feet

1. **Let sitting at Jesus' feet be your one desire today. Talk to Jesus and tell Him that there is no other place that you would rather be.**
2. **At Jesus' feet, lay down all your anxieties and fears. Tell Jesus all that you are feeling and thinking. Remember, He is your Best Friend and He is your Savior and Lord. Jesus will hear and He will help.**

**At the Feet of Jesus... Sins are Forgiven... Strongholds are Broken...
Strength and Help are Given... and Deep Needs are Met.**

Day 31

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

**Isaiah 40:6-8
Matthew 9:36
John 11:35**

Crying Out Loud For God!

“The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field” (Isaiah 40:6)

CRY? Why cry? Babies seem to just love to cry! They cry to get people’s attention, but they also cry to communicate they are in need. But there are other kinds of cries, like a mother crying out to her little child who is about ready to run across the street or the fireman crying out to see if there is still someone left in the burning house. Or there is the cry that comes deep from within the heart because of the overwhelming sense of pain, loss, emotional wounds, and unrelenting grief.

Did you know that God is a God who cries? Yes, He is! Check it out, the shortest verse in the Bible is packed full of emotion, “*Jesus wept*” (John 11:35). But God never cries for Himself, His tears are always shed for people. God’s heart cries for those who are His people, whose hearts are not fully His and who are ensnared by sin (Luke 19:41-42). God’s heart cries for those who are lost and have not received Him and are wandering around aimlessly like a lost sheep (Matthew 9:36). The bottom line...God’s heart beats and breaks for people.



Cry to the people and tell them they are like flowers and grass... they will die!

The prophet Isaiah, God’s spokesman of that day, was told to cry. “Cry what?”— was Isaiah’s response. “Cry out loud to the people,” the Lord said. God then gave Isaiah a few more details, “Tell the people that life is short and that it will come to an end. People are like grass, they are here but for a brief time and then they will wither and die. People are like flowers. Beautiful for a time, sweet smelling, even eye-catching,—but in the end they will fade away” (paraphrase of Isaiah 40:6-7). Can’t you just hear Isaiah’s response, “Oh, great, that will go over well!” But God wasn’t finished with dictating Isaiah’s cry message yet. The kicker is found in Isaiah 40:8, “*The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever.*”

Isaiah was commanded to go with a message of urgency... to cry out loud to the people to get their attention. What was Isaiah’s cry message? Let me paraphrase for you,—“People, wake up! Your life is going to come to an end and the only thing that will last forever is the Word of God! So quit spending your life on foolish pursuits of wealth, happiness, and the good life and pay attention to God’s Word. Spend time in God’s Word each day, but most important, get to know the God of the Bible, because you are going to meet Him someday. If you want to invest your life, fine! Invest your life spent in knowing God’s Word, knowing God Himself, and reaching out to God’s people so that they will know God too. People and God’s Word are the only things that will last forever. Everything else is for the “U-Haul” truck and it won’t be following along behind you where you are going!” Wow, what a pointed message... ouch!

So what’s the point? Turn the page for real life application...

Crying Out Loud For God!

Four Keys to Developing a Heart that Cries Out Loud For God

1. Compassion for People

Do you have a heart for people like God does? How would you say your compassion for people, both big and little, is today? Do you see people the way that God does? Pray and ask God to give you His heart for people. Repent of any hardness of heart towards others and failures to respond in the way God would have wanted you to towards people. Write out your prayer to God.

2. Cry to the Lord in Prayer for People

You say, "I have compassion for people!" Great, then the first thing you need to do is to pray for them. Pray for those who have wandered away from Christ, pray for those who are hurting, pray for those who do not even know Christ and don't realize that they need Jesus. Pray for those whom God has placed in your life that the Lord wants you to minister to today and in the future. Make a list of 5 to 10 people who need prayer and what their needs are AND pray for them today, beginning now!

3. Concerned Enough to Take Action

Yes, God wants you to pray, but He also wants you to take action, beginning by speaking with your mouth, just like the prophet Isaiah. God wants you to cry out loud to people and let them know that you care enough about them to take the time to tell them that they need God. What are some concerned action steps that you are taking in your life right now to tell people that life is short and they need God and need to pay attention to God's Word?

4. Keep This in Mind When you are Crying Out Loud for God

Remember that when you are crying out loud for God, that you are doing it for Him and not for yourself or for your own glory. Your cries are only going to be heard when they come from a right heart for God and for His people that are fueled by your prayers. You're not the message, just the messenger. Ask God to give you a humble heart to be His messenger, crying out loud for God today for His glory!

Remember, Life is Short...So Cry Out Loud for God Today!

Day 32

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

Isaiah 40:9

Isaiah 52:7

Romans 10:13-17



“How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good news!” (Romans 10:15)

What would you do if you had over 3,000 pairs of shoes? Do you know how long it would take you just to wear a different pair each day? Try about eight and a half years! That’s how many pairs of shoes the First Lady of the Philippians had accumulated. I’m sure she wore some of her shoes, but do you know what she did with the rest? That’s right, she put them on display for people to see! They were not for her to wear for every day use, but for an ever growing collection for the world to see through a glass—to look at, know about, and admire.

Do God’s people do this with the Gospel message? We know the message of the Gospel. We even know a plethora of different ways or methods of sharing the Gospel. We love to compare and contrast our favorite Gospel methods; like the “Wordless Book”, “The Four Spiritual Laws”, and the “Romans Road.” We even love to take special training classes, read books, and get Bible degrees in Gospel sharing techniques. All these things are vital and good! But if we fail to get out there and share the Gospel with real, live people (big and small), we are guilty of *showcasing* the Gospel message! This is treating the Gospel as something for us to look at, know about, but not for daily use! How foolish! Just as shoes without people wearing them is meaningless—so is the Gospel without people wearing the message by their walk and talk in their day to day interaction with others. How can others HEAR the Gospel, if we don’t GO and TELL them?



People who don't know God, do not understand God's Word. They need YOU to tell them God's message, the GOOD NEWS of the Gospel! (Romans 10:14)

How can you share the Gospel in the twenty-first century? Song artist, Stephen Curtis Chapman, on his record called, “Speechless,” has a song called, “The Change.” The first verse goes like this: *“Well I got myself a T-shirt that says what I believe. I got letters on my bracelet to serve as my ID. I got the necklace and the key chain and almost everything a good Christian needs, yeah I got the little Bible magnets on my refrigerator door. And a welcome mat to bless you before you walk across my floor. I got a Jesus bumper sticker and the outline of a fish stuck on my car...”* I think we get the point! Can you share the Gospel to people by having these things? Yes! But is just having these things sharing the Gospel message? No! It’s showcasing the Gospel, just like those 3,000 pairs of shoes! You see the answer to this dilemma is so simple. People who don’t know God, do not understand God’s Word. They need you to tell them God’s message, the Good News of the Gospel!

Guess what? Did you know that this is exactly what God says in Isaiah 40:9? Twice in one verse it has the phrase, *“lift up your voice!”* This same verse not only says to “lift up your voice”, but to do it with strength—with the power that only comes from God the Holy Spirit (check out Acts 1:8). There is no need to be afraid, when you are proclaiming the Gospel. God is right there with you, helping you, all the way! You say, “Ok, I’m getting bolder. I want to share the Gospel, putting those Gospel shoes on each day, beginning today,—but what do I say?” Again, God’s Word is so clear. What does Isaiah 40:9 tell you to say, *“Behold your God!”* Do you know what John the Baptist, a Gospel preacher if there ever was one, said about Jesus to people who wanted to know who Jesus was? *“Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world”* (John 1:29). In other words, just open up your mouth, put your Gospel shoes on and talk about JESUS!

Are You Showing the Gospel or Showcasing the Gospel to Others?

Gospel Shoes and You!

Gospel Pointers From the Life of Philip (Acts 8:26-40)

1. Stay sensitive to the Lord to go where God wants you to go and talk to whom He wants you to talk to each day. The result? “Divine Appointments,” set up by God: (Acts 8:26-34).

Have you ever seen God just line up an opportunity for you to talk to someone about Jesus? Do you start the day by telling God that you are open and willing to go WHERE He wants you to go and to talk to WHOM God wants you to talk with each day? Do you believe in “Divine appointments?” It’s Biblical! God wants to put people in your path for you to talk to about the Lord. But you must stay close and sensitive to the Lord’s leading to hear when God says, “Over here... this person, right there!” Is your heart sensitive to the Lord’s leading even today? If not, pray about it, right now!

2. Talk about Jesus... Jesus... Jesus! (Acts 8:35)

When you “witness” to people, do you often find yourself talking AROUND Jesus, instead of ABOUT Jesus? It’s so easy to talk about Church, a Christian book (like the “Left Behind” series), or an up and coming, Christian music group! But it’s just beating around that “old bush!” Just open up your mouth and talk about Jesus. Start today! Look for an opportunity when you can open your mouth and talk to someone about Jesus and what He means to you! Go for it, because the heart of the Gospel message is Jesus, God’s Son!

3. Lead People to Jesus Immediately! (Acts 8:36-38)

What do you think about people saying that it is important to build relationships first before you start talking to someone about Jesus? Do you think that people (big and small) should hear the Gospel many times before they receive Christ to make sure they understand what they are doing and what the Gospel is really about? How does this thinking compare with what the Bible says, for example the story of Philip and the Ethiopian? If God has given you an opportunity to talk to someone about Jesus, take the next step—ask them if they want to believe in Jesus, who is the Son of God, right now! Have you been talking to someone about Jesus, but you haven’t taken them to that final step? Pray and ask God to give you the boldness that you need and just do it!

4. Look out for the “after effect” in leading people to Jesus. (Acts 8:39-40)

Have you ever led someone to Christ and then there was this MAJOR GAP before you talk to another person about Jesus—like maybe even weeks or months? Leading people (big and small) to Jesus is a major “high!” There is nothing like it—it’s the reason why God has left you here on this earth and why you are not in heaven... yet! God wants you to tell others about Him as a way of life. But look out for basking in the “after effect,”—the glow of leading a person to Christ. Rejoice? Of course, the angels do it! In fact, the angels with every lost sinner saved have a big party of rejoicing in heaven (Luke 15:10)! Follow Philip’s example in the Bible—give God the glory and then get on doing what God directs you to do next—staying always sensitive to Him and taking that next “Gospel Shoes” step!

Remember, Gospel Shoes are for Wearing Each Day!

Day 33

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

Isaiah 40:3, 5, & 10

II Corinthians 5:9-10

Revelation 22:12 & 20



Are You Ready for His Coming?



“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be... Surely, I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:12 and 20)

Do you remember those memorable days of school when you had a substitute teacher? That’s right, it was anything goes and practical jokes day (and let’s not forget the spitball and paper airplane flights and fights)! But then, the lid blew-off! That substitute teacher called for the principal! You hear his footsteps pounding up the stairs and down the hallway, coming to your classroom door. Suddenly, the class instigator cries out in a whispered voice, “Hey, the principal is coming, LOOK BUSY!”

One of my all-time, favorite Christian bumper stickers reminds me of those substitute teacher school days. The bumper sticker says simply this: “*JESUS IS COMING: LOOK BUSY!*” The first time I saw that bumper sticker, I cracked up with laughter and then I said, “That’s cool” to myself in the car. But then I stopped laughing and thought about the painful and poignant truth of that simple bumper sticker.

Jesus is coming! But am I ready to meet Him,— to see Him face to face? If I were to stand before Jesus right now, how would He evaluate my life? Would He say “*Well, done good and faithful servant... enter into the joy of the Lord*” (Matthew 25:21)? Or would I be ashamed of how I lived my life on this earth, wasting my time and not living for the Lord? Would my life’s work last and be rewarded at the Judgement Seat of Christ (II Corinthians 5:10) or would it all just go up in smoke and amount to nothing but a pile of ashes (I Corinthians 3:13-15)?



At the “Judgement Seat of Christ,” believers will be rewarded and judged for their works here on earth... for what they did

Throughout Scripture and with each passing day, the Lord pounds the truth home that He is coming and soon. No, we do not know “when”, but that is NOT for us to know! The point is that Jesus tells us that He is coming and we, God’s people, need to be prepared and ready to meet our Savior and Lord face to face. Isaiah 40:3 says, “*...Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.*” But how can you and I prepare for the Lord’s coming? First, by making sure our own hearts are right with the Lord and that we are living for Him and not for ourselves. Second, by helping other people who don’t know the Lord yet, to come to Jesus and start living for Him before it’s too late. Jesus is returning! The Lord will come to judge those who refused to believe on Him and to reward His servants that faithfully served Him. The judge is at the door and He knows who has been working for Him and who hasn’t. Are you ready?

How Can You Be Ready for the Lord’s Coming?

Heart-Checkpoints in Preparation For His Coming

1. What Would Be Your Reaction If Jesus Came Today?

Someone once said, “The mouth speaks what’s in the heart.” If Jesus would come today, right now, what would be your verbal reaction and why?

- a) “Jesus is coming... Oh, no, not yet!”
- b) “Jesus is coming... look out!”
- c) “Jesus is coming... look busy!”
- d) “Jesus is coming... I’m going home!”

2. What is Jesus Going to Judge His People on if They Are Already Saved?

- a) The hidden things done in secret and the very thoughts and intents of their heart (I Corinthians 4:5)

QUESTION: How’s your heart before God today? I John 1:9 *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

- b) Our service as to the Lord for what we did and did not do for Him while on earth with our life and in our bodies (II Corinthians 5:10, Matthew 25 and Ephesians 2:10).

QUESTIONS: What have you been doing for the Lord in His name and not for yourself?
Have you been living a life that is pleasing to the Lord with your body?

3. Are You a Sky-Watcher Believer or an Obedient Disciple?

In Acts 1:7-11, Jesus told His Disciples what they were to be doing until He returned, telling all the people everywhere about the Lord Jesus. But instead of doing what they were told, they just stood for the longest time looking up into the sky and awaiting Jesus to come back. Two angels had to get their attention and rebuke them for their sky-gazing. In other words, they were saying, “Hey, Jesus is going to come back. But you get busy doing what He’s told you to do! Get out there and tell others about Him in His power and in His name!”

QUESTION: Are you guilty of being a “sky-watcher” too? How much time have you spent trying to guess when Jesus might be coming back, compared to doing what He has commanded you to do?

Get Ready, Jesus is Coming! “Even so, Come, Lord Jesus!”

Day 34

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

**John 10:11-16
Matthew 9:36-38
1 Peter 5:2-4**

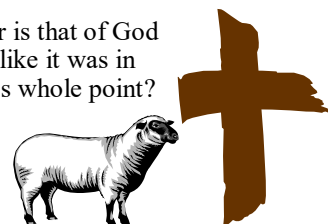
Shepherds and Their Sheep



“He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young” (Isaiah 40:11)

One of the most descriptive and precious images that permeates the Scripture from cover to cover is that of God being our Good Shepherd and we, His sheep. Raising sheep in the 21st century, USA is nothing like it was in the Bible-land times of Israel. Taking care of sheep was a 24 hour a day job. But isn't that God's whole point? Taking care of each one of us is a 24 hour a day job. But get this— God wants to *take care of us*! Why? *Because He loves us*! But how is God our Good Shepherd?

Psalms 23 paints a beautiful picture: He provides our every need and we lack nothing (vs 1), He knows when we need rest, to be still and to be restored in the very depths of our souls (vs 2 -3), He goes before us to check out the path, and then comes back to walk just a few steps ahead to lead us and not lose us (vs 3), He stays close beside to comfort, calm shadowing fears, and to protect us from enemies and our own hearts from evil (vs 4-5), He heals our wounds and overflows our lives with His good blessings now and forever (vs 5-6). And this is just a sampling of the tasks of our Good Shepherd,—all because of His mercy and love!



One of the greatest ironies in the Bible, is that the Lord, our Good Shepherd is also the Lamb of God!

Jesus said in John 10, *“I am the Good Shepherd”* (vs 11). There is no question that when Jesus made this statement, that in the Israelite mind, Jesus was equating himself with God. In fact, later on in this same passage, Jesus stops speaking in symbolism and speaks plainly, *“the Father is in me, and I in him”* (vs 38). But what is so marvelous is that in this same passage of Jesus declaring Himself to be God, our Good Shepherd, He also states that He is the sacrificial Lamb of God who came to give His life for the sheep (vs 11, 17, and 28).

Jesus is *“the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”* (John 1:29). Why did the the Lord, our Good Shepherd need to become the Lamb of God? That's an easy one! Because, *“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity (sin) of us all”* (Isaiah 53:6). But what Jesus, our Good Shepherd and Lamb of God, did was NOT easy! He was bruised, beaten, whipped, mocked, and pierced just for us! Why? So we could be forgiven of our wayward hearts and lives and be with Him forever. That's how much our Good Shepherd cares for His sheep!

But here is the real twist: The Lord, our Good Shepherd, calls His sheep that know Him to be good shepherds of other sheep! Listen to what Jesus says to Peter: *“Peter, do you love me? Feed my sheep”* (John 21:15-17). In fact, Jesus repeated this two more times! One day Jesus' heart went out to the multitude of people gathered around Him. Why? *“Because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd”* (Matthew 9:36). Wasn't Jesus enough for all these people? Yes, but no! Jesus is the Good Shepherd and could meet their every need. But the people still needed other people to shepherd them, to take care of them and to be the very hands of Jesus. Jesus had His disciples standing right beside Him when His heart melted. Were not 12, fully trained disciples of Jesus enough take care of that single crowd of people? No. More shepherds were still needed. It wasn't enough! Then Jesus turned to His disciples and said these famous, missionary conference words: *“The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few: Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest field”* (Matthew 9:37-38).

What Jesus was seeking to communicate to His chosen 12, is the same message to our hearts today. There are so many sheep who have lost their way. They have fainted and are scattered abroad, beginning with those across the street and those in the far corners of the earth. They need shepherds who will reflect the Good Shepherd. They need shepherds who will tell them of the Good Shepherd, the Lamb of God. And they need shepherds to feed them, to take care of them—all in Jesus, the Good Shepherd's name.

Let's go deeper. How can we be “good shepherds” of other sheep?

Shepherds and Their Sheep

A Good Shepherd vs. A Bad Shepherd

- 1. Look at I Peter 5:2-3. List qualities of a good shepherd and qualities of a bad shepherd.**
- 2. Did you know Jesus instructed Peter to feed not only His sheep but also His lambs? Check it out for yourself (John 21:15-17). How are children or young believers in the Lord like lambs in the flock? What kind of special care is needed for them?**
- 3. How can you be “an example” to the lambs that the Lord has placed in your life and ministry?**
- 4. Why would it be important for you, a shepherd of the lambs, to first feed yourself in God’s Word each day before you feed the lambs from God’s Word each day?**

Remember that there is only One Good Shepherd and we are to reflect Him!

Day 35

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

Isaiah 40:12-26
Psalm 147:3-5
Psalm 8



Who is Like Our God? Who Can Compare? Who is His Equal?

*“When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
What is man, that thou art mindful of him and the son of
man that thou volest him?” (Psalm 8:3-4).*

It was one of the proudest moments in the history of mankind. With “One small step for man, and a giant leap for mankind,” the Apollo 11 commander, Neil Armstrong, in 1969 ushered in a new era. From that point on we live in a world where man has walked on the moon. It wasn’t a miracle. We just made up our minds and decided to go! What couldn’t man achieve now! Nothing was thought too great, too far out of reach, or too difficult that couldn’t be conquered and achieved by man. Just look at man! We can scale the highest mountain, we can plunge the depths of seas, we can rattle the earth with our harnessed energy, we can soar above the eagles, we can circle the earth, and rocket to the moon and beyond. What can’t man do?

Just when we think we have all the answers, God likes to challenge us to take a test. Would you like to take it? Here it is, just a sampling, not the whole test mind you. Are you ready?

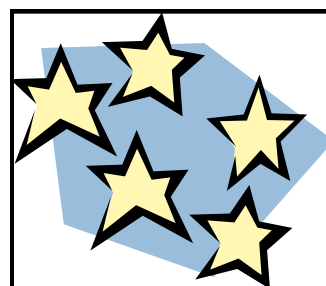
- *Who measures all the waters in the hollow of his one hand?
- *Who can measure the whole heaven with just the span of his hand
(Note: A span equals from your elbow to the tip of your extended fingers)?
- *Who knows how much dust there is in the whole earth and can measure it?
- *Who can weigh all the mountains and the hills on a balance of a scale and fit it on here?

BUT DON’T GIVE UP, THAT IS JUST THE FIRST QUESTION! (Isaiah 40:12)

Who is this person? I’ll give you one guess: That’s right! He is the Everlasting GOD, the LORD, the CREATOR of the ends of the earth! Good, you got that part right, now are you ready for the brain-stretcher, the mind boggling question of all time? Are you sure you’re ready? Ok, here it goes, right from Isaiah 40:18 & 25... “Who is like God? Who can compare to God? Who is equal to Him?” What? I can’t quite hear your answer, what did you say? I don’t hear anything. In fact, I hear nothing. You got it! That’s exactly right! NOTHING, absolutely NOTHING and NO ONE can compare to, is like, and can even begin to equal God, the Holy One!

When man compares who he is and his greatest accomplishments in the face of Almighty God, all human pride is shattered. We could all take a lesson from Job when he faced God in the whirlwind for his knowledge test, “*I am nothing. What can I answer You? I put my hand over my mouth*” (Job 40:4). The Psalmist is right. “*What is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou volest him?*” (Psalm 8:4). I don’t have a good answer. In fact, there is no answer, except the truth of God’s Word and God’s Heart-beat for all mankind. The God who holds all in His hands, holds you in His heart (Psalms 147:3). The One who calls the stars by name, knows your name (Isaiah 40:26, Psalm 147:4, and John 10:3 & 27). The God, the Creator of heaven and earth, made you, knows you, and loves you!

How much does this God care for us? Before the foundations of the earth were formed, He planned for our salvation; He purchased our salvation by visiting us, becoming one of us and dying for us; and He is preparing for our salvation home even now so that we can be with Him and He can be with us for all eternity. This is our God, the Servant-King! Who is like our God! Who can compare to our God! Who can even begin to equal God! I am left speechless, how about you?



*The same God who
numbers and names
the stars can see and
heal your broken heart.
Oh, how great is
our God!*

SELAH... Stop, Think about, and Ponder the Greatness of Our God!

Who is Like God?

Thinking About Our God

1. Take the time right now to think about who God is? Write down all the words that come to your mind to describe who God is to you.

2. God loves it when we worship Him, because God is so worthy of our praise. Do that right now!

3. What is your heart's response to God for who He is and for all that He has done for you?

“The Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him” (Habakkuk 2:20)

Day 36

So Where Does the Strength Come From?



Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

Isaiah 40:27-31
2 Corinthians 12:9-10
Philippians 4:13

“But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31).

That’s it! You’ve reached the end of your human limits. You’ve wrangled your brain analyzing it from every angle, exhausted your energy, snapped your emotions, drained your resources, and just used up your last life line. No, it’s not a game. It’s NOT “Be a Millionaire” or you in the Australian outback on “Survivor”. It’s life...your life! More specifically, it’s you running this race of the Christian life as God intended for you. But you can’t. You’re overwhelmed. You are weak. Your heart is growing faint. Your strength is zapped and your hope is gone. You are going to utterly fall flat on your face.



Eric Liddell, the gold medallist in the 400 meter race of the 1924 Olympic games in Paris, often compared faith in the Christian’s life to running. “It’s hard, requiring concentration of will and energy of soul.” A year before the Olympic games, Eric Liddell, known as “The Flying Scot” was in a match race of Scotland Vs France. On the first turn around the track of the 400 meter race, a ruthless competitor intentionally knocked Eric Liddell to the ground, leaving him in the dust of the pack of runners. Eric reached down deep inside, got up and ran, breaking the tape first in a come from behind victory!

Are You Trusting God With Your Whole Heart?

If we trust ourselves, we will faint and fall; but if we wait on the Lord by faith, we will receive strength for the journey.

In the movie, “Chariots of Fire,” after the race, Liddell met with a group of people on the track. Not to gloat, but to simply share his faith in Christ Jesus, his Lord. Eric asked, “So where does the power come from to see the race to its end? From within.” Jesus said, “Behold, the Kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21). Eric finished his testimony with his crowd of admirers by admonishing them each day of their life, even during the most dismaying moments when their soul falters and hope is lost, to turn to God. For the Lord promised, “If with all your heart you truly seek me, you will surely find me” (Jeremiah 29:13-14).

What burdens are you baring? What is weighing your heart down? Why are you growing faint-hearted and weary of body, mind, and soul? Are you trying to handle the ruts and knocks of life’s track in your own strength? You can’t! You were never meant to manage life on your own power. You were not made that way! “Have you not known? Have you not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding. He gives power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength” (Isaiah 40:28-29). Stop carrying your burdens alone! Give them up and surrender them to the one who cares for you (1 Peter 5:7). The Lord Jesus did not just go to the cross to carry your sins. He went to the cross to bare your sorrows and your pains of this life. He loves you and He longs to impart His strength to your heart so that you, together in Christ, can carry on in His name.

The movie of, “Chariots of Fire,” paints a portrait of two men who were both in the Olympics, but for two, distinct reasons. Eric Liddell, ran for God, to honor Him, and to please Him. While, Harold Abrahams of Cambridge University, ran for himself and for that awe encompassing gold medal. Throughout the movie he is portrayed as a self-absorbed man who is consumed with winning and being the fastest in the 100 meter sprint. But even after Abrahams won and achieved his goal, he seemed unsteady and unsatisfied. All that work, but now what? Eric’s life, on the other hand was just beginning. Soon he would leave for China to serve God on the mission field. Years later he would die in a concentration camp in China, still serving His Master, and sharing his faith and God’s Word to all who would listen. Just two questions remain: Who are you running for...for God or for yourself? And whose strength are you running in?

What Does it Mean to Run in the LORD’s Strength...Waiting Upon Him?

So Where Does the Strength Come From?

Running in His Strength and Waiting Upon Him

1. What is weighing your heart down right now, causing you to become faint-hearted and weary in the Christian race of life? Talk to God. Tell Him about it. He cares for your cares. He cares for you!
2. Take a few moments to think about who your Lord is, His character and His promises to you. Pray and seek Him with all your heart. Tell Him that you need Him and you need His strength to carry on. Ask the Lord to search your heart, washing away any sinful desires that you have to run for yourself, instead of for God and His sole glory.

“Run With the Heart of the Lord”

Written by Katrina Forseth

*When the road seems too long... And when you lost the will.
Run to the Lord, find your strength in Him, And He will help you through each day.*

*When you've fallen down... And you can't get up again.
Lift up your eyes and focus on the Lord, And He will help you to run again.*

So run in the strength of the Lord... And focus your eyes upon Him. Run so that others may know Him. Run with the heart of the Lord. Yes, Run with the Heart of the Lord.

*When you've lost the meaning... For the running of this long race.
Remember we're running for the glory of God and that others may know of God's great grace.*

*Others have run before us... Marking the course with their faith. So let us strive to finish well,
And that others may obtain the faith, to run... And that others may obtain the faith.*

2. Did you know Jesus instructed Peter to feed not only His sheep but also His lambs? Check it out for yourself (John 21:15-17). How are children or young believers in the Lord like lambs in the flock? What kind of special care is needed for them?
3. How can you be “an example” to the lambs that you will be ministering to this summer?
4. Why would it be important for you, a shepherd of the lambs, this summer to first feed yourself in God's Word each day before you feed the lambs from God's Word each day?

So run, with HOPE in your HEARTS and WINGS on your heels in the LORD's Strength!

The Servant-Worm

Check it out for yourself first!

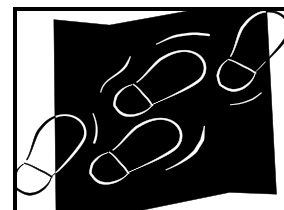
Read the following Bible passages:

Isaiah 41:8-9; and 14
John 13:1-5; 12-17
Philippians 2:5-8



“But thou... art my servant...whom I have chosen...my friend. Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee... Fear not, thou worm...” (Isaiah 41:8-9 and 14).

Who are you in Christ? What is your calling? God has a title for you... a position that He wants you to take. **You are God’s servant.** That’s right, you are destined to be His servant, and not a star! You were chosen for this purpose before the world began. Remember, He chose you and not the other way around (John 15:16). Your calling in Christ, should warm your heart with security. Yes, you belong to God! But your call to be God’s servant also means that you have no rights of your own. You are God’s bond-servant and that’s the bottom-line!



Jesus not only calls us His servants, but also **His friends** (Isaiah 41:8 and John 15:14-15). Think about it! Abraham, the great patriarch of the Old Testament was known as the friend of God. Could it be that the same God of the Bible wants to walk and talk with us... communing and communicating His very presence and His specific will to our hearts? YES! The greatest joy is to know that the Master of the universe is also the Friend of our hearts.

So why does God call His people, His servants, His friends, a **worm**? “He does? Where?”, you say. “That’s not in the Bible!” Oh, but it is. Check out Isaiah 41:14. Just after God finishes calling His people a Servant, He calls them a Worm! That’s nice, isn’t? And what about in the book of Job, “How much less man, that is a worm? and the Son of man; which is a worm?” (Job 25:6). The worm... it has to be one of the most loathsome, debasing, inferior creatures of God’s creation. Do you even want to guess which critter in God’s kingdom loves to feast on carcass’ in graveyards buried six feet under? That’s right, it’s the worm (Job 24:19-20)! Why, oh why, does our loving, Heavenly Father call us a worm? It’s not because of who we are in His eyes. Oh no, we are His special treasure (Psalm 135:4)! God calls us a worm, because that’s the attitude... the character that He wills for us to become.

Are You Following in the Steps of the Servant-King?

*“Lord, bend that proud and stiff-necked I,
Help me to bow the head and die;
Beholding Him on Calvary, Who bowed
His head for me.”*

(Hession, “The Calvary Road”)

You see, it’s like this... “In tropical lands there is a big difference between a snake and a worm, when you attempt to strike at them. The snake rears itself up and hisses and tries to strike back—a true picture of self. But a worm offers no resistance, it allows you to do what you like with it, kick it or squash it under your heel—a picture of true brokenness. And Jesus was willing to become just that for us—a worm and no man (The Suffering Servant, Psalm 22:6). And He did so, because that is what He saw us to be, worms having forfeited all rights by our sin, except to deserve hell. And He now calls us to take our rightful place as worms for Him and with Him” (Hession, “The Calvary Road”).

This is our call. This is our ordained position... to be God’s Servant-Worm! We have no rights of our own. If people tromp on us, we can’t tromp back! If they prick us with their hooks, we can’t retaliate back or even put up a defense. And no squirming allowed on that altar of the hook either! We are to be humble and utterly dependant upon the Lord... claiming no righteousness, but that of Christ, who is our sole redeemer and our daily example. Do you remember Jesus’ words to His disciples after He called them to be by His side, following His lead... remember? “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19).

If the world is going to see Jesus, than we must first become the bait. We must allow our Master at each stage of our life, to drop us in His chosen pond. We must willingly take that piercing hook and become a true, “Servant-Worm.” For it is then, and only then, that mankind, great and small, will be drawn to the Savior. This is our call.

Let’s Dig Deeper in the Rich Soil of Scripture... How is Christ the Servant-Worm?

The Servant-Worm

Following Christ's Example

1. Read Philippians 2:5-8. What was the attitude... the mind of Christ in leaving heaven for this earth? What was He willing to do for us on our behalf and ultimately, to obey and follow in every detail His Father's will?

2. Search your heart. Why are you serving the Lord? What is your motive? We all fall short of Christ's example of ultimate sacrifice and a pure heart's motive. But as much as possible, God desires that we, "*Serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind*" (1 Chronicles 28:9).

Ask God right now to cleanse your heart of all its impurities and to give you a right heart's motive and a right mind's attitude as you give yourself to serve Him.

A Prayer to the Lord as We Serve Him

*May I serve my Master-Savior, as I reflect upon His cross.
That He gave Himself all for me, that I may not be lost.*

*Oh, my friend I plead you...beg you, live for Christ alone today.
Let the world go and grasp the Savior, for He is life always.*

May the Lord Strengthen Your Hearts and Your Hands as You Serve the Master Today!

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

Isaiah 41:1
Psalm 42:1-2
Revelation 22:17



“Keep silence before me... and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together...”
(Isaiah 41:1)

The backside of a desert... what a strange place to meet God! The bewildered man edged towards the inquiring sight and saw a shrub consumed with blazing flames, yet never diminishing. How could this be? Then a voice... the voice of God, called to the trembling man by name. “Here am I”, said the Almighty. Then without warning, the green light changed to blaring red, as God commanded, “Stop, do not come any closer... for the place you are standing on is holy ground” (Exodus 3:1-5).

From that first sin in the garden, to Moses’ burning bush, leading ultimately towards one Friday afternoon in the Jewish Temple... this has been the dilemma. God and man want to come together, but something has been blockading the starting-line. What is it? Man’s sin and the holiness of God. Man cannot come to God because of His sin. So how did a loving and holy God respond? God came down to man (John 1:11). Jesus, God the Son, came into this world for one reason... to break down the wall of sin so that we may come back to God. The Temple veil has been torn and there is no longer a line drawn that says, “This far and no further.” Through Jesus, the Lamb of God’s shed blood, we have direct and complete access to the Father. We can now come before His holy throne...anytime, day or night.

But do we come? We must break God’s heart. Rushing, pushing, and climbing life’s ladders... is this not our lives, even as Christians? “Too busy for God,” we quip. But not only are God’s people too busy to serve God, we are becoming too busy to know God and to come to our God each day. How can we slight Him in this way when He planned it all, gave it all, and made it all happen just for us to come?

“Come now, and let us reason together”, says the Lord (Isaiah 1:18). Bring your heart’s dirty laundry before Him... for He longs to make your heart whiter than snow today! God will forgive you of your waywardness and sin of ignoring Him, because His mercy is new every morning!

But how do we come? God tells us how. Isaiah 1:14 says to keep silent before Him. What does that mean? To keep silent! To stop up our mouth and switch off our racing mind and fretting heart. Why? So we can be still before the Lord and remember who’s presence we are in! Psalm 46 says, “Be still and know that I am God” (vs 10). He is God, the Great “I am”! The Self-Existent One, the Eternal God, the All Sufficient One, the Almighty, the Creator of the Universe, the Lord of Hosts, the Master of Heaven and Earth, and our Savior...that is whom we are before! So be silent before Him as you come!

Seek God with all your heart and you will find Him (Jeremiah 29:13). This is the secret of drawing near to God! Then speak to Him. Don’t hold back, He already knows it all! Just tell Him... you have the ear of the Creator of the Universe and He will hear you as you pray (1 John 5:14-15). God’s promise to you as you come near to Him is renewal of strength. He longs to impart His strength to you and to restore your soul.

Now that you have come, God has a task that He asks of you. God said to Moses, “Come now, and I will send you” (Exodus 3:10). After we have come to God, encountering His divine-holy presence... we are ready! God desires that we now join Him in calling others to come to Him. Listen to God’s heart-beat as He summons others and His bride, that’s us, to extend His invitation that has been freely engraved in His own blood: “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17).

Won’t you come, drawing near to Him today? Come for your own heart and come so that others may know Him too!

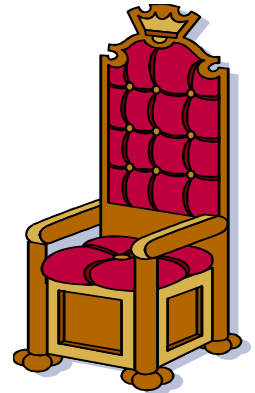


*Come before
His holiness in
humbleness...
Commune with
Him as friend
to friend...
Then, go and
serve Him,
freeing others
so they may
come.*

How Much Longer Will You Wait to Come Before Your God Today?

Come Near to God

*“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need”
(Hebrews 4:16)*



1. Come before the Lord right now. *Keep silent and be still before Him*, pondering who it is that you are coming before... the great “I am”.

Draw near to God... seeking Him with all your heart. Let your heart be so filled with Him that there can be no room for unconfessed and unrepented sin.

Then speak... speak to Him right now. Tell Him all that is in your heart. He is your God, and your Abba, Father. Come near... Come near before Him who sits on His throne and find mercy, grace, and renewed strength. Come near... Come.

2. Sometimes prayer journaling opens up our heart to come fully before our Father (just take a look at the book of Psalms). Write out a prayer from your heart to God’s heart, then pray your written prayer back to God.

Come into His Presence with Thanksgiving and Your Heart Full of Praise (Psalm 100)

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

Isaiah 41:10 and 13
 Psalm 27:1
 II Timothy 1:7



“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yes, I will help thee; yes, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness”
(Isaiah 41:10)

Phobia, “the fear of...”, you fill in your blank! Me? No, I don’t have any “phobias”! At least, I never thought so until that one evening... “Come on, it will be fun,” my friend said. Because I trusted, I complied. There was a crowd of people standing outside. “It must be ok... Look how many people are here. It will be alright,”—so were my thoughts. It was now our turn. We stepped into the darkened room filled with eerie sounds. There was a strange light flashing as we ducked into the entrance. We were crawling now on our hands and knees. I waived my hand smack in front of my eyes... nothing. I could see nothing but pitch, velvet blackness. “This way... no, that way,” I heard my friend’s voice, but from where? How many times had we turned and twisted? I lost track. Voices were all around me, but never clear. Which one was my friend’s?

Confusion, isolation, and now pounding terror was flooding my heart. That’s enough, I wanted out! I must get out,... but which way was out? I had no idea. Just as paralysis began to set in, my friend came back. My friend took me by the hand and told me to stay close and follow. In a matter of minutes we were out... out of that darkened maze and out of the building. So much for claiming not to have any phobias!

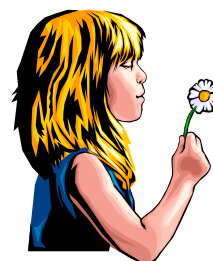
The truth is that each one of us has fears. Fear and humanity go hand in hand. Fears are part of our fallen, sinful nature. Remember Adam and Eve in the garden (Genesis 3:10)? It was only after they had sinned, disobeying God that they were afraid and hid from the very presence and voice of God. God knows that we have fears. And God wants us to know when the stormy, dark clouds do come, we need not fear. Six times in Isaiah 41, God tells His people to “fear not” and to “be not dismayed.” Why do God’s people need to fear not?

“I am with you,” says the Lord God Almighty. Think again who is your God, the great “I AM.” He promises to be with us, through our slightest and deepest fears. God is there. But the problem is that we read our present circumstances as being “**God is nowhere**” vs. “**God is now here.**” It all comes down to the inner shift of whether we are focusing our heart and staying our mind in faith towards God or focusing our heart and mind on fretting and steadily growing fears.

Do you remember when the disciples panicked during the storm and thought they were going to die (Mark 4:35-41)? We often view the disciples on pedal-stools, that we can never spiritually match. But get this, they had the physical, Son of God, right there in their own boat... and they were still afraid! “*Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?*” questioned Jesus, their Master (Mark 4:40). In the midst of our fear, God wants us to remember and to know that He is there, right there... in our boat! There is no need to fear, but to have faith in the great “I AM”.

God has three distinct promises that we can claim in the midst of fearful waters, because God is our God: “*I will **strengthen you**; I will **help you**; yes, I will **uphold you** with my righteous right hand*” (Isaiah 41:10). This is His promise. When our fear dries up our strength to face another hopeless day; God will be *our strength*. When fear plunges us into the pit of despair; God will be *our help* and lift us out. And when we are lost and confused and feel all alone; God will *hold us* close and take us through this present darkness into the light of His presence (Psalm 27:1).

The promise and surety of God’s presence in the midst of brooding clouds, paints for us a rainbow of promise. Because of Him, we can face tomorrow! Because of Him, we can have strength for today! And because He is our God, our Best Friend, whom we can implicitly trust; He will lead us out of our fearful maze. His voice calls out our name. He asks us not to fear, but to have faith and just take His hand.



Our Heavenly Father knows our delicate heart.

He longs to ever so gently pick us up and then with one puff of His breath, blow and scatter our darkest and deepest fears to the wind.

But will we trust Him as He holds our frail heart in His hands?

What Fears Are You Seeking to Hide From God Today?

Fear Not

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7)



1. What FEARS are striking at your heart? What are your greatest fears, maybe not the ones you face today, but the ones you are dreading for the future? Write them down and tell God your every fear.

2. Think upon God’s promise that He will be with you; to strengthen, to help, and to uphold you with His righteous hand. Ponder who is your God and give your fears to Him. Ask Him to give you faith to believe and to trust in Him.

3. Do you have a friend or someone that you know who is entangled by open or undisclosed fears? Pray Isaiah 41:10 for them. Ask God to show them that He is there for them, and just waiting to strengthen, help, and uphold them by His right hand. Pray now and continue to pray for them.

“There is no pit so deep, that He is not deeper still.” Corrie Ten Boom, “The Hiding Place”

Rivers of Living Water

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

Isaiah 41:17-18
Jeremiah 2:13
John 7:37-39



“I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water; and the dry land springs of water” (Isaiah 41:18)

After years of experimenting with all the sodas and soft drinks in town, I’ve reached a conclusion. There is only ONE thing that can quench my thirst completely.... it’s WATER! Natural, clean sparkling water is the only liquid substance that satisfies. God knew this... that’s why He made it!

From cover to cover, God is seen as the one who is the giver of the water of life, especially to those in great need. *“When the poor and needy seek water, and there tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I will not forsake them”* (Isaiah 41:17). And that is exactly what God does! From Haagar struggling for her and her child’s life in a desert (Genesis 16); to the Israelites clamoring for God and Moses to supply water in the wilderness (Exodus 15 and 17); to the prophet Elijah being fed by a running brook for the 3 years of famine (I Kings 17); The Lord God proves that He is, “Jehovah-Jireh,” our Provider!

And what about the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman (John 4)? Now here’s a gal in her day who definitely has three strikes against her. She’s a woman (strike 1), she’s a Samaritan woman (strike 2), and she is anything but a good woman (strike 3). But here is Jesus resting on the well just waiting for her to come. And, yes, He did know that she was coming! At the most unsociable time for drawing water in the peak heat of the day, here comes this woman that God so loved. Jesus engages her in a conversation, intrigues her with a strange proposal, and then reveals Himself to her, putting all her doubts aside. She believes and receives the gift of God!

What gift? The gift of Jesus’ living water, eternal life! *“Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life”* (John 4:13-14). The Samaritan woman received the cleansing and infilling of the waters of eternal life because she accepted Jesus as the Christ, the Savior of the world! But watch her next action. She drops down the water pot and bolts back into town unashamedly. Why? Because she didn’t want to keep this water of life to herself! She wanted everybody to know that they could come and see for themselves, receiving the rivers of living water for all eternity! This is the same message and the same response that God longs for His people to take to each desert of the human heart. Jesus wants us to run back to our home towns and to the ends of the earth proclaiming... Jesus alone can satisfy! And it is ONLY through Jesus that we can have eternal life!

God has poured out His cup of salvation into our hands. We receive it and our soul is reborn (John 3:5)! We bask in it and out springs new rivers of life (Psalm 107:33-35)! We now have a duty. Each day we go to our Master, so that our hands are full of fresh, living water to give to a dry and thirsty world. We keep going back to our Master because the parched hearts and needs are so great. But then one day, we decide not to go to our Master, and just use the drops of water still left in our hands. We wring our hands until our once full hands become dry and chapped. Finally, we realize that we have nothing left to give. What’s the problem?

God knows. *“For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of the living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water”* (Jeremiah 2:13). We cannot minister God’s life-giving water in our own strength and we cannot return to our old “water pots” to seek satisfaction. So come and rest by our Master and take in His Words of water of life daily. Then let us drop down our “water pots” and bolt with inner floods of strength and joy to a weary world. The world needs to know, there is only ONE who will satisfy our thirst quenching souls—Jesus! Do you know Him? If not, turn to Him today, believing on His name. If you do know Him already, GREAT! But are you allowing Jesus to be your life-giving water today?



*What kind of a stream are you that others may drink from?
A running river or a stagnant pool?*

*If you stop drinking afresh today,
you stop ministering tomorrow.
You cannot give what you do not have.*

How Full Are Your Hands Today as You Minister to a Thirsty World?

Rivers of Living Water

*“In the last day... Jesus stood and cried, saying,
If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.
He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said,
out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.
But this spake He of the Spirit,
which they that believe on Him should receive...”
(John 7:37-39)*

- 1. Read John 7:37-39. What person in the God-head (Father, Son, Holy Spirit), is the one who gives the fresh-water of life each day?**
- 2. Jesus commanded His disciples to “Go into all the world”. But before they were to begin their mission, they were to wait for the Holy Spirit to come upon them (Acts 1:8). Why does God say the Holy Spirit is necessary before God’s people launch out into ministry? What is the Holy Spirit’s role in completing the Great Commission?**
- 3. When is the last time you truly rested near the feet of Jesus, drinking in His every Word? When was the last time your heart was so full of truth and life-giving words that you just had to run and share it with someone? Talk to the Lord and ask the Holy Spirit to fill you anew, today!**
- 4. What are some “old water pots” that you get tempted to pick up and try to fill up for satisfaction? Give them to Jesus, and ask Him to shatter their pull upon your heart today.**

“I’ve Got a River of Life Flowing Out of Me... For the World to Come and See Jesus!”

What Kind of Tree Am I?

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

Isaiah 41:19-20
Psalm 1:1-3
Psalm 92:12-14



*“And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”
(Psalm 1:3)*

The Fruitful Tree

Written by Katrina Forseth

*I wandered in the inviting forest,
Not knowing what I exactly wanted to see.
As I was looking over God’s creation,
I began to judge between the different types of trees.*

*I saw barren trees who bore not any type of fruit.
Some showed life at the bottom, but ceased to be apparent at the peak.
Yet, others showed the opposite, by suddenly bringing forth signs of life near the top.
Pondering in my heart, I began to ask myself a question, and the answer I did seek.*



“Lord, what kind of tree am I?”

Barren? No, for I am a new creature in Christ.

The other two types, I considered.

“Lord, don’t let me wait till I’m older to bear fruit, nor stop growing and waste my life.”

*Reasoning, I concluded, “I cannot pinpoint exactly which one I am.
But, Lord, take my life as a sacrifice and mold me into what I am to be.”*

Then, the blindfold was lifted and I could now clearly see.

For there stood a majestic, tall tree that had bore fruit all its’ days, I knew I had found the key.

*My hope and prayer I then lifted up to Him. “Father, take me from where
I am, and let me bring forth fruit for the rest of my days.”*

*Only one, old, rugged tree could break the bonds of sin to set me free.
Now, this new tree took on the symbol of all that I ever wanted to be.*



What Kind of Tree Am I?

What About You? What Kind of Tree Are You?

1. **BARREN TREE:** Is your walk with God completely dried up? Can others see the fruit, the evidence in your life of your love for God? Have you been ignoring God and neglecting His Word? Survey your own heart and ask God to search the depths of your heart, pointing out any sin and wanderings from Him.

Jesus said some tough words in John 15:6, *“If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”*

How are you doing in abiding in Christ today and allowing God’s word to abide in you?

2. **PAST FRUIT TREE:** Do you describe your relationship with God always in the past tense? “Well, I used to read my Bible... I used to pray... I used to serve God... I used to have a vital, walk with God, my Savior... I used to... I used...”. STOP! Commit yourself to no more wasted days, months, and years spent apart from God. Come back and get right with God! Let your walk with Christ be an ever present reality beginning TODAY!

3. **LATE BLOOMER:** “It’s better late than never!” That’s a true, but sad reality for some. Just as it is NOT God’s will that any should perish and be separated from Him (Matthew 18:14); it is NOT God’s will that you wait until you are older to start living for the Lord and walk close with Him. God wants you to live your whole life for Him, beginning NOW!

Listen to God’s heart-beat concerning at what age you can begin to walk with God:

II Timothy 3:15 *“And that from a CHILD thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”*

I Timothy 4:12 *“Let no man despise thy YOUTH; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”*

4. **FRUITFUL, GROWING TREE:** This is God’s will... His goal for our lives! Is it yours?

Psalms 92:12-14 *“The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.”*

Day 42

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

Isaiah 40:1-2
John 14:16-18, & 26
John 15:26
John 16:7-15
II Corinthians 1:1-7



Comfort My People

"...the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (II Corinthians 1:3-4).

From birth to death, from crying babies to lonely senior citizens in the nursing home, there is one basic heart cry of the human heart... to receive comfort. The one who says that he does not need the comfort of anyone else in his life is a lying fool. Everyone needs to be comforted. Everyone needs to know that he is loved and cared for by at least one other. This is the way that God has made us to live. From the cradle to the grave, God has designed us to want someone to reach out to us, to uphold us, and to tell us that everything is going to be ok.

God knows our need to be comforted. God commanded His prophet Isaiah to speak words of comfort to His once wayward, but now repentant people.

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God" (Isaiah 40:1). The most comforting words in the whole world are to be told that all your sins are completely pardoned and that you are now at peace with God. Remember Jesus' words to the woman who was sick in her body and soul? *"Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace"* (Luke 8:48). Jesus Christ came to heal and comfort our sin sick soul through His discomfort that He willingly suffered and died for on the cross.



*Reach out first to God.
Receive His comfort. Then reach
out to your neighbors and take
them by their hands.
Comfort God's
people with God's comfort.*

On the night before Jesus went to the cross, Jesus spoke words of comfort to his sorrow-filled disciples. The disciples didn't fully understand what Jesus was saying, but they knew that something was going down. Jesus assured them that it would be just a little while, and then they would see His face again. Jesus vividly displayed His love to them. He washed their feet and sought to calm their deepest fears. He assured them of His unfailing love for them. He called them friends and not servants. That night, Jesus began to speak of another who would come, whom the Father Himself would send—the Comforter.

Of all the ways to describe the person and the work of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, is the one that the Lord Jesus chose that long night. Why? Because God knew that's what His people really needed! In 43 days, Jesus was going to physically leave this earth and ascend to His Father in heaven. His followers were heart-broken. Jesus was their Lord, Jesus was their life, and Jesus was their best and dearest friend. How could He just up and leave them alone by themselves to face this weary world?

Jesus didn't and He still doesn't abandon us today. To every child of God who has trusted in the Lord Jesus as his Saviour, the Father sends and seals him with His indwelling Holy Spirit who will always stay. God knew that His people needed more than just a weekly "date night" with God. God's people need God every moment of every day. This is the comfort of the constant reality of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. God's people are never alone, not even for one second!

The Holy Spirit not only indwells us, but He is there to continually guide us. The Holy Spirit comforts us by His constant counsel. He is there to teach us all things, to make God's Word come alive to our hearts, and to open our hearts to receive His Word through His work of conviction and correction. More than anything, the Spirit comforts us by giving us direct access to constant communion with our Father. No wonder Paul describes God as the God of all comfort! Everything we need can be found in our God, the great Comforter!

Yet, there is another part to this circle of comfort that must be closed. God comforts us, so that we in turn, can comfort others with the comfort that we have first received from the Lord. Trials in this life abound. Burdens are heavy. Hearts are broken and people are banged up and bruised. Receiving comfort is never meant to be a one-way street. God gives so that we might give to others, and that through it all, God would be glorified.

Have you ever wondered why bad things happen to God's people? God only knows, but it may just be so that others might come to know the God of all comfort through the comfort that God Himself has given to you. Now that's a comforting thought!

The Holy Spirit is Our Comforter and Our Constant Companion in Life.

Comfort My People

1. **God is the God of all comfort, there's no doubt about that! How has God been comforting your heart recently? Don't forget to share it with someone else today!**

2. **Are you lonely today and need comfort?** Remember the comfort of the Spirit's abiding presence in you is a constant reality. God has said, *"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"* (Hebrews 13:5).

Are you needing counsel? Remember the Holy Spirit wants to speak to you through the Word of God to bring comfort and correction for your life's direction. *"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope"* (Romans 15:4).

Are you longing for constant communion with God? Talk to the Lord and let Him speak to you. You do have the mind of Christ, because His Spirit lives within you! *"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God"* (Romans 8:26-27).

**Comfort Others With Your God-Given Comfort.
"Therefore we were comforted in your comfort" (II Corinthians 7:13)**

Day 43

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

Isaiah 61:1-3
Jeremiah 29:11-14
I Corinthians 2:9
Philippians 4:6-8



Memories to Remember

“But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart” (Luke 2:19).

Days give way to weeks, weeks into months, and before you know it another year has come and gone. One more page has been written and recorded in your life. What do you remember? Scratch that. What do you want to remember? What do you want to recall from those memoirs etched down deep in your heart’s treasured memory box?

Memories are special things. Memories make you smile, they make you laugh, and memories remembered bring great joy, almost unspeakable joy to your heart. How many times has someone caught you with an out of place great grin on your face and asked, “So what are you thinking about?” That is what’s so great about memories. We can think about them, mull-over, ponder and muse about that—anytime of the day and anywhere! It’s like reliving your life, those happy times, through the memory lane of your heart. But memories are also complicated things. There are some things that we don’t want to remember. If we were all to be bluntly honest here, each one of us have had some days and even some whole years that we desire to block out of our memory bank forever. Sometimes the pictures of our memories are just too sharp. We will do anything to change the channel and we would give anything to erase the vivid videotape.

Did you ever stop and think that is exactly why we need a Savior? Jesus didn’t come to just save us from our sins. Are you shocked at that statement? You shouldn’t be. Listen to what Jesus, himself, said was the reason why he had come, *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord”* (Luke 4:18-19).

The Gospel message isn’t only the promise of eternal life, it is the promise of God’s healing, deliverance, and restoration in your life! God knows all about your broken heart, your blindness, and your bruises that you have carried through the years. God sees and that is why He sent His Son to set you completely free (John 8:36). God desires to free you to live this life in the abundance of joy (John 10:10). The Lord wants to lift you up as on eagle’s wings above life’s bumps and bottomless pits so that you can soar and be all that God designed and intended for you to be (Isaiah 40:31)!

You see, life isn’t just about making memories. Life is about thanking God for the endeared memories and trusting Him—including those sharp edged etched memories in our soul that pierce down deep like a sword (Luke 2:35). Life is about letting the healing in, not so that we would be happy, but that we would be made whole. God wants to take us deeper and to make us stronger like a firmly planted and fruitful tree. At times God, our Gardener, has to do some pruning, some trimming, and some digging to remove deeply entrenched roots. Let Him. God knows what He is doing. God is remaking us. God is taking all that we are and all our memories—including the good and the bad, the happy and the sad,—all to glorify His holy name (Isaiah 61:3).

Looking back over this past year, what are your memories? What handprints of God can you see clearly upon your life? What has the Master Gardener been working on? Has He been watering, nurturing, and sustaining you? Or has He been cutting back those wayward branches, uprooting the things that bind you, and replacing the rocky soil in your heart? Twice in the Gospel of Luke, we read this intriguing phrase, *“but his mother kept all these sayings... and pondered them in her heart”* (Luke 2:19 and 51). Think about your life. Think about where you are now and what God has taken you from. Ponder God’s work of grace and mercy that He has shown to you each day. Remember God’s blessings that He has given to you which come in all sizes and shapes. God’s gifts of blessings can never be packaged and wrapped, they can only be remembered.

Memories, even the bad ones, can be used for the glory of God when we choose to turn them all over to Him. Remember God’s promise? *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose”* (Romans 8:28). Give God your memories. Receive His comfort that He offers through His Word, through His Spirit, and through God’s people. Repent of any past sin and continually surrender your mind, heart, and body to the Lord. God wants what is best for you in the days and the years to come. He wants holiness and purity to reign in your life, not ugly self-filled sin. Your future memories can be good ones as you daily obey the truth as revealed by the Spirit. God does have a plan for your life and it is good! Trust Him, He knows what He is doing. Each day, choose to think on all the good things that God has done for you and prayerfully give Him all the rest. Let God’s peace flood your heart and mind today.



*Give God your time.
Give God your
memories.
Give God the
permission to use
your whole life,
both the good and
the bad, all for His
glory, honor, and
praise!*

Remember Your Memories... Give Them to God... and Let God Use Them For His Glory!

Memoirs to Remember

Memories are treasures of the heart. Stop and take the time and ponder anew what the Lord has been doing in your life recently.

When was your heart overflowing with joy for what the Lord has done for you? Write down your treasured memoir to remember.

Do you have any disturbing memories which sadden you or even plague you? Give them over to God and let God use even these things all for His glory.

Look again at God's Word. What sorts of things does God want you to think upon today?

Philippians 4:8

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

Think on These Things!

“And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7).

Day 44

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

**I John 3:19-22
Isaiah 65:24
Daniel 10:12
Psalm 116:1-2**



The Joy In Asking

“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (John 16:24).



There is unspeakable joy in knowing that your Creator cares personally about you to hear and answer your specific prayers!

It hit me like a ton of bricks that day. The Spirit of God took the Word of God and pierced my heart straight through in one shot, “You haven’t asked Me for anything.” I had been bemoaning my hurts and my pains before the Lord. My heart was cracked wide open and tears had been streaming down my face. Where was the joy, where was the peace, and where was God? I looked again at the verse tucked in the middle of John chapter 16, “*Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full*” (vs 24). Pieces were missing in my life that were causing me to be peace-less, yet I didn’t know what they exactly were. I began to pray a very child-like and even an awkward, stumbling prayer. I listed out my heartaches and my sorrows and told the Lord my heart’s hidden desires. I didn’t know if it was even right to pray for what I was asking for. I told the Lord so, and then committed it all over to Him. As I prayed, I sensed that the Lord was listening to my very words. God was drawing me to bring all my needs to Him. God did not want me to pray in generic terms. God was calling me to pray specifically about what my heart longed for and what I thought I needed. God wanted me to ask Him to answer and to meet my every need.

We are so slow sometimes, aren’t we? I know I am! But, I don’t feel so bad, because Jesus’ disciples were that way too. Before Jesus was taken to be tried and crucified, He reminded His disciples that He came so that their joy would be full. Jesus knew that they were deeply troubled that night and that things for awhile were only going to get worse. So Jesus spelled out the problem to them and the solution. “Ask me. Come and talk to me. Tell me all the things that are troubling you and tell me what you need. I’m here waiting for you, but as yet, you haven’t come.” This wasn’t the first time that Jesus had told His followers this. Jesus had promised and pleaded with them before, as a good father would do for his children, “*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him*” (Matthew 7:7-11)?

Many people of God down through the years have learned this blessed truth. Hudson Taylor, the famous missionary statesman and founder of China Inland Missions, often said, “God’s work done in God’s way will never lack God’s supply.” He believed that it was important to balance faith and work, so he worked as if everything depended upon working and prayed as if everything depended upon praying. Over and over again, he learned that he could trust God with everything in his life, even down to the last coin in his pocket. Hudson Taylor believed in praying. He believed in asking and he believed in asking God specifically for what he needed for himself, for others, and for the ministry. God answered! Reese Kauffman, the President of Child Evangelism Fellowship, a world-wide Christian children’s ministry organization, shared how he too believes in praying with label and serial number on it. He explained why, “So that when the answer comes,” he said, “I’ll know that it was my prayer that God answered and God gets all the glory.” How true!

There is nothing that fills the heart more full of joy than in knowing that your Creator heard your prayer and answered it in a way so that you would know that He did it just for you! But why should that surprise us? If Jesus loved us enough to die for us, why wouldn’t He love us enough to want to listen and to answer us? God’s Word makes a precious promise to us, “*And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us; And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him*” (I John 5:14-15).

But does it work? I can testify that it does! Before that day was over, God answered my prayer twice with no hinting or helping from me. Do you know what I learned? I’ve got to pray about everything, big and small, and I’ve got to pray more specifically. Think of all the joy that I’ve been missing, just because I didn’t ask! Not anymore, I’m asking with label and serial number on it from now on. How about you?

God promises, “Before you ask, I will answer” (Isaiah 65:24).

The Joy In Asking

1. Have you been guilty of not asking God specifically for what you need? Change that now! Search your heart and take your needs before your God. Ask Him for your heart's desires, pray according to God's will, and leave the rest up to Him. Write out your requests to God.

2. Are you at a loss of not knowing what you should pray for or what you should ask? Tell God and ask Him to guide and direct your very thoughts and your prayers. Remember you have some awesome people praying for you. Jesus is interceding for you and the Holy Spirit is praying for you according to the Father's will. With a team like that, you can't lose! Thank the Lord for His personal care and concern for you. And thank Him in advance, for He will answer your prayer in His way and in His will.

Hebrews 7:25

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

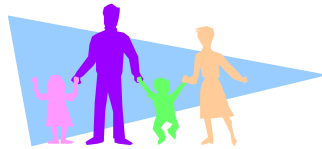
Remember, Nothing is Too Small to Not Pray About!

Day 45

Check it out for yourself first!

Read the following Bible passages:

Deuteronomy 31:12-13
Judges 2:10
Psalm 78:1-8
Matthew 18:1-14



For the Generation to Come

“This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord” (Psalm 102:18).

“I can’t believe it. It’s been right here in God’s Word all along!” Why should I have been surprised? Doesn’t God long for all people to come to Him? Didn’t Jesus command us to take the Gospel to every corner and to every creature on the earth? Why should we then be shocked to find a detailed plan written plainly in Scripture of how to reach the next generation for Christ? God cares about every generation and it is not His will that any generation or any person would be lost (II Peter 3:9). There is no such thing as a generation “X” or a hopeless generation. Every generation can come to know Christ if each preceding generation does its part in calling the coming generation to come.

From the very beginning, God wanted the children to know who He was. What was God’s plan? It’s simple: that the children would come to know the living God through their parents’ living faith. Adam and Eve were to pass on what they knew about God to their children. How did Cain and Abel know that God was holy, that God was almighty, and that God knows everything at all times? Because of their parents! There were no books or videotapes or Sunday School classes back then. It has always been God’s design for parents to share with their children what their faith in the Lord means to them. *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up”* (Deuteronomy 6:4-7). God wants us to share with children who He is. It’s not a method or a program. It is a way of life!

So where do you start with talking to children about God? There is no need to guess because God’s Word is so clear. You need to begin by focusing the children on understanding **WHO GOD IS**. God is the Creator—the Maker of all things. That’s a great place to start! God is Holy, He’s perfect, and God always does what is right. God loves us. These are all benchmarks of God’s character in which the whole Gospel is built upon. Take away who God is out of the Gospel message and your Bible theology collapses like a house of cards. You’ve got nothing! That is why the psalmist declared the first step in how to teach the coming generation about God, *“We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done”* (Psalm 78:4).

Don’t stop there! Go on and teach the children the next step. *“For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children”* (Psalm 78:5). You see, God has a law. It’s called **GOD’S COMMANDS**. Children need to know that there is a right and that there is a wrong. They need to understand God’s call to holiness and man’s failure called sin. Sin is spelled, “s-I-n.” Children need to know that the big, “I”, in sin means that they have sinned too, “for all have sinned” (Romans 3:23). They need to understand that they have fallen short of God’s standard of holiness and have completely missed the mark. That’s why you can’t skim and skip over lesson 1 on the character of God. If you fail to communicate that God is holy, how will the children ever see their sin? They can’t! The problem with our world today is that God’s people so gloss over sin and lack personal holiness in their own lives that the next generation cannot comprehend their true spiritual condition before God. They are utterly blind to it.

God does have a solution. God wants the children to come to Him and to trust in Him as their Lord and Savior. Look at these verses, *“That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God”* (Psalm 78:6-7). Let these words sink into your heart, **“That they might set their hope in God.”** That’s it! The whole purpose of teaching children, from the Old Testament to the New Testament, is so that the children would **COME TO GOD**. The goal of instructing children has never changed. Each generation and each individual must put his personal trust, his personal faith, and his personal hope in God and in His promised Son alone. Salvation has always been from cover to cover in both the Old and New Testaments, by GRACE ALONE, by FAITH ALONE, and in CHRIST ALONE! Trusting in Him alone, this is our hope! Reaching the coming generation is not about better education or morals, it’s about soul-saving salvation and then continual learning to walk with God by faith. The children are ready and waiting to come to Christ. Who will go to them? This coming generation needs to know about Jesus now!



Who will reach this generation to come?

Will you reach out to the children or will you walk away from your calling to bring the children to Christ in this generation?

Go to God for the Children. Then Go to the Children So That They Will Come to Him!

For the Generation to Come

1. Are you following God's plan for reaching the next generation and calling them to come?

STEP 1: WHO GOD IS

Do you talk to the children about the character of God? If you were to describe to a child who God is and what God is like, what would you say?

STEP 2: WHAT ARE GOD'S COMMANDS

You may do a great job at talking to children about God, but do you talk to them about their sin? Do the children understand what sin is, not just the big stuff, but even the little things that we—think, say and do that displease God?

Before we go any further, examine your own heart. Is there any sin area in your life that you have been glossing over and ignoring God's commands?

STEP 3: PERSONAL TRUST IN GOD

Don't neglect this final step. What is the point of all your Bible teaching if you fail to bring the children to the point of helping them to put their personal trust, their personal faith in God, by receiving Christ as their Savior. Without this, the children will not know God!

Remember John 17:3, the true definition of eternal life is KNOWING GOD and HIS ONLY SON, whom God has sent!

John 17:3

*"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God,
and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."*

**Teach the Children Who God is, That God Has Laws,
and That They Can Put Their Personal Trust in Him—In Christ Alone!**