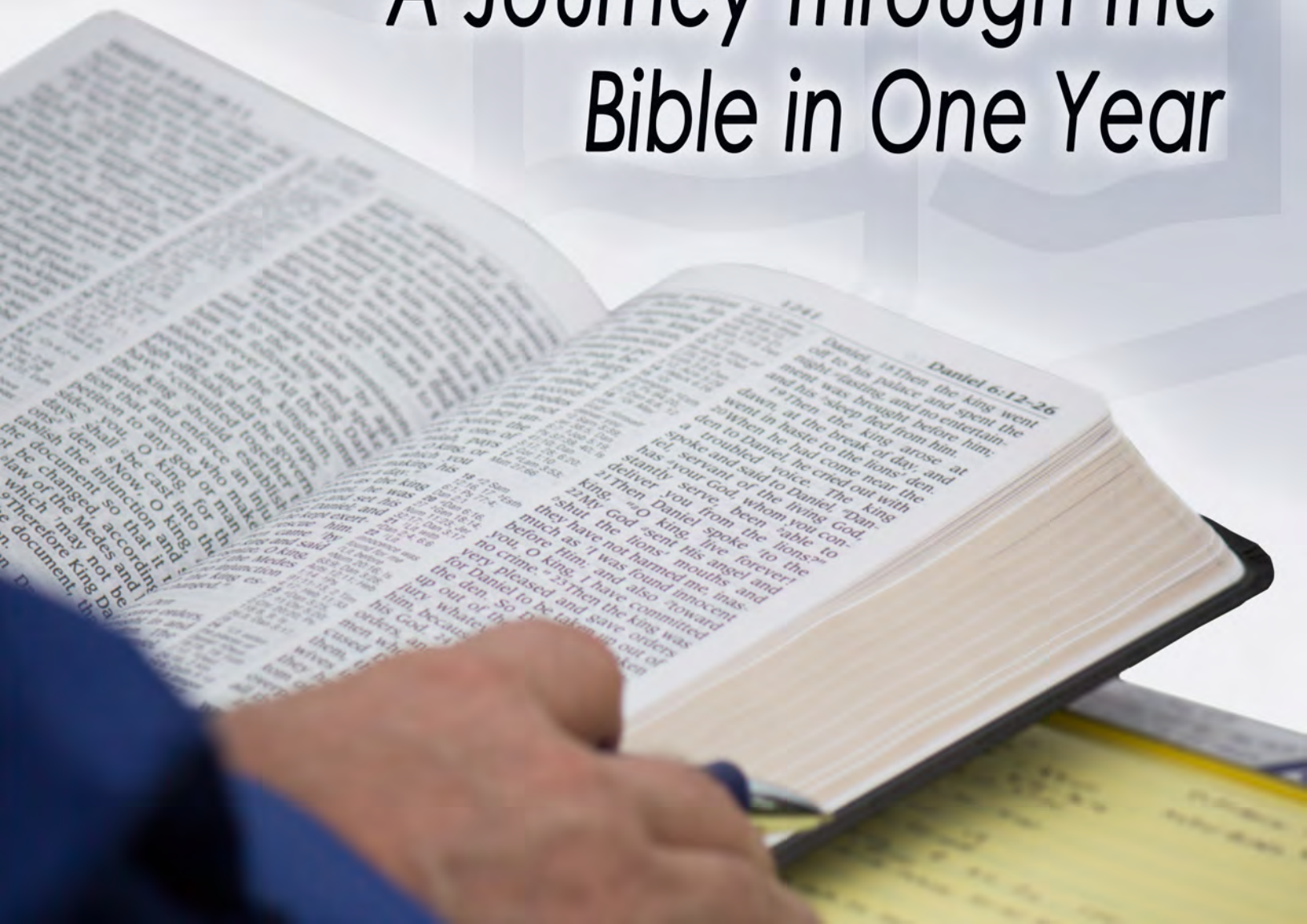


IN  
**SEARCH**  
OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

# Daily Devotionals

*A Journey Through the  
Bible in One Year*



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## JANUARY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15  
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## FEBRUARY

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## MARCH

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## APRIL

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## MAY

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## JUNE

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## JULY

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## **AUGUST**

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## **SEPTEMBER**

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## **OCTOBER**

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## **NOVEMBER**

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## **DECEMBER**

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January 1

**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 1-3

**Memory Verses:** **Genesis 2:7** then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

**Song:** [“O Lord, We Praise Thy Name”](#)

The crowning achievement of God’s creation was mankind. God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth” (Genesis 1:26). He made them male and female in His own image (1:27).

The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man (2:21-22).

God united the two in the first marriage. Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed (2:24). So innocent were they that they could be naked and not feel shame. They had access to the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The evil serpent, the devil, tempted Eve through creating doubt in God’s command, lying, and presenting a sinful alternative. The shrewd devil easily led Eve astray, and a foolish Adam followed. They disobeyed God and found the consequences severe. They were forced out of the Garden and separated from the tree of life; they would have to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow; the ground was cursed with thorns and thistles; humans from that day forward would know death; God multiplied the pain woman had in child-bearing; and the woman was to desire the man but be ruled by him.

Every action has consequences, and the first Adam brought death to us all. In the midst of this tragedy, however, is the promise of the seed of the woman (3:16) who would overcome the seed of the serpent. This prophecy of Jesus gives hope and redemption.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for giving hope in the worst of days. Help me to think before I act, so that I might not sin against Thee. Deliver me from the lies of the serpent in my own time. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I look for alternatives that benefit me but defy God? Have I kept my hope in the seed of the woman to deliver me?



January 2

**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 4-7

**Memory Verses: Genesis 6:5-8** The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them." But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

**Song:** ["His Grace Reaches Me"](#)

Wickedness and evil can penetrate an entire society and corrupt their hearts and lives. Among some in our society, we too can say, "every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." I wonder sometimes if God is sorry He made us.

God determined to blot out man whom He created from the face of the land. He could not tolerate their evil. God won't ever tolerate evil practiced on and on. He has a limit to His grace. His holy character demands that He punish the wicked who will not repent.

Peter said, "if he (God) did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly, . . . then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment" (2 Peter 2:5, 9).

But Noah found favor (grace) in the eyes of the Lord. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. God saved him and his family through an ark. God gave Noah many specific instructions in how to build the ark: gopher wood, three floors, pitch inside and out, one door, and one window. The ark was 300 cubits long (450 feet), 50 cubits wide (75 feet), and 30 cubits high (45 feet). It held two of every kind of unclean animal and seven pairs of every unclean animal. The instructions for the ark were specific and somewhat detailed.

But Noah was righteous and blameless. He kept God's command to the letter. "Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did" (Genesis 6:22). We too show our faithfulness to God when we keep His commandments accordingly.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for caring enough for mankind to spare Noah and his family. Thank you for redeeming me and giving me a new birth and opportunity to serve. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I follow God's commandments to the letter? If God were looking for a righteous and blameless man to preach and to follow His instructions, would He choose me?





January 3

**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 8:1-11:9

**Memory Verses:** “While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.” (**Genesis 8:22**)

**Song:** “[In His Time](#)”

“Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow” (James 1:17). When you consider all that God has done for mankind over the centuries, one can only be amazed at His utter care and concern for His creation. Christ holds all things in the creation together (Colossians 1:15-17).

God is indeed changeless in His devotion to mankind, even when humans don’t appreciate His kindness. The Lord Jesus taught in Matthew 5:43–45, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

God wanted people to know of His love and care for them, even when men rejected Him or lost sight of His goodness. “In the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways; and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness” (Acts 14:16–17).

To be sons of our Father in Heaven, we too must learn to give what is good, even to those who don’t deserve it or don’t appreciate it. In spite of our sins, God still offers His grace to us in the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ. Let us devote ourselves to the Lord.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for keeping your promise for thousands of years. You are in control of all things and hold all things together. Thank you for each morning, each evening, and each season of the year. Thank you for continuing to provide for our needs year in and out. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I appreciate all that God does for us year in and year out? Do I act like a child of God by treating others with kindness, even when they don’t deserve it?



January 4

**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 11:10-14:13

**Memory Verses: Genesis 13:8–9** So Abram said to Lot, “Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers. “Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me; if to the left, then I will go to the right; or if to the right, then I will go to the left.”

**Song:** [“Blest Be the Tie”](#)

Abram did not want strife with his nephew Lot. He valued peace and friendship above the petty disputes over water and grassland, so he made the offer to part with Lot amicably. He let Lot choose which land he wanted. Lot chose the well-watered land, the valley of the Jordan. But his choice came with a price. That land was filled with exceedingly wicked people (8:13).

Sometimes, what appears to be the wisest choice financially may be the poorest choice morally and spiritually. Peter records that Lot was “oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard *that* righteous man, while living among them, felt *his* righteous soul tormented day after day by *their* lawless deeds)” (2 Peter 2:7-8). Jude says that Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them “indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh” (Jude 7). What a terrible place to raise children! Lot could not prosper spiritually, even if he could prosper financially in such a place.

One can only imagine the torment Lot suffered because of his choice to go to Sodom. God delivered him from this oppression, but the effects of a lascivious environment may have prompted his daughters to act shamefully (Genesis 19:30-38).

Be careful what you choose in life; it may be entirely different from what it appears. Better to have a righteous life with a spiritually healthy family than to live in financial prosperity with spiritual bankruptcy.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for showing the value of a truly abundant life in Christ, filled with love and righteousness. Deliver us from evil. Help us to choose wisely in this life, so that we may please you in every way. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I think about the spiritual implications of my life choices? Have I permitted myself and my family to live in an ungodly environment?



January 5

**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 14:14-18:8

**Memory Verses:** **Genesis 15:5-6**, “And He took him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.”

**Song:** [“My God and I”](#)

Abraham was an old man with no heir. He did not know how an old man with an old wife could bear a child. Sarah too had grown doubtful. Both laughed at the promise of God, but God would show them His power to overcome what seems impossible to people. Abraham believed God’s promise to have heirs, but he did not yet know how God would keep His promise.

Abraham first considered his servant Eliezer of Damascus to be his heir, but God said no (Genesis 15:2-4). Later Abraham wished Ishamael might be the one to “live before Thee” (17:18). But God had different plans. There was another to be born of Sarah who would be his heir. Only the son of promise could fulfill God’s plan (Galatians 4:21-31).

Many times in life we don’t know how God will accomplish His purpose. We think we have a plan our own, like Sarah did with Hagar; but God’s ways are higher than ours (Isaiah 55:8-9). God doesn’t always reveal in the beginning how He will accomplish His promises. Our task is to believe He will even when we don’t understand. God doesn’t need our help to figure a way to accomplish His purposes, but He does need our trust and willingness to follow.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for all your many promises in Christ. Help me to trust in You and not lean on my own understanding. Help me to walk with you rather than presume I can find a way on my own. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I trust what the Lord promises? Have I tried to make God’s promise work on the basis of my own strength rather than wait for the Lord? Do I believe God?





January 6

**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 18:9-21:21

**Memory Verses: Genesis 18:19** “For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.”

**Song:** [“God of Our Fathers”](#)

Abraham had many fine qualities, but God reveals why He chose Abraham in Genesis 18:19, “so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice.” God chose Abraham because He knew Abraham would be faithful as a parent to command his children to keep the way of the Lord.

The primary work of a Father is to provide for his children. Children need food and clothing and shelter; but more than anything every child needs to know the Lord and follow in His steps. Good parents cannot neglect to “Train up a child in the way he should go” (Proverbs 22:6).

In Deuteronomy 6, God wanted Israel to hear His words and to love Him with all their hearts and souls and might (6:4-5). God’s words were to be on their heart. Primary to all this was the need for parents to teach these commandments diligently to their children. They were to talk of them when they sit, when they walk, when they lie down, and when they get up. They were to dominate their lives (6:7-9).

Every child could wish to have such a father as Abraham, and every man could wish to be such a father as Abraham to train their children to keep the way of the Lord. How badly we need Christian fathers and mothers today who will point the next generation to God. When parents fail to teach, children go astray.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for our children. Help us to love them and to train them in the way that You would have them walk, to keep Your statutes and ordinances all the days of their lives. Help us to be faithful as parents, and watch over our children. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I teach my children about the Lord and His commandments? What can I do to help my children learn to love the Lord and His Word?



January 7

**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 21:22-24:27

**Memory Verses: Genesis 22:11–12** But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” He said, “Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”

**Song:** [“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”](#)

As the parent of four children, I can only imagine the heartache Abraham felt when God told him, “Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the Land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you” (22:2).

Abraham and Sarah had waited many, many years for this precious son, and now God wanted Abraham to sacrifice him? What of the promise? How could God build a nation from a dead who was dead? Abraham no doubt questioned; but faith grows strongest when it relies on God Himself, even when it does not have all the answers to specifics.

The Bible says that Abraham offered up Isaac “by faith” because he “considered that God is able to raise *people* even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type” (Hebrews 11:19).

We do not have to know *how* God will do things to believe that He *will* accomplish His purposes and keep His promises. God will work a way, even if we can’t see it. Abraham acted in accordance with God’s will, trusting the Lord to work out the how. We too need such faith.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for keeping all Your promises. We don’t always know how You do what You do, but we are thankful that You fulfill your purposes. Help us to have faith when we do not understand. Help us to obey, even when it difficult. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I trust God to keep His promises, even in those times when I cannot see how God will work them out? Am I willing to be obedient even in the hardest times?



January 8

**Scripture Reading:** Gen 24:28-26:35

**Memory Verses:** Genesis 25:34 “Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank, and rose and went on his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.”

**Song:** [“Higher Ground”](#)

The birth of Esau and Jacob led to a struggle that would last for years with many intrigues and plots and difficulties. Jacob, “the heel-grabber,” or the one who supplants would do what he could to take from Esau the place of firstborn. He did not remember God would have worked his own will in the matter.

The LORD said to her, “Two nations are in your womb; and two peoples will be separated from your body; and one people shall be stronger than the other; and the older shall serve the younger” (Genesis 25:23).

The hunter Esau came in from the field famished and wanted to eat. Jacob said, “First sell me your birthright.” The birthright was something to be cherished, a place of honor and responsibility; but Esau despised it. Esau said, “Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?” (Genesis 25:32)

Those who live for the day, live for their flesh, and think nothing of the future or their responsibility act like Esau, whom the Scripture calls immoral and godless (Hebrews 12:16). Let us determine not to treat the valuable as if it were only a single meal.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for all our blessings. Help us never to take them for granted or overlook what great things you have done for us. Help us not to treat what is holy as if it were profane. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I treat what is holy as if it did not matter? Do I value the blessings God has given to me, or do I treat them as if they were of little consequence?



January 9

**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 27-29

**Memory Verses: Genesis 29:20** “So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her.”

**Song:** [“O How I Love Jesus”](#)

Love changes things. What people will never do for anything else, they will do for love. Jacob was happy to serve seven long years for Rachel, because of his love for her.

But, as you know, Laban deceived Jacob by giving Leah to him instead of Rachel. Learning that the firstborn must marry first was the practice of Laban but certainly should have been discussed first with Jacob. In the end Jacob got Rachel, but he had to serve another seven years with Laban.

Two people cannot have first place. Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah, and this fact would cause trouble for many years to come. Leah felt unloved, so the Lord opened her womb and gave her four sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah.

Fourteen years of service for the wife you love is a great deal, but Jacob believed she was worth it. Wouldn't you like to be loved so greatly? Have you ever loved so greatly?

When we serve the Lord, it becomes a pleasure not a burden (1 John 5:3). The yoke of the Lord is easy and light (Matthew 11:28-30). God's blessing is worth every effort and every sacrifice; it is true joy. The wonderful thing about God is the joy never ends.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for loving me so much that You were willing to give a great gift for my salvation, Your only Son. Help me to so love and so serve that I may find my true joy in You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I love God lavishly or sparingly? Do I give of myself to God out of compulsion or from a cheerful heart? Do I enjoy serving God?



**January 10**

**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 30:1-31:42

**Memory Verses: Genesis 30:1–2** Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she became jealous of her sister; and she said to Jacob, “Give me children, or else I die.” Then Jacob’s anger burned against Rachel, and he said, “Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?”

**Song:** [“The Lord Has Been Mindful of Me”](#)

The problems between Rachel and Leah affected their children and also their servants Bilhah and Zilpah. Ultimately, Leah bore six sons and a daughter, Dinah. Bilhah and Zilpah each bore two sons. All eleven came into the world before beloved Rachel gave birth to her first child, Joseph. She waited a long time before God gave her a child, but God did not fail her.

God’s timing and our own are often different. We wish to have our way quickly and often lack the patience we need to wait upon the Lord (Psalm 147:11). But the Lord acts in His own time and in His own way.

While Rachel felt great pain in not being able to conceive, she had Jacob’s undying love. But God was also considering the “unloved” Leah. When Leah’s sixth son was born, she said, “God has endowed me with a good gift; now my husband will dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons.” So she named him Zebulun.” (Genesis 30:20). God loved both Leah and Rachel and wisely worked a way to bless them both.

The Lord is mindful of me, but He is also mindful of others whom He also loves. He provides for their needs just as He provides for ours.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for being able to see beyond my own selfish desires to be able to bless the lives of many others. Thank you for giving each one the attention and love they need. Thank you for loving us all. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I focus on my own selfish desires to the exclusion of others? Am I willing to wait upon the Lord?



January 11

**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 31:43-34:31

**Memory Verses: Genesis 31:41–42** “These twenty years I have been in your house; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for your flock, and you changed my wages ten times. “If the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had not been for me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God has seen my affliction and the toil of my hands, so He rendered judgment last night.”

**Song:** [“My God, My Father, Though I Stray”](#)

Life has its paydays. One cannot treat others contemptibly and expect never to have any consequences. Jacob sacrificed dearly to gain his two wives and watched over the flocks of Laban for another six years in order to have his own flock. Jacob protected the flock, bore the losses personally, served in the heat, endured the frost at night, lost sleep, and served faithfully.

In spite of all Jacob’s sacrifices, Laban changed his wages ten times in order to short-change Jacob and benefit himself. Laban sought to supplant the supplanter, the heel-grabber, Jacob. If God had not protected Jacob, surely he would have left the house of Laban empty-handed. Though Jacob blessed the house of Laban, Laban thought only of himself.

Laban’s ugly ways were now coming back on him. His deception and changing the rules with his servant now worked against him rather than for him. If God had not warned Laban not to “speak either good or bad to Jacob,” surely Laban would have acted against him (Genesis 31:26-30).

Jacob’s life from this point forward would change. He would no longer live as a supplanter toward Esau or anyone else. Rather he would seek reconciliation with the brother whom he did wrong.

“In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 7:12).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for loving me even when I was hard to love. Thank you for giving me Your love and forgiveness, even when I had so sinned against You. Help me to treat others with the love You have given me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I try to “one-up” others? Do I plan ways to take unfair advantage of others? Have I had “paydays,” where my plans have backfired?





January 12

**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 35:1-37:24

**Memory Verses: Genesis 37:32-35** And they sent the robe of many colors and brought it to their father and said, “This we have found; please identify whether it is your son’s robe or not.” And he identified it and said, “It is my son’s robe. A fierce animal has devoured him. Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces.” Then Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, “No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning.” Thus his father wept for him.

**Song:** [“I Know the Lord Will Find a Way for Me”](#)

Perhaps as no other passage, this brief story reveals the power of a lie. The brothers of the dreamer Joseph grew exceedingly angry at their brother and sold him into the hands of the Ishmaelites to be sold into slavery in Egypt. They thought they removed their problem by getting rid of Joseph. They did not like his favored-son status, his robe of many colors, or his dreams of ruling over them. They filled their hearts with jealousy and hatred. They sinned against their brother.

They were not prepared, however, for the response of their father. He believed their lie, mourned his son, and would not be comforted. Every time they saw their father in mourning, they remembered their lie. They had to live with the guilt and the consequences of their sin.

When a lie is taken for the truth, it does much damage. That is why God hates a lying tongue (Proverbs 6:17). Liars have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Revelation 21:8).

Occasionally I hear people excuse white lies, false doctrines, and little deceptions as no real problem, but God does not see these matters as we do. Truth and error cannot live side by side. To stray from the truth can cause a person to lose his soul (James 5:19-20; cf. Galatians 1:6-9). Lies are indeed evil; there is a reason God condemns them. Lies about God and about salvation are especially evil.

Thankfully, Joseph’s brothers begged forgiveness; and Joseph gave it to them. This we will explore on another day. Let us speak the truth (Ephesians 4:25).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for teaching me the truth in Your word so that I might know the right way to live and serve You. Help me to abide in the truth always. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I speak the truth in every matter? Have I believed a lie or perpetuated another’s lie to the harm of others?



**January 13**

**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 37:25-40:8

**Memory Verses: Genesis 39:7-9** And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, "Lie with me." But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

**Song:** ["Learning to Lean"](#)

Potiphar's wife did all she could to seduce Joseph. Ultimately she pretended Joseph tried to take sexual advantage of her. When she cried out (39:15), she was exonerating herself in the eyes of the other servants and putting all the blame on Joseph. Potiphar married poorly; however beautiful she might have been who would want an unfaithful wife with her character?

Joseph had clearly thought through his response to her. He knew why he would not cheat on his master. In those days adultery was defined as sexual intercourse with another man's wife. The penalty for adultery was death. Potiphar's imprisonment of Joseph in Pharaoh's jail revealed at least some compassion Potiphar had for Joseph's service. The Lord was with Joseph, and "the Lord caused all that he did to succeed in his hands" (39:3). The Lord blessed Potiphar for Joseph's sake; He blessed all that Potiphar had in the field and in the house. Potiphar favored Joseph, and prison was certainly better than death.

What will you do, if someone tries to seduce you? Joseph said, "How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" It was not the consequences of the crime. It was not the offense against his master Potiphar. Joseph thought long and hard on his relationship with God. Some people speak of victimless crime, but all sin is sin against God. He could not sin against the Lord who had given him favor and blessing in all that he did. Through all the ups and downs of his life, Joseph never forgot God. This young, virile, successful, handsome young man never forgot God.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for giving me examples of old that help me in my time of temptation to do what is right. Help me, Father, to remain close to you. Deliver me from temptation and help me to do Your will in every matter. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I love God so much that I would so no to life's temptations? Will I do what is right even if I think no one knows? Do I count God's gracious care for me as sufficient reason never to sin against Him?



**January 14**

**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 40:9-42:28

**Memory Verses: Genesis 41:15–16** And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.” Joseph answered Pharaoh, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.”

**Song:** [“Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah!”](#)

Joseph had learned to rely upon God and to have confidence in God. He knew that his ability to interpret dreams was not through some inherent talent of his own; he knew that every good and perfect gift comes from God (James 1:17). God was the interpreter, not Joseph.

Have you ever said, “It is not in me”? We get tempted to think sometimes that it is all about me, my talents, my attitudes, and my abilities. We forget God is the one who made us and the one who enables us to think and to act.

Moses worried that the people might become proud after they possessed the promised land for a while, forgetting God and thinking they had gained the land by their own virtue (Deuteronomy 8:11-20).

Joseph never forgot his utter dependence on God. He never forgot that God gave him the interpretations, that God had been molding and shaping him for a great work. Unlike Herod who was willing to receive undue praise (Acts 12:20-23), Joseph pointed to God.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for all You have done for me. Thank You for my abilities and my blessings. Help me, Father, never to forget that I am nothing apart from You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I give glory to God for what He has done for me? Do I selfishly take credit for what God actually does? Do I remember all I am and all I have come from God?



**January 15**

**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 42:29-45:15

**Memory Verses: Genesis 45:4–5** So Joseph said to his brothers, “Come near to me, please.” And they came near. And he said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.”

**Song:** [“God of Our Fathers”](#)

God’s role in our lives is always much greater than we imagine. He knows us so intimately. He shapes and molds us into the people He can use. When God has a great task, He chooses a person. When God finds the person, He equips him with what He needs.

God sees what we cannot see and knows what we cannot know. We think our decisions make an impact, not realizing God is still in charge. Joseph’s jealous and angry brothers thought they could deal with their anger by selling Joseph into slavery, but God’s ways are bigger than ours. He had a bigger work for Joseph than any of his brothers realized.

They thought to do Joseph harm, not realizing they were setting into motion a plan God had to preserve life. God used their malice to put his man in place to preserve the family and to fulfill the promises.

We must not doubt God’s power to work His will in our lives. God can even use some of our most negative experiences for good (Romans 8:28). Were the brothers cruel? No doubt. Did they cause harm to Joseph and their father? Assuredly. But God is able to use their cruelty for their salvation. The Father in Heaven used the cross to bring about our salvation. We can only marvel at God’s ability to turn the ugliness of man in the beauty of salvation.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for having the power to turn what is evil into good for our lives. Thank you for sending the Lord Jesus to die for my sins. I’m so sorry He died, but I’m so thankful He loves me that much. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I trust in God’s wisdom and power to turn the ugly experiences of my life into some good? Can I be mature and gracious enough to those who do me wrong to see how God’s purpose will actually do good from it?



**January 16**

**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 45:16-48:7

**Memory Verses: Genesis 47:8–10** And Pharaoh said to Jacob, “How many are the days of the years of your life?” And Jacob said to Pharaoh, “The days of the years of my sojourning are 130 years. Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their sojourning.” And Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went out from the presence of Pharaoh.”

**Song:** [“The Sands of Time”](#)

It’s hard to imagine living 130 years. This is twice the 65 years many people live. God blessed Jacob had lived a long life, though not as long as Abraham (175 years) or Isaac (180 years). Still, Jacob says of the days of his life two things, few and evil.

No matter how long one lives, the days seem to pass quickly. The older one gets the faster a year seems to pass. One barely gets used to writing the number of one year till the next comes to pass. The days of 130 years at 365 days per year number 47,450. In spite of being so many, Jacob saw them as few. Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed as a few days because of his love for her.

Those who are older remember important events many decades before as if they were yesterday. Moses in Psalm 90:12 said, “So teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom.” If our days are few, we must use them for good and not ill.

Jacob recalled the evil of his days. He may have recalled the disagreement with Esau, the treachery of Laban, the death of Rachel, and the loss of Joseph. One cannot live without the heartaches of life; time and chance overtake us all (Ecclesiastes 9:11-12).

Yet Jacob as the heel grabber still knew the promise of God and found blessing in the end. He was able to see once again his son Joseph and his grandsons Manasseh and Ephraim. Jacob is Israel, and the nation as his descendants carries his name to this day.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for each day. Help us to use it wisely. Help us to see all the good we can do to honor Your name. Help us to be grateful for what you do for us. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I look back and see the good God does for me? Do I use each day to bless the lives of others? Do I thank God for what He has done?



**January 17**

**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 48:8-50:26; Exodus 1

**Memory Verses: Genesis 49:10** “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.”

**Song:** [“Jesus, Name Above All Names”](#)

The first king of Israel was Saul, who came from the tribe of Benjamin; but because of his sin, God sought for “a man after His own heart” and took the kingdom from Saul (1 Samuel 13:11-14). In time David, the son of Jesse, of the tribe of Judah became king (1 Samuel 16:11-13).

The Lord God promised David, “When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. “He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever” (2 Samuel 7:12–13).

Many scholars take Genesis 49:10 to be a Messianic prophecy, arguing that the name “Shiloh” is a reference to Jesus. In this context the word points to the “one to whom the rule rightfully belongs.” Colossians 1:15-18 reveals the Lord Jesus is the firstborn of all creation, the one to whom all things belong. All things were made by Him and for Him. He is to have first place in everything. Luke 1:33 reveals that He is the One who would set up a kingdom that would last forever.

Though Jacob did not understand all the details that would follow, God prophesied through him the wonderful kingdom the Lord Jesus would set up. That kingdom is the church.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for the church, that wonderful and everlasting kingdom belonging to Jesus our Lord. Thank you for caring for Your people enough to give us such a great and loving King. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I treasure my citizenship in the eternal kingdom of the Lord? Do I give the Lord Jesus first place in every aspect of my life?





January 18

**Scripture Reading:** Exodus 2:1-5:9

**Memory Verses: Exodus 2:23–25** “Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God. So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice of them.”

**Song:** [“Yes, for Me, for Me He Careth”](#)

God heard their groaning, God remembered, God saw, and God knew. Life can become harsh over time and cause us to wonder if God hears our prayers and what he will do about the needs we have. God still hears our groaning, still remembers His promise to care for our needs, still sees what is happening and knows what we need.

The Lord Jesus said “Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things” (Matthew 6:31–32).

The heavenly Father knew the plight of Israel in Egypt and had been preparing Moses to deliver them. Though Moses offered five excuses why he should not obey God in delivering Israel and taking them to the promised land, God was determined to work His will in the matter. Though Moses wanted someone else to do the job, God sent him.

God’s ways are wiser than our own and past tracing out (Romans 11:33-36). Simply because God doesn’t do things when we want it done or how we want it done does not mean He is doing nothing. God saved Israel with a mighty hand, and no one could doubt that God is the Lord. Don’t give up on God. He took eighty years to shape Moses for a great work, and He may be acting in ways beyond our understanding.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for doing all you have done. I know that everything I am and have come from Your hand. I know that you have not finished with me yet. Help me to be patient and to trust in Your wisdom and power to fulfill Your promises. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I trust God? Am I patient with God? Do I think God must work only in the ways that make sense to me? How have I seen God working in my life?



January 19

**Scripture Reading:** Exodus 5:10-8:15

**Memory Verses: Exodus 7:3–4** “But I will harden Pharaoh’s heart that I may multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. “When Pharaoh does not listen to you, then I will lay My hand on Egypt and bring out My hosts, My people the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt by great judgments.”

**Song:** [“Humble Yourselves”](#)

There is a bigger picture here than just one man. You might think God is somewhat cruel to harden Pharaoh’s heart, knowing the Egyptians will suffer because of that rebellious spirit. The text speaks of God hardening Pharaoh’s heart (7:22), and Pharaoh hardening his own heart (8:15). But the purpose of the hardening was twofold: (1) that God may multiply signs and wonders in the land of Egypt (7:3); and (2) that Pharaoh and Egypt may know that God is the Lord.

Pharaoh blasphemed the Lord when Moses said, “ Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘Let My people go that they may celebrate a feast to Me in the wilderness.’” Pharaoh sarcastically replied, “Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and besides I will not let Israel go” (Exodus 5:1-2). Pharaoh’s arrogant and rebellious spirit led him into much suffering through the ten plagues.

The water turned to blood, but Pharaoh’s heart was hardened. Frogs filled the land, and Pharaoh hardened his heart against the Lord and Moses. His hard heart meant that he would not listen to the Lord. It took ten plagues before Pharaoh came to understand “there is no one like the Lord our God” (8:10).

I look into my own stubborn heart and wonder what it will take for me to learn that the God of Israel is the one and only Lord. The Lord disciplines those He loves (Hebrews 12:5-11).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for loving me enough to discipline me when I most need it. Father, break my stubborn will that I may be a humble servant always. Forgive my willful ways, and help me to love You and devote myself to You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I fight with God over things I don’t like? Do I require God to prove Himself to me? Do I harden my heart and stop my ears to the things I don’t want to hear?



**January 20**

**Scripture Reading:** Exodus 8:16-11:10

**Memory Verses: Exodus 8:22–23** “But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where My people are living, so that no swarms of flies will be there, in order that you may know that I, the LORD, am in the midst of the land. “I will put a division between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign will occur.”

**Song:** [“Lord, We Come Before Thee Now”](#)

While the Egyptian magicians with their secret arts were able to make serpents, turn water to blood, and to make frogs, they were unable to make the gnats (7:22; 8:7, 18). They did not have God’s power. They told Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God” (8:19). But Pharaoh, hardened of heart, would not listen.

God distinguished the land of Goshen, where the children Israel were, from the rest of Egypt. No swarms of insects plagued God’s people(8:22); God protected them; and all of Egypt saw the difference. The Lord made a difference with the pestilence on the livestock (9:4), a difference with the hail and fire (9:26), a difference with light in the plague of darkness (10:23), and a difference in the death of the firstborn (11:7).

Those among Pharaoh’s servants who feared God and listened to the word of the Lord kept their cattle and families safe from the hail (9:20-21).

God always distinguishes those who fear and obey from those who do not. Every spiritual blessing is in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). Following the way of the Lord is the most important decision and way of life anyone can choose. Pharaoh’s hardened heart and devotion to false gods only caused him pain and destruction. He had to learn the hard way that the God of the Hebrews is the Lord, and there is no one else like Him.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for caring for us each day and for Your grace. Keep our hearts tender, humble, and obedient to Your will. Help us to fear and serve You and You alone. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I realize the difference between following and not following the Lord? Do I fear God enough to listen to Him, even when it is hard?



**January 21**

**Scripture Reading:** Exodus 12:1-14:20

**Memory Verses: Exodus 12:22–23** “You shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood which is in the basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and the two doorposts; and none of you shall go outside the door of his house until morning. For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to smite you.”

**Song:** [“Nothing But the Blood”](#)

Each household of the children of Israel was to take an unblemished male lamb, a year old, from the sheep or the goats. They were to kill it and take some of the blood to sprinkle on the doorposts and the lintel (cross piece above the door) of their houses.

They were to eat hurriedly the entire roasted lamb that night with unleavened bread and bitter herbs (endive). They were to burn the leftovers. They were to eat with their loins girded, sandals on their feet, and a staff in their hand.

That night the Lord struck down all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast and executed judgment against all the gods of Egypt (12:12). Where the blood of Passover was, there was life; but where there is no blood, the first-born died.

In our walk with the Lord, we must have the atoning blood. Our Passover is Christ (1 Corinthians 5:7), and we are cleansed through His blood (1 John 1:7; Ephesians 1:7). Because the blood of Christ has atoned for us and cleansed us, the Father no longer sees our sins. Instead, our cleansing means our names are in the Lamb’s book of life, and we have the opportunity to live and walk with God forever.

We too need the blood; nothing else will save us.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for being willing to sacrifice Your Son upon the cross to atone for our sins. We are so grateful His blood can be applied to our souls so that we may . In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I see Christ as my Passover? Has the blood of Christ been applied to my soul (Revelation 1:5; Acts 22:16)?



January 22

**Scripture Reading:** Exodus 14:21-17:16

**Memory Verses: Exodus 16:35** “The sons of Israel ate the manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate the manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan.”

**Song:** [“Is Thy Heart Right with God?”](#)

From Ramses to Sinai, the Lord tested Israel. When the Lord saved them and they passed through the Red Sea, the people “believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses” (Exodus 14:31), but their faith turned to grumbling.

They grumbled about water, and the Lord answered their grumbling at Mara (15:23-25) and at Rephidim (17:1-7). They grumbled about food, and God gave them manna and quail (16:13-30). The sons of Israel ate manna for forty years, until they crossed into Canaan (16:35). Free food for the gathering, but they still grumbled.

But the people thirsted there for water; and they grumbled against Moses and said, “Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” (Exodus 17:3).

Contentment in God’s providence is not always easy to achieve. We always seem to long for more. The man who loves money can never get enough (Ecclesiastes 5:10). Rather than looking back at what God did in their crossing of the Red Sea, the Israelites could only see their present plight and grumble at God. Never enough.

Paul drew his strength to cope with the stresses of life by drawing close to God (Philippians 4:4-13). He found the secret to contentment was in a close relationship with and trust in God, not in things.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for all my blessings, spiritual and material. Help me to trust that You will supply all my needs according to Your riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Father, close my mouth, when I am tempted to grumble. Reassure my heart. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I grumble when I don’t get my way, when I don’t get what I want when I want it, or when I feel I have been slighted? Do I trust God to provide all my needs? Am I dependent on God? Do I appreciate what He has done for me?



January 23

**Scripture Reading:** Exodus 18:1-21:21

**Memory Verses: Exodus 19:3–6** Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to Myself. Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.”

**Song:** [“Great Is Thy Faithfulness”](#)

A covenant is a legal binding relationship, wherein two parties pledge loyalty to each other. In a covenant with God, God makes promises and the people pledge obedience. Such was the covenant God made with Israel at Sinai. The Ten Commandments are the words of the covenant God made with Israel (Exodus 34:27-28).

When two parties pledge loyalty in a covenant, they belong to one another from that day and forever. The Lord’s possession of Israel meant His blessing and protection. The people pledged, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do!” (19:8), but they quickly forgot their promise (Exodus 32) by making a golden calf.

God never failed to keep His promises, but men often do. They forget, they grow weak, they get caught up in the daily grind, or they turn their hearts elsewhere. Their former pledge is broken.

The Ten Commandments were indeed the Lord’s commandments. Keeping them was an act of love and devotion sealed by the covenant both parties entered. Though we are not under this covenant made at Sinai (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:8-13), we too are in a covenant with God through the blood of Jesus Christ. Let us be faithful to our promises.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for giving us an opportunity to be Your people through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Help us to give ourselves fully to You forever and never forget what we have pledged. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I keep my commitments to God? Am I faithful to the covenant ratified by the blood of Jesus Christ?





**January 24**

**Scripture Reading:** Exodus 21:22-25:9

**Memory Verses: Exodus 23:7-9** “Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent or the righteous, for I will not acquit the guilty. “You shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and subverts the cause of the just. “You shall not oppress a stranger, since you yourselves know the feelings of a stranger, for you also were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

**Song:** [“Love Divine”](#)

The Lord Jesus taught simply, “In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 7:12). Today’s reading confirms this.

God is watching, so don’t mistreat others. Neglect the poor, and God notices. Mistreat the widow or the orphan, and God sees. “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth” spoke for justice in those early days. The victim was not to overreact by inflicting more punishment on the offender than he received.

God made it clear: “I will not acquit the guilty” (Exodus 23:7). The abuser who perverts justice, makes a false charge, oppresses a stranger, or serves other gods will have no place with God. The neglectful man who digs a pit and forgets to cover it, the person who carelessly starts a fire, the borrower who fails to protect what he borrowed, and the thief who breaks in, each of them puts himself in peril.

Commitment to God includes commitment to our neighbor. Faithfulness to God means treating our neighbor the way we wish to be treated.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for showing us how to treat others, and for protecting those who cannot protect themselves from people who abuse. Hear their cry, Father, and help them through the difficult times. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I false charge or run roughshod over others? Do I remember that God sees everything I do? Do I realize God will recompense me for my deeds, good or bad?



**January 25**

**Scripture Reading:** Exodus 25:10-27:21

**Memory Verses:** Exodus 25:9 “According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it.” Exodus 25:40 “See that you make them after the pattern for them, which was shown to you on the mountain.”

**Song:** [“O Lord, Our Lord”](#)

When God sets a pattern, He expects His people to follow that pattern. God laid out numerous specifics for the tabernacle and called Oholiab and Bezalel (Exodus 31:6) to do and to oversee the actual construction of each detail.

God chose the materials and the sizes. God ordered the size of the tabernacle, the kinds of clasps, the kinds of curtains, and what each part was made of. He left nothing to the guess of the artisans. He knew exactly what He wanted, revealed exactly what He wanted, and expected the craftsmen to follow the pattern diligently.

“And Moses examined all the work and behold, they had done it; just as the Lord had commanded, this they had done. So Moses blessed them” (Exodus 39:43).

God cares about details and blesses those who follow details. We should not suppose God takes no notice when people vary from His teaching or His instructions. Every living thing God ever made has a pattern. The sun, the earth, and the moon follow a pattern. Every leaf on every tree has a pattern. Every cell in a living organism has a pattern.

Let’s do “just as the Lord had commanded,” so that we too may receive a blessing.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for ordering our bodies, so that we may function properly. Thank you for the pattern of the seasons, for the pattern of night and day. Help me, Father, to follow Your instructions, that I may please You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I follow the details of God’s instructions? Do I check my work to see that it is correct?



**January 26**

**Scripture Reading:** Exodus 28-29

**Memory Verses: Exodus 28:30** “You shall put in the breastpiece of judgment the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be over Aaron’s heart when he goes in before the LORD; and Aaron shall carry the judgment of the sons of Israel over his heart before the LORD continually.”

**Song:** “[Holy, Holy, Holy!](#)”

God took special care to instruct Moses and his sons to dress in a way that befits their holy place. “You shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. You shall speak to all the skillful persons whom I have endowed with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron’s garments to consecrate him, that he may minister as priest to Me” (Exodus 28:2–3).

Some people say God does not care how people dress. They say He only looks at the heart. But is that true? Would God have spent so much time describing what holy dress is, if it mattered not to Him? In this case, their dress was for beauty and for His glory (28:40). God took their dress very seriously.

“They shall be on Aaron and on his sons when they enter the tent of meeting, or when they approach the altar to minister in the holy place, so that they do not incur guilt and die. It shall be a statute forever to him and to his descendants after him” (Exodus 28:43).

In all times in all places, God takes the worship and devotion people pay to Him seriously. We must at all times show the deepest respect and awe for our Holy God (Hebrews 12:28-29).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for helping us to understand how holy and majestic You truly are. Help us to honor You in our hearts and life. May our words and our actions glorify Your name. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I honor God by my words, my dress, and my behavior? Do I regard my ministry to God as a holy work?



January 27

**Scripture Reading:** Exodus 30-32

**Memory Verses: Exodus 31:15-17** ‘For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, holy to the LORD; whoever does any work on the sabbath day shall surely be put to death. So the sons of Israel shall observe the sabbath, to celebrate the sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.’ “It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day He ceased *from labor*, and was refreshed.”

**Song:** [“God Is the Fountain Whence”](#)

The Sabbath carried a special relationship between God and the sons of Israel. They were not to work on the Sabbath, because God rested on the seventh day of creation. He ceased from labor and was refreshed. He knew the sons of Israel needed occasional rest in order to be refreshed. The Sabbath was God’s gift to this new nation.

God gave the Sabbath for another reason as well. “You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to observe the Sabbath day” (Deuteronomy 5:15). The Lord never bound the sign of the Sabbath on the other nations such as Egypt. The Sabbath marked them as His people.

The Sabbath was a sign between Israel and God and part of the covenant (Exodus 34:27-28). Moses said in Deuteronomy 5:2–3, “The LORD our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, with all those of us alive here today.” God never bound the keeping of the Sabbath prior to Israel’s departure from Egypt and did not bind it upon those Gentiles outside the covenant made at Horeb.

Our Sabbath rest is not a day of the week but the rest God has prepared for us in heaven (Hebrews 4:1-11; Revelation 14:13).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for the work we have in this life and the rest we look forward to in the next life. Help us to be faithful and to hold fast to our faith firm to the end. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I take time to rest and be refreshed occasionally? Do I hold firm in my faith? Do people recognize my relationship with God by my life?



**January 28**

**Scripture Reading:** Exodus 33:1-35:29

**Memory Verses: Exodus 35:21–22** “Everyone whose heart stirred him and everyone whose spirit moved him came and brought the LORD’S contribution for the work of the tent of meeting and for all its service and for the holy garments. Then all whose hearts moved them, both men and women, came and brought brooches and earrings and signet rings and bracelets, all articles of gold; so did every man who presented an offering of gold to the LORD.”

**Song:** “[All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name](#)” (Coronation)

The Lord asked for contributions from the people to build the tabernacle or tent of meeting (Exodus 35:4-9). God asked for gold, silver, and bronze. He asked for blue, purple, and scarlet material, fine linen, goat’s hair, and rams’ skins dyed red, and porpoise skins, and acacia wood.

He asked for oil, spices, and fragrant incense. The Lord asked for onyx stones and setting stones for the ephod and for the breastpiece.

Wherever small or large, the people’s hearts moved them to give what they had in order to furnish the tabernacle with the very best. All gifts were voluntary. God wants gifts from those who are willing to give. He loves the cheerful giver, who gives because he wants to see the Lord blessed and glorified (2 Corinthians 9:6-7).

God does not want the compelled gift or the begrudged gift; He wants the heart of the giver who loves the Lord and wants to give (2 Corinthians 8:1-5). When God has the heart of the person giving, every gift brings a joy. When God doesn’t have the heart of a giver, every gift is a burden.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for giving me all that I have and making me all that I am. I owe everything to You. Thank you for giving me the pleasure of loving You and giving to You. May my gifts be a pleasure for You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I give cheerfully or begrudgingly? Do I thank God for the opportunity to give? Does God have my heart?



**January 29**

**Scripture Reading:** Exodus 35:30-37:2

**Memory Verses: Exodus 36:4-5** “And all the skillful men who were performing all the work of the sanctuary came, each from the work which he was performing, and they said to Moses, The people are bringing much more than enough for the construction work which the LORD commanded us to perform.”

**Song:** [“Walking in Sunlight”](#)

How thankful we are for our blessings. The gifts God gives to us were not merely for our benefit. God desires that we use them for His service. “As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen” (1 Peter 4:10-11).

“Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness” (Romans 12:6-8).

The people lovingly, freely, and abundantly used their gifts and their resources to build the tabernacle. They gave so much they had to be restrained (Exodus 36:6). Wouldn't it be wonderful if we had that kind of zeal to do the Lord's work today?

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for all the blessings and talents You have given me. Help me to use them in Your service. Help me never to hold back what I can do to glorify Your name. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I give generously or sparingly? Do I use my talents and skills to serve the Lord? Does my heart belong to the Lord?



**January 30**

**Scripture Reading:** Exodus 38:1-40:16

**Memory Verses: Exodus 39:32** “Thus all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was completed; and the sons of Israel did according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses; so they did.”

**Song:** [“Lord, We Come Before Thee Now”](#)

The concept of obedience begins with listening to the Lord. The Lord revealed to Moses the pattern for the tabernacle. Moses informed the people. The people did everything according to the pattern. “So the sons of Israel did all the work according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses. And Moses examined all the work and behold, they had done it; just as the LORD had commanded, this they had done. So Moses blessed them” (Exodus 39:42–43).

If you do not hear, you will not know. If you do not know, you cannot obey. Listen, so that you will know what God commands. Do what He says.

The phrases “just as the Lord commands” and “did all according to that the Lord commanded” can be found frequently from Exodus through Deuteronomy. They are actually phrases that distinguish those who obey the Lord and those who do not. To do “just as” the Lord commands means one does not add or subtract from the commands and one does not edit the command to suit oneself. One does only what was commanded. That’s obedience.

The Scriptures regard Moses as a faithful (Hebrews 2:2-5), because He built the tabernacle according to the pattern (Hebrews 8:5). Jesus was even more faithful (John 12:49-50) in His commitment to Father as a Son. May these examples encourage our hearts to obey faithfully and not move away from the commandments given to us.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for instructing us in the way we should go. Help us to follow You rather than seek our own ways. Help us to listen carefully and obey faithfully. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I double check to see what I am doing is exactly what God commands? Do I listen carefully to the instructions of the Lord?





**January 31**

**Scripture Reading:** Exodus 40:17-38; Leviticus 1-4

**Memory Verses: Leviticus 4:27–28** “Now if anyone of the common people sins unintentionally in doing any of the things which the LORD has commanded not to be done, and becomes guilty, if his sin which he has committed is made known to him, then he shall bring for his offering a goat, a female without defect, for his sin which he has committed.”

**Song:** [“Lead Me to Calvary”](#)

It is a shocking thing to find out what we have been doing is sinful. We didn’t know what we did was wrong. We didn’t mean to sin. But we have sinned, and yes even that kind of sin needs a sin offering. An anointed priest is to offer a bull to the Lord, the congregation is to offer a bull, a leader is to offer a goat, and a common person is to offer a goat or lamb.

Not any bull will do; it must be without defect, and its sacrifice is quite elaborate. The text details what is to be done with the fat, the skin, the entrails and the flesh of the offering. “The priest shall also put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense which is before the LORD in the tent of meeting; and all the blood of the bull he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering which is at the doorway of the tent of meeting” (Leviticus 4:7).

When one considers the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins, it seems pretty simple as a sacrifice. Under the old covenant, men made sacrifices for their sins. Under the new covenant, God gave the blood sacrifice in Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:23-10:14). Our response to that sacrifice is not so elaborate, but it is not easy. Committed faith, utter repentance, willing confession, and obedient baptism seems simple, compared to the elaborate sin offerings of the old covenant. Yet God demands in our response a wholehearted love and willingness to take up a cross. Once we have committed to the Lord, there is no turning back. In that sense we are atoned by His blood, but make a full living sacrifice of ourselves as a response of commitment. Have you?

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for sending Jesus to the cross to atone for my sins. Help me to make a full commitment of faith and love to You. Help me to bear my cross so that I might glorify You, Oh Father. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I love God without reservation? Have I taken up my cross to follow the Lord? Do I realize what sacrifice was given for me that I might be forgiven?



# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

February 1

**Scripture Reading: Leviticus 5-7**

**Memory Verse:**

**Leviticus 5:1 (ESV)** “If anyone sins in that he hears a public adjuration to testify, and though he is a witness, whether he has seen or come to know the matter, yet does not speak, he shall bear his iniquity.”

**Song: “[There's Something About That Name](#)”**

When we know something that deeply affects other people, God expects us to speak up. It is cruel indeed to remain silent when what we know may harm another. In ancient Israel trials demanding testimony were often capital cases, where the defendant's life was at stake. To remain silent when a person's life or even his property was at risk was criminal in God's eyes. Of how much greater value is the soul?

People need to hear the gospel to save their souls (Rom. 10:14-17). It is more than cruel or criminal; it is damning to remain silent when another's soul is at stake. A Christian who fails to tell the gospel of Christ to another in order to save his soul from death greatly sins against his brother or sister. He greatly sins against God, and he greatly sins against himself by refusing his responsibility.

Of course, the gospel provides its own reason for telling. It is good news of forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life. The gospel introduces us to the love of God and his provision for our souls. Will you not tell it today?

**Prayer:** *Oh Father, open to us a door for the Word, that we may speak clearly to the lost as we ought to speak. Help us, heavenly Father, to reach each one with the message they most need. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

**Thought Questions:** When did you last speak a good word about the Lord Jesus? What are you doing to help the lost see their sad condition?



# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

February 2

**Scripture Reading: Leviticus 8:1-11:8**

**Memory Verse:**

**Leviticus 10:3 (ESV)** Then Moses said to Aaron, “This is what the LORD has said, ‘Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.’” And Aaron held his peace.

**Song: “Holy, Holy, Holy!”**

For eight days Aaron and his sons, Nadab and Abihu, did “just as the Lord commanded” during the days these priests were consecrating themselves and the tabernacle (see chapters 8 and 9). The glory of the Lord appeared to all the people gathered near the tabernacle, fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the pieces of fat on the altar. When the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces (9:23-24).

At this point the sons of Aaron decided to take the matter into their own hands, acting presumptuously without authority. They each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, which he had not commanded them. And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD (10:1-2).

Such harsh punishment is shocking, but God was making a point. Those who draw near will treat God as holy by giving proper reverence to His commandments. We should not worship God any way we please. Sanctifying Him means that we listen and respect his instructions. Nadab and Abihu did not give him that respect. We must not make this mistake.

**Prayer:** “Oh Holy Father, may our hearts always treat You as Holy and Divine. Keep back your servants from presumptuous sins. Thank you, Father, for always loving us and forgiving us. In Jesus' name, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** When I come to worship God, do I show him the proper respect? Can I find every thing I do in worship within the instructions of God, or have I acted on my own authority to develop my own forms of worship?



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February 3

**Scripture Reading: Leviticus 11:9-13:39**

**Memory Verse:**

**Leviticus 11:2-3 (ESV)** “Speak to the people of Israel, saying, These are the living things that you may eat among all the animals that are on the earth. Whatever parts the hoof and is cloven-footed and chews the cud, among the animals, you may eat.”

**Song:** [“Take Time to Be Holy”](#)

God makes distinctions. A postmodern culture doesn't like to make distinctions, because they do not wish to think in terms of “right” or “wrong.” A television personality says that there is no such thing as sin. A television minister suggests that the biggest obstacle to evangelism is to suggest people are sinners or that sin exists.

In light of such beliefs, one can say neither the television personality nor the minister takes God's word seriously enough to believe and teach what it teaches. God distinguishes right from wrong, the broad from the narrow, the wise from the foolish, and the saved from the lost. At the end of time, the angels will separate the righteous from the wicked. Each has a distinct destiny.

A pure person will refrain from the impure that he might please God. He will intentionally discipline his life to keep from offending God. God is holy, and those who love God choose to live holy lives that they may remain close to God. They keep themselves in the love of God (Jude 21).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father and Lord, help me to remain pure and refrain from evil. Deliver me from temptation and forgive my transgressions. May my heart always be inclined to please You. In Jesus' name, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Have I tested my heart and mind to see if any impure or negative thought is tempting me? Can I live any way I please and still please the Father in heaven? What does it mean to be holy?



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February 4

**Scripture Reading:** Leviticus 13:40-14:57

**Memory Verse:**

**Leviticus 14:8** And he who is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes and shave off all his hair and bathe himself in water, and he shall be clean. And after that he may come into the camp, but live outside his tent seven days.

**Song:** [“Redeemed”](#)

It's pretty hard to imagine how difficult it must have been to have leprosy in the wilderness of Palestine more than 3000 years ago. Lepers were unclean. Their clothes and their houses were unclean. They had to hold their hands over the lips and announce to any who drew near that they were unclean.

They could not worship in the tabernacle or later in the temple as long as they were unclean. Nor could they worship in the synagogues in the days of Jesus. A leprous person suffered physically, socially, and spiritually. They lived lives separated from their families, from their religious support group, and from their places of worship.

But when the priest proclaimed a person as clean, he or she could resume their place in the family and in the worship. To be “clean” was a great blessing. We are blessed today to be clean by the blood of Christ in the washing of regeneration (Titus 3:3-7). In baptism God washes away our sins, and we saved and added to His church and family (Gal. 3:26-27). How wonderful to be in fellowship with God and clean from sin!

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, we praise and glorify Your Name, because You have cleansed us and redeemed us by the precious blood of Jesus our Lord. May we ever live in gratitude for the grace and mercy you had on us to make us clean in Your sight. In the name of our Savior we pray, Amen.

**Thought Questions:** Unclean people in ancient times had to wash. Are you washed in the blood of the Lord? Have you been redeemed (1 Peter 1:18-20)?



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February 5

**Scripture Reading:** Leviticus 15:1-18:18

**Memory Verse:**

**Leviticus 15:31 (ESV)** “Thus you shall keep the people of Israel separate from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness by defiling my tabernacle that is in their midst.”

**Song:** [“Purer in Heart, O God”](#)

The Law valued purity, purity of heart in dedication to God and purity of life in remaining free from the things that defile. To enter the tabernacle with uncleanness would bring about death.

The Temple Mount in Jerusalem was surrounded by numerous ritual baths (*mikveh*). Those who approached for worship must be ceremonially clean to enter. The cities and villages throughout ancient Israel also so that when the Jews came to worship in their synagogues, they would not defile themselves.

Purity is still a necessity for Christians. The things that defile us today are not what we taste or touch but what we think (Mark 7:15). The things that defile a man originate in the heart (Mt. 15:19). If we are to be the people of God, we too must not touch the unclean thing (2 Cor. 6:16-18).

**Prayer:** “Oh Righteous Father, keep me from temptation and deliver me from evil. Help me to keep my heart and my life free from the things of this world, which are perishing. Help me say no to my own lusts. Forgive my sins, so that I may come before you without stain. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**Thought Questions:** Are you allowing impure thoughts to dominate your life? What movies do you see? What books do you read? What television programs do you watch? Are you spiritually stronger or weaker for what you allow in your heart?



# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

February 6

**Scripture Reading:** Leviticus 18:19-21:24

**Memory Verse:**

**Leviticus 19:2** “Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.”

**Song:** [“Holy Is the Lord”](#)

The concept of Holiness is often missing in our world today. We are to be holy, because we belong to the Lord God; and the Lord our God is holy. Holiness reflects that which is uncommon; God has set it apart for His specific purposes and His service. God condemns anyone who profanes that which is holy.

The holiness of God must never be taken for granted. The Lord our God is not common or profane. He is above evil; He cannot be tempted and does not tempt man with evil (James 1:13-15). His eyes are too pure to look upon or approve of evil (Habakkuk 1:13). Such holiness is what makes Him uniquely good and without sin. We are sanctified (set apart as holy) by the blood of Jesus, not by our own works (Heb. 10:8-10). Yet we are called to sanctify ourselves; we are to strive for the holiness necessary to see the Lord (Heb. 12:14).

Holiness is not merely a separation from the common. The doctrine of holiness speaks to how we identify ourselves as a holy people (1 Peter 2:9-10) and how we live as a holy people (1 Pet. 1:13-17). Doctrine always matters in life and ethics. What we believe defines how we will live. Holiness calls us to a higher, nobler life, separated from the ungodly and the worldly.

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, help us to live holy lives that glorify your name. We know that You are Holy. Help us to live higher, nobler lives than the world lives. Transform our hearts and minds into conformity with Your Son Jesus. In the name of our Lord Jesus we pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Am I living a holy life? Do I treat God, His word, His will, and His ways as holy? Do I confuse the holy with the profane?





# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

February 7

**Scripture Reading:** Leviticus 22-23

**Memory Verse:**

**Leviticus 22:31-32** “So you shall keep my commandments and do them: I am the LORD. And you shall not profane my holy name, that I may be sanctified among the people of Israel.

**Song:** [“I Need Thee Every Hour”](#)

Though many people today think of “obedience” and “commandments” as mundane and unfeeling, God sees them as something different. How the people sanctified or set God apart from the common was through keeping his commandments.

It is a wrong assumption to think that keeping a commandment is rote, unfeeling, or unnecessary in our relationship with God. In fact, even the Lord Jesus said more than once that the means by which we love Him is by keeping His commandments (John 14:15, 21, 23; 15:10). For those who love God, those commandments are not grievous (1 Jn. 5:3).

Every devoted Israelite recited the *Shema* daily, a quotation from Deuteronomy 6:4-9. Within this passage loving God with all the heart, soul, and might was merely breath away from keeping the words commanded of the Law on their hearts and diligently teaching them to their children. Individuals become Christians by being obedient from the heart to the divine doctrine they received (Rom. 6:16-18). Obedience from the heart is how we relate to God, not merely some appendage to a doctrinal statement.

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (John 14:15)

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, help us always to demonstrate our love to you, not merely assume it. Help us Father to let Your great love melt our hearts, so that we may respond in obedience out of love. This we pray fervently in the name of the Lord Jesus, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Have I been stubborn in heart or soul in refusing to keep the commandments of God? Have I loved God only when I agreed with His commandments but failed to show my love when I disagree with Him? Can people see in my life by my attitude and behavior that I love God?



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February 8

**Scripture Reading:** Leviticus 24:1-26:13

**Memory Verse:**

**Leviticus 25:10** And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to his property and each of you shall return to his clan.

**Song:** [“Sing to Me of Heaven”](#)

The celebration of Jubilee was a great blessing to Israel. Each man returns to his possessions; slaves are free; Jubilee brought great rejoicing. According to Parson's Bible Dictionary, Israel in the year of Jubilee found these blessings:

1. It would prevent the accumulation of land on the part of a few to the detriment of the community at large.
2. It would render it impossible for any one to be born to absolute poverty, since every one had his hereditary land.
3. It would preclude those inequalities which are produced by extremes of riches and poverty, and which make one man domineer over another.
4. It would utterly do away with slavery.
5. It would afford a fresh opportunity to those who were reduced by adverse circumstances to begin again their career of industry in the patrimony which they had temporarily forfeited.
6. It would periodically rectify the disorders which crept into the state in the course of time, preclude the division of the people into nobles and plebeians, and preserve the theocracy inviolate.

God knew how to be fair, and Jubilee brought great hope to all Israel. He also knows how to bring us hope and an abundant life (John 10:10). Let us rejoice in Him (Philippians 4:4).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, we are so grateful that you are a good God, who provides every good and perfect gift for our lives. We rejoice in our salvation and in the hope of being free with you forever. Lord, keep us close always to Your side. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Have I ever taken advantage of another? Is there hope of their redemption? Have I ever held a grudge? Have I ever needed redemption?



# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

February 9

**Scripture Reading:** Leviticus 26:14 – Numbers 1:1-41

**Memory Verse:**

**Leviticus 27:30** “Every tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the LORD’S; it is holy to the LORD.”

**Song:** [“All to Jesus I Surrender”](#)

The tithes of Israel belonged to God; they paid for the service of the tabernacle and provided support for the priestly Levites. Though the money was in the pockets of the Israelites, God expected them to pay their tithes. Tithe money was holy, set apart for the service of God. Israel was not to spend it upon themselves.

Whatever I am, whatever I have enjoyed, whatever I have possessed, and whatever I will be has come to me by the mercy and grace of God. James 1:17 says that every “good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”

It is easy to forget that I myself belong to the Lord. I am His bond servant. I serve at His pleasure. I am mine no more. “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Giving to God is a means of recognizing His place as Sovereign Ruler in our lives. We can give cheerfully not slavishly, because we know that our gifts show love and devotion to our loving Father.

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, we thank You that you have provided for our needs each day, and we give our hearts and our praise. Father we know that we belong to You body, soul, and spirit. May our lives glorify God. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do my friends know by my words and by my life that I am not my own but belong to the Lord? Have I ever robbed God of what actually belongs to Him?



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February 10

**Scripture Reading:** Numbers 1:42-3:32

**Memory Verse:**

**Numbers 2:34** Thus did the people of Israel. According to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so they camped by their standards, and so they set out, each one in his clan, according to his fathers' house.

**Song:** ["Our God, He Is Alive"](#)

The God who created the universe is indeed a God of order. All of life operates by laws and order, so it should not seem strange that God would arrange the camp of his people in an orderly way. The people of Israel did "according to all that the Lord God commanded Moses." They put themselves into the hands of the Lord to follow His will and His way.

They did not edit God first, did not vote on whether to accept His will, and did not rebel against him to camp where they wanted. They did just what the Lord said. This is easy to do for people who love and respect God to the point they are willing to serve Him.

When people, however, get to thinking too much of themselves, start looking at other gods, or think they have a better way than God, they will not be content to do as they were told. They will do as they please and try to justify their disobedience.

In other days Israel will show this human frailty, but here they are willing to trust God and obey His will. This is always the right way.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, help us to order our lives according to Your holy will and not feel that we may please ourselves. May our highest pleasure be in serving you. Thy will be done. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Am I willing to obey the Lord in everything, when I agree with Him and when I feel otherwise? Am I willing to obey the Lord when I do not understand why He asks me to do this or that? Have I ever considered myself wiser than God?



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February 11

**Scripture Reading:** Numbers 3:33-5:22

**Memory Verse:**

**Numbers 4:15** And when Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, as the camp sets out, after that the sons of Kohath shall come to carry these, but they must not touch the holy things, lest they die. These are the things of the tent of meeting that the sons of Kohath are to carry.

**Song:** [“Humble Yourselves”](#)

God makes distinctions. Only the Kohathites were to carry the ark. In years to come David would find out that one cannot with impunity violate the commandments of God (2 Samuel 6:5-7; 1 Chronicles 15:12-15).

Holy things are separated to God. The Kohathites could carry the ark and other holy things on poles or carrying frames, but they could not touch the holy things “lest they die.” If someone looks at God, that person will die (Exodus 33:20). Because these items share in God's divine holiness, they too were not to be treated as common (Numbers 4:17-20).

God makes distinctions in many things. Among Israelites only Levites could be priests. Because Jesus Christ was of the tribe of Judah, he could not serve as a Levitical priest in the tabernacle or the temple (Hebrews 7:13-14). Before we think of God as unfair to us by not allowing us to serve as we please, let us remember that the Son of God could not serve as a priest in the Temple.

Instead of criticizing God for making distinctions, we should rejoice in our own place in God's will and service. In Christianity every member of the Body, whatever the function, was needed and valued (1 Corinthians 12:14-26). Let us glory in how God has made us, instead of complaining that we are not something else.

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, help me to accept your will for my life and to do my best to serve you. Forgive me for foolishly envying others. Oh Father, may you always work through me in the way that pleases you most. In Jesus' name, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Am I an ear wishing to be an eye? A foot wishing to be a hand? Am I willing to accept the role God has given me in life? Am I content with the will of God in my life?



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February 12

**Scripture Reading:** Numbers 5:23-7:59

**Memory Verse:**

**Numbers 6:24-26** “The LORD bless you and keep you, the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.”

**Song:** [“The Lord Bless You and Keep You.”](#)

Blessings from the Lord comfort, restore, encourage, build up, and assure our hearts. One who has the blessing of the Lord has much, though his purse is empty. One who has not the blessing of the Lord is poor indeed, though his purse be filled with pearls and gold.

The Lord is the source of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17); every blessing comes down from the Father of lights. When the Lord blesses us, we are blessed indeed. When his face shines upon us and we live in his favor, all is well. We can have peace and security. God will meet our every need (Philippians 4:19).

When the Lord blesses and keeps, no one can harm. The Christian prays to the Father, and the Father sets a guard around his thoughts and heart (Philippians 4:6-7). Let us make our Father in heaven smile upon us by lives that please him and recognize his grace and love in our lives. How sad it would be to be so blessed and not treasure that blessing!

Peace of heart grows out of a right relationship with the Lord. When we wear His Name upon us, live with His favor, and enjoy His peace, we are truly blessed indeed!

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, keep me close to You. Let me wear Your Name and cause You joy by my life. Bless me, Oh Lord, and keep me from harm, that I may have peace all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I enjoy God's favor and blessing? Am I a blessing to the Lord? Have I lived in such a way that God would be pleased to place His Name upon me?



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February 13

**Scripture Reading:** Numbers 7:60-10:10

**Memory Verse:**

**Numbers 9:15** On the day that the tabernacle was set up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony. And at evening it was over the tabernacle like the appearance of fire until morning.

**Song:** [“He Leadeth Me”](#)

For forty years God led Israel through the wilderness by means of a covering of cloud by day and fire by night; this covering over the tabernacle was a signal to Israel when to camp and when to move. At the command of the Lord they set out, and at the command of the Lord they camp. When God wanted them to move, the covering would move. When God wanted them to camp, the covering would rest.

God's presence in our lives does not come today with a pillar of cloud or a pillar of fire. Today God speaks to us through His Son and leads us by His Word (Hebrews 1:1-3; John 12:48-50). Indeed, our bodies are a temple (a holy place), where the Spirit dwells (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)!

Knowing that God is near brings a great consolation to my life. He knows my hurts, my failures, my joys, and my victories. He sees everything I see and knows everything I know. God's presence reassures me of His devotion to me. His presence and holiness also give me reason to keep myself free from sin. I do not wish to disappoint Him but to follow where He leads.

Though we no longer move with a tabernacle, we do bear our crosses in his footsteps, walking that narrow way that leads to life. Let us watch and stay close to our Lord. Let us find our hope, our strength, and our peace in Him.

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, help me to imitate Your Son Jesus, to walk where He walks, to pray as He prayed, to love as He loved, and to give of myself as He gave. Oh Father, may I never forget You are with me always. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Have I considered lately the fact that I am in God's presence all the time wherever I go and whatever I do? Am I following the Lord's lead by obeying the instructions of the Bible? Am I willing to let God see what I see and go where I go? How close am I to God?





# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

February 14

**Scripture Reading:** Numbers 10:11-13:16

**Memory Verse:**

**Numbers 11:14** “I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me.”

**Song:** “[Father of Mercies](#)”

Facing our own humanity is not easy. We are all limited in intelligence, in wisdom, in strength, and in ability. There will always be loads beyond our ability to carry; we are human and need God for so many things. Some people eschew God and say that religion is just a crutch for the weak. Nonsense! We are all weak and in need of God.

Moses found that leading a couple of million people and dealing with all their needs and weaknesses was more than he could bear. Moses was so despondent that he further said, “If you will treat me like this, kill me at once, if I find favor in your sight, that I may not see my wretchedness” (11:15). Moses would rather die than live under the pressure.

Perhaps you've found yourself at the end of your rope. Don't despair; call on God. The Lord answered Moses' request by gathering 70 elders to help. God granted the people's request for meat in a way that showed his irritation at their doubt in his providence. God knew their needs and provided, but the people wanted more. How often we too want more than what is sufficient for our needs and like the rabble grumble against God. 1 Corinthians 10:1-12 reminds us that grumbling is as great sin as idolatry or immorality. Let us be thankful.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father in Heaven, help me to be content with what you have provided and not fill my heart with envy and forget you. Remind me, Father, of your love each day. I pray this in the name of my Lord Jesus, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Have I been content with what God has given me? Have I allowed envy of what others' possess to blind me to all the good God has done for me? Am I a thankful person?



IN  
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February 15

**Scripture Reading:** Numbers 13:17-15:21

**Memory Verse:**

**Numbers 13:30** But Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, “Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it.”

**Song:** [“Soldiers of Christ Arise”](#)

The people of Israel looked at the Canaanites and looked at themselves, but they forgot to look at God. The twelve spies returned with a bad report. It was bad because it was faithless. All they could see were the strong cities and the large people. They said, “we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them.” They forgot that God was larger and stronger.

Present circumstances can often blind us to eternal truths. Some folks get so caught up with the worldly culture or the worldly circumstances they forget there is another realm of reality. Forgetting God is never wise, and there are always consequences. Only faithful Joshua and Caleb were given the right to enter the Promised land. Israel wandered for 38 years in the wilderness, and many people died before their time because they doubted God.

Your doubts may lead you to lose a great opportunity to serve God. They may cost you the promises God has in store for you. Doubt robs one of hope and success. The “we can't” attitude always leads to failure. Faith leads to success.

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, keep us from doubt and fear. May our faith in You lead us to conquer our fears so that we may serve you well. Forgive our fear and doubts. Renew our faith. In Jesus' name, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Have I let my fears and doubts overwhelm my confidence in God? Have I seen myself like a grasshopper? Have I so concentrated on my weaknesses that I have forgotten God's strengths and power?



IN  
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February 16

**Scripture Reading:** Numbers 15:22-16:50

**Memory Verse:**

**Numbers 15:30** But the person who does anything with a high hand, whether he is native or a sojourner, reviles the LORD, and that person shall be cut off from among his people.

**Song:** [“Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross”](#)

Some sins are unintentional, conceived in weakness; but other sins are high-handed. A “high handed” sin was one that lifted a fist against Jehovah in rebellion; such hardened resistance reviled or blasphemed God. It was the worst kind of sin, because the one who committed it did so defiantly and without thought to any repentance. Such a sinner was to be cut off from among the people. No sacrifice would atone for his sin. It was a kind of blasphemy.

“Because he has despised the word of the LORD and has broken his commandment, that person shall be utterly cut off; his iniquity shall be on him” (Numbers 15:31). To “cut off” an individual meant either to exterminate him or to excommunicate him. In the latter case one would be so shunned that he would be cast out alone to perish. There was no redemption for the person “cut off.” His sin remained upon him.

The book of Hebrews points out the same harshness and lack of forgiveness for the one who willfully keeps on sinning. “For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries” (Hebrews 10:26-27). Christians must watch their attitudes, lest they too blaspheme God to the loss of their souls.

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, keep me from willful and presumptuous sin. Please keep my heart tender to the truth and free from rebellion of any kind. Oh Lord, may I never shake fist against your love. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Have I ever found myself fighting with God? Have I ever hated God for what I thought He had done in my life? Have I ever let sin harden my heart?



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February 17

**Scripture Reading:** Numbers 17-20

**Memory Verse:**

**Numbers 20:13** These are the waters of Meribah, where the people of Israel quarreled with the LORD, and through them he showed himself holy.

**Song:** ["All to Jesus I Surrender"](#)

The people grumbled for water, complaining that God had brought them into the wilderness that they should die there, they and their cattle (20:4). God spoke to Moses and Aaron in the tent of meeting, instructing them to take their staff and go to the rock. They were to tell the rock to yield its water for the congregation.

Then Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels: shall we bring water for you out of this rock?" And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice, and water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their livestock (20:10-11).

But God was not pleased with Moses. The Lord said, "Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them" (20:13). Moses acted presumptuously by claiming the power for himself and making a show in striking the rock (there was no instruction to do this). Moses and Aaron learned God must be regarded as holy by those who draw near to Him (Leviticus 10:3).

Moses died at the top of Pisgah on Mount Nebo in the land of Moab, having seen the Promised Land but never entering (Deuteronomy 34:1-6).

**Prayer:** "Oh Lord, keep me from presuming that I may take the glory that only belongs to You. Keep my heart humble and hide me in the shadow of the cross. In Jesus' name, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Have I allowed my pride to blind me to the will of God? Have I taken credit for things God actually did? Have I ever made a show of my faith?



# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

February 18

**Scripture Reading:** Numbers 21-23

**Memory Verse:**

**Numbers 21:8** And the LORD said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.”

**Song:** [“God of Grace and God of Glory”](#)

Israel had all the frailties and faults of humanity. Impatient and loathing the manna they ate each day, they grumbled against the Lord. In response to their faithlessness and ingratitude, “the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died” (21:6).

To their credit, the people realized they had sinned by grumbling against the Lord and asked Moses to pray to the Lord that he take the serpents away. The Lord told Moses to make a fiery serpent and set it upon a pole. Those who are bitten, if they should merely look upon the serpent, they will live. Moses did as God asked and made a bronze serpent.

Looking upon the serpent is such a simple thing. One did not earn his healing by doing so. No, the healing came by God's grace and power. But God required the looking as a condition of his grace. Look and live; comply and receive God's gracious healing. Can you imagine someone stubbornly refusing to look because he was sure that looking was a work, and works can't earn grace?

Grace is a gift, but even gifts can have conditions. Never does God offer “unconditional grace” in response to sin. Faith, repentance, and Christian baptism are conditions to enjoy God's grace through the blood of Christ. Like looking on the serpent, they do not earn anything; but one cannot live without them.

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, grant me your loving favor. Help me never to think I can receive from your gracious hand anything by my own merit or with my own plan. Give me confidence to do as you ask that I may live with you. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Have I approached God on my terms? Have I redefined conditions as works of merit? Have I valued the grace of God enough to comply to his terms?



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February 19

**Scripture Reading:** Numbers 24:1-26:34

**Memory Verse:**

**Numbers 24:12-13** And Balaam said to Balak, “Did I not tell your messengers whom you sent to me, ‘If Balak should give me his house full of silver and gold, I would not be able to go beyond the word of the LORD, to do either good or bad of my own will. What the LORD speaks, that will I speak?’”

**Song:** [“Without Him”](#)

King Balak of Moab listened to the fears of the people and summoned Balaam, the son of Beor of Pethor, to come and curse the children of Israel. Moab was in dread of Israel, and great fear came upon the people. They said, “This horde will now lick up all that is around us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field” (22:4). Balaam's reputation had grown far and wide. They believed, “he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed” (22:6). They came to him once and again, offering a great reward if Balaam would curse Israel.

God spoke to Balaam and first informed him not to go with the men from Balak, because Israel is blessed and not cursed. But at the second attempt God let Balaam go, “but only do what I tell you” (22:20). Balak got angry when Balaam blessed rather than cursed Israel, but Balaam of Aram, said, “Must I not take care to speak what the LORD puts in my mouth?” (23:12) Three times Balaam blessed Israel, which made Balak increasingly angry.

Money and desire won't turn a wrong act into a right one. No matter how badly one wants to act contrary to the will of God, it won't do him any good. People preach all kinds of theologies that have nothing to do with the word or the will of God. They are only deceiving themselves, just as Balak did. The word of God does not change, and all the gold and silver in the world won't change that.

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, help me to listen to your will rather than try to invent my own. Remind me, oh Father, of your sovereignty in my life. Let me be a faithful servant and not be swayed by the riches of this life or the call of the popular. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** If the world offered to pay me to sin, would I accept it? Can I act contrary to the will of God and succeed? Is God's Word steadfast?



# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

February 20

**Scripture Reading:** Numbers 26:35-28:31

**Memory Verse:**

**Numbers 28:2** “Command the people of Israel and say to them, ‘My offering, my food for my food offerings, my pleasing aroma, you shall be careful to offer to me at its appointed time.’”

**Song:** [“Have Thine Own Way”](#)

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven” (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Time is the stuff that makes life. Our time is both abundant and yet limited. We would love to be the master of our time, but time often enslaves us.

Some things cannot be hurried. They grow at God's pace, not our own. Some things happen the way God has planned, and we cannot speed them up or slow them down. The second coming does not depend on us; God will act in His own time. God doesn't open doors for people until they are ready to go through them, and all the wishing in the world won't change that. Those break through doors before the time often find failure.

God wants what He wants when He wants it. He has an appointed time for offerings. The Lord asks Christians to make their collections on the first day of every week (1 Corinthians 16:1-2), and He asks us to remember Him in the Lord's Supper on the Lord's day, which is the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 11:20; Revelation 1:10; Acts 20:7). This was the practice of the church for many years. When men changed it to other appointed times, they showed their disregard for God.

Devotion to God means doing His will in His way in His appointed time.

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, open my heart to your appointments in my life. Keep me from thinking my own way is ever better than yours. Forgive me when I fall astray and grow in my heart a zeal to please you in every thing. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Am I willing to let God take control of the times of my life? Am I willing to wait upon the Lord until He acts in His own time? Will I respect God enough to act when and how He teaches?





# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

February 21

**Scripture Reading:** Numbers 29:1-31:47

**Memory Verse:**

**Numbers 30:2** If a man vows a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge, he shall not break his word. He shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.

**Song:** ["My Eyes Are Dry"](#)

Words are important to God. We may take lightly what we say, but takes our words seriously. The Lord Jesus said, "I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matthew 12:36-37).

What a person speaks to the Lord is even more serious. The Lord hates "a lying tongue" (Proverbs 6:17), and all liars will find their portion in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Revelation 21:8). A person is better off to remain silent than to promise God that which he has no intention of doing. A person is better off to remain silent than to take back a promise.

Psalm 15:3-4 says that God honors those who fear him, who swear to their own hurt and will not take it back. If one makes a vow to God, he must pay it. Ecclesiastes 5:4-7 says, "When you vow a vow to God, do not delay paying it, for he has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you vow. It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. Let not your mouth lead you into sin, and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands? For when dreams increase and words grow many, there is vanity; but God is the one you must fear."

**Prayer:** "Oh Lord, help me to keep my word to You. I love you and also fear your Name. Oh Lord, be my Lord in every part of my life. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Have I kept my promises in my gifts to God? Have I kept my heart pure and my life pure as I promised when I became a Christian? Have I fulfilled my ministry?



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February 22

**Scripture Reading:** Numbers 31:48-33:56

**Memory Verse:**

**Numbers 33:55-56** “But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then those of them whom you let remain shall be as barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall trouble you in the land where you dwell. And I will do to you as I thought to do to them.”

**Song:** [“Onward Christian Soldiers”](#)

The failure of Israel to drive out all the inhabitants of Canaan caused their descendants centuries of trouble. It was indeed barbs in their eyes and thorns in their sides. Joshua 1:27-36 lists the places Israel failed to capture and destroy. The people wept over this failure (Joshua 2:1-4).

It is not an accident that within a generation the barbs and thorns were stealing the children of Israel from Jehovah and introducing them to their pagan gods. The book of Judges tells the story of compromise and punishment Israel endured again and again, all from the barbs and thorns. God's prediction came to be true:

“If you will do this, if you will take up arms to go before the LORD for the war, and every armed man of you will pass over the Jordan before the LORD, until he has driven out his enemies from before him and the land is subdued before the LORD; then after that you shall return and be free of obligation to the LORD and to Israel, and this land shall be your possession before the LORD. But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out” (Numbers 32:20-23).

The Lord sees and knows, and sins have a way of coming back to haunt us in ways we never contemplated. Let us also rid ourselves of the superfluity of our own naughtiness (James 1:21).

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, help me to rid every sin in my life. Help me fight the good fight of faith and repel the fiery darts of the evil one with faith and a pure heart. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Have I allowed old sins to come back and haunt me? Have I put to death the evil passions in my life? Have I done everything to stand firm against the wiles of the devil?



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February 23

**Scripture Reading:** Numbers 34-36, Deuteronomy 1:1-15

**Memory Verse:**

**Deuteronomy 1:17** You shall not be partial in judgment. You shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not be intimidated by anyone, for the judgment is God's. And the case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.

**Song:** ["Dear Lord and Father of Mankind"](#)

The burden was too heavy for Moses alone, so with God's wisdom the tribes appointed commanders as judges over thousands, over hundreds, over fifties, and over tens. Only when the case was too difficult for them were they to bring it to Moses.

Human nature has the tendency to want to make exceptions to the rules. When the rule extends to someone close, the tendency is to excuse that close one from the rules. When the rule extends to someone detested, then one might feel justified in being overly harsh. God wanted neither; He expected the judges to be fair and impartial. What was wrong for one was wrong for all, and what was right for one was right for all. It is not always easy to be fair; one must work at it.

Moses feared that a commander might be intimidated by another or by the group who disagreed with his judgment. Moses made it clear: the righteous judgment of the commander was the righteous judgment of God. To rebel against the judgment was to rebel against God.

No person was too small to be heard or too great to be heard. God too is impartial; He saves those who love him and obey his will (Romans 2:6-16) but turns away those who are rebellious and selfishly ambitious. God isn't picking on you; God isn't specially favoring you. God is going to judge you like everyone else—according to His word (John 12:48).

**Prayer:** "Oh Lord, let me never take your grace for granted, as if I were special. Help me to respect your judgments in my life and live with faith. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I live confidently in the judgments of God, or do I judge God when I disagree with him? Am I willing to submit to the will of God rather than to intimidate others into doing things my way?



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February 24

**Scripture Reading:** Deuteronomy 1:16-3:29

**Memory Verse:**

**Deuteronomy 2:27** Let me pass through your land. I will go only by the road; I will turn aside neither to the right nor to the left.

**Song:** ["I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"](#)

Moses' promise to Sihon, the king of Heshbon, became an important principle for Israel. At first it was merely a promise to a king in order to allow the people to pass safely through the land without thought of any damage to the land. Sihon refused, and Israel had to conquer Heshbon; but the idea of turning neither to the right or the left appears again 5:32; 17:11, 20; and in 28:14. In these passages the idea is that one would cease to follow God and would disobey the commandments or depart into idolatry.

Moses also uses this concept to warn against turning from God's way, which is regarded as great sin (9:12, 16; 11:28; 31:29). God wants his people to walk in his ways (5:33; 8:6; 10:12; 11:22; 19:9; 26:17; 28:9; and 30:16).

God wants us to do what is right in his sight (13:18; 21:9) rather than to follow the desires of our own eyes (12:8; 29:19). Solomon noted, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end of it is death" (Proverbs 14:12). We must pay close attention to God's direction and walk where he commands; only by staying in the path can we hope to reach the destination. The narrow way leads to life. Wandering from the path leads to destruction.

**Prayer:** "Oh Lord, help me to take up my cross and follow. Keep my wandering eyes focused and feet sure to stay with you and not stray from the path. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** When the Lord asks me to obey Him, am I more concerned about my desires than what is right in his eyes? Have I listened to God and heeded his words?



# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

**February 25**

**Scripture Reading:** Deuteronomy 4:1-6:15

**Memory Verse: Deuteronomy 6:4-5** “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”

**Song:** [“The Greatest Commands”](#)

Every faithful Israelite knew the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) by heart. The Shema was in a practical sense a confession of faith in which they acknowledged the one true and living God and committed themselves to His commandments.

When a lawyer asked Jesus what the greatest commandment, he cited this passage first in answer to the question and added Leviticus 19:18 (you shall love your neighbor as yourself) as a second passage like it. “On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 22:40).

Loving God with all the heart and soul and might meant living or walking according to the Law with all its commandments and ordinances. It meant having that healthy fear of the Lord that led one to respect all that God says or desires from us.

More than anything, God expects us to put Him first in everything (Matthew 6:33; Colossians 1:10). He is to consume all our heart, soul, mind and strength. Jesus said, “Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me” (Matthew 10:37-38).

Loving God with all my heart, soul, and might means I will not put myself and my interests before His. He will be first in all my decisions and pursuits.

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, I love You with all my heart, soul, mind and strength. Help me to put You and Your Son Jesus first in my life before anything else. Keep me from putting my own interests ahead of my duty and love for You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Who is first in my life? Do I love the Lord more than I love myself? Do I put my family before my Lord?



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February 26

**Scripture Reading:** Deuteronomy 6:16-9:21

**Memory Verse:**

**Deuteronomy 8:11** “Take care lest you forget the LORD your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today.”

**Song:** “[Without Him](#)”

The last three times Moses addresses the people of Israel make up the book of Deuteronomy. While the book contains the Law of God through Moses given a second time, Deuteronomy often takes the form of a sermon or exhortation to faithfulness. Moses is now close to death, and his heart goes out to the people. He wants them to enjoy the blessing of the Lord as they go into the Promised Land, a land he himself would see but not enter.

Moses feared that once the people had settled into the land, had eaten of the produce, built houses, built up their possessions, and had multiplied, they would lift up their hearts and forget God. He reminded them of how God fought for them, fed them, and delivered them from the hand of Pharaoh. He warned them to beware thinking they had gotten their blessings by the power of their own might. What they have, they have because of God's mercy. God gave them the power to gain wealth.

It is indeed easy to forget in our own lives that God gives the power to gain wealth. Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning (James 1:17). Without God we would indeed be nothing, have nothing, and live loneliness and hopeless lives. God is the source of every blessing; let us rejoice in Him!

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, we remember that every good gift, every skill, every talent, and every blessing comes from your hand. We are indeed grateful for your love and mercy. Help us Father to keep our focus on your marvelous grace. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Have I remembered God today? Do I set aside time everyday to count my blessings from his hand? Am I remembering the death of Jesus in the Lord's Supper on each Lord's Day?



# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

February 27

**Scripture Reading:** Deuteronomy 9:22-12:32

**Memory Verse:**

**Deuteronomy 10:17** For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe.

**Song:** [“God of Our Fathers”](#)

The uniqueness of the God of the Bible is essential to understanding His nature. The world in Moses' day had many gods, but not one was like Jehovah. He stood above them all as great, mighty, and awesome. The idols of the ancient world were fantasies, humanly contrived, and impotent. Their only ability lay not in the idols but in the deceived people who blindly followed them.

But the God of the Bible, who created the world and all that is in it, is the only true and living God. In Him is all power and glory. He makes the soil fertile and gives life and breath to all things. Unlike the useless idols, He hears prayers and provides blessing.

The fantasy gods of the ancients often partook of the nature of men. They showed all the weaknesses and biases of humanity. They were perceived to be powerful but showed little of the moral excellence found in Jehovah. They were often sinful beings, vengeful, and envious. Unlike the God who made the world, they lived unholy lives.

Israel was blessed to have a moral God who made laws for their good. They were blessed to have a great, mighty, and awesome God rather than a weak-willed tyrant. We have a true God worthy of our respect and adoration. Let us be thankful.

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, we praise you as our Mighty and Awesome God. We give you our respect because you are indeed holy and righteous. Help us, Father to live holy, just as you are holy. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Since I am made in God's image, do I know much about the nature of God? Do I really know who God is? If God is morally excellent and I belong to Him, do I live as a person who is His child?





# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

February 28

**Scripture Reading:** Deuteronomy 13:1-16:8

**Memory Verse:**

**Deuteronomy 13:3** You shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the LORD your God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

**Song:** [“Will Your Anchor Hold?”](#)

God tests his people. He tested Abraham at Mount Moriah (Genesis 22:1-14); He tested Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 32:31); He tested Job (Job 1:8-22); and He tested Israel in the days of Elijah (1 Kings 18).

James said, “Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him” (James 1:12).

In Deuteronomy 13:1-5 God was testing the people of Israel to see if they would listen to His voice or listen to a false prophet whose word came to be true. There are times God allows wickedness to appear powerful in order to see if his followers will be true to Him or follow some falsehood. Some do not love the truth enough to stay with it and so be saved. “Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12).

Why would an Israelite desert the true God for a false god? Probably because the false god promised fleshly promises. Most of the gods of Canaan were worshiped with gross immorality and drunkenness. The god some want is often not the God that is. Our task is to be faithful to the one true and living God.

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, deliver me from the lying ways of the evil one. Keep me from being seduced by my feelings and forgetting what You have said. May you Father help me in my time of testing that I may prove to love you more than my self. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I know God's will well enough to spot a lie of the devil? Do I love God enough to listen to Him every day? Do I love God more than my self? Would I, like Moses, trade the treasures of Egypt for the riches of Christ?



February 29

**Scripture Reading:** Deuteronomy 13:1-16:8

**Memory Verses:** Deuteronomy 15:16–17 “It shall come about if he says to you, ‘I will not go out from you,’ because he loves you and your household, since he fares well with you; then you shall take an awl and pierce it through his ear into the door, and he shall be your servant forever. Also you shall do likewise to your maidservant.”

**Song:** [“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”](#)

When a Hebrew purchased a Hebrew for a slave, he could only keep him as a servant for six years. At the end of six years, he must set him free. The Lord said, “It shall not seem hard to you when you set him free, for he has given you six years with double the service of a hired man; so the LORD your God will bless you in whatever you do” (Deuteronomy 15:18).

When the master sent his freed servant out, he was not to send him out empty-handed. “You shall furnish him liberally from your flock and from your threshing floor and from your wine vat; you shall give to him as the LORD your God has blessed you” (Deuteronomy 15:14).

In some cases Hebrew slaves would marry and bear children while serving their masters. The Law said, “If his master gives him a wife, and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall belong to her master, and he shall go out alone” (Exodus 21:4). Some servants loved their masters, their wives, and their children more than their freedom and would decide to be a servant in that house forever.

Masters took their loving, voluntary, permanent slaves and pierced their ears with an awl in the door. This visible mark showed their position in and their dedication to that house. When we are baptized, we commit ourselves freely, fully, and permanently to the Lord out of love. We sacrifice our freedom to become a slave in the house of God forever.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for giving me a place in Your family through Christ. Help me to be a loving, faithful servant all the days of my life. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Did I become a Christian and lifelong servant of the Lord because I loved Him? Do I treasure my freedom more than my place in God’s family?



IN  
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March 1

**Scripture Reading:** Deuteronomy 16:9-19:21

**Memory Verse:**

**Deuteronomy 17:6** On the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses the one who is to die shall be put to death; a person shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.

**Song:** ["To God Be the Glory"](#)

God demanded of Israel that they remain faithful and pure. He did not tolerate idolatry. "You shall not plant any tree as an Asherah beside the altar of the LORD your God that you shall make. And you shall not set up a pillar, which the LORD your God hates" (Deuteronomy 16:21-22).

The Asherah tree was associated with the fertility goddess Asherah who was the wife of El and mother to seventy gods, the most famous of which is Baal. In some cases the Asherah tree was a stump, in other cases it looked like a pole. The King James Version translates "Asherah" as "grove."

Pillars were small stones, sometimes graven, set upright and worshiped as shrines to their gods by the Canaanites. The King James Version translates the word as "images." Setting up a pillar was a form of idolatry in worship to a false god. An idol is usually considered as either the deity itself or his permanent dwelling place; a fetish is an object which has been given a magical or divine power, either because of its having been the temporary home of the deity, or because it has been spiritually influenced by such deity.

God was not in the business of acting without proof. It took two or three witnesses to condemn a person of idolatry. Hearsay, speculation, opinions, or hunches were not sufficient. There had to be proof. Stoning was a community act, and the accuser cast the first stone. Such harsh treatment shows how strongly God regarded idolatry as an offense.

**Prayer:** "Oh Lord, keep me from idols and from temptation to worship anything but you. Forgive me of my weaknesses and help me never to let anything come between You, Father, and me. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I have an idols, trees or pillars in my life? Am I unfaithful to my God by allowing other things to become the object of my adoration and service?



# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

March 2

**Scripture Reading:** Deuteronomy 20:1-23:14

**Memory Verse:**

**Deuteronomy 20:17-18** But you shall devote them to complete destruction, the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, as the LORD your God has commanded, that they may not teach you to do according to all their abominable practices that they have done for their gods, and so you sin against the LORD your God.

**Song:** [“Lord We Come Before Thee Now”](#)

God is the hero of the Bible, and many people do not understand why God would completely destroy any nation if he were good. The problem here is not in the goodness of God; the problem is that we today are short-sighted. We see only what is happening and not what will happen.

The nations devoted to destruction, if not completely destroyed, would lead Israel to sin against the Lord by teaching the people to “do according to all their abominable practices.” That result would be far more an offense to Israel and to the world than their immediate death. Idolatry was a hateful, unforgiving cancer to Israel. Unless it were cut out completely, it would continue to afflict Israel on and on. In fact, that is exactly what happened. Because Israel failed to exterminate the Canaanites, idolatry troubled Israel for centuries.

It is easy at times for men to feel the need to judge God, but such judgments are often short-sighted. They cannot see what God sees and do not know what God knows. Such judgments often arise from gut feelings or from a desire to speak against God. It is a judgment born of misunderstanding.

God acts with a larger view in mind, a view that we cannot and do not understand. We must trust God's wisdom to act in ways beyond our comprehension and yet for what is best. Let us trust him to see beyond our limitations.

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, help me to trust in your wisdom to know what is best. Forgive my quick presumptions, my unfairness to you, when I cannot see the whole picture. Give me contentment with your decisions in my life. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Have I ever unfairly judged God? Have I put my trust in Him, even when He acts in ways I do not understand or find difficult? Have I taken time to remember the unsearchable riches of the wisdom of God?



IN  
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March 3

**Scripture Reading:** Deuteronomy 23:15-27:10

**Memory Verse:**

**Deuteronomy 26:18-19** “And the LORD has declared today that you are a people for his treasured possession, as he has promised you, and that you are to keep all his commandments, and that he will set you in praise and in fame and in honor high above all nations that he has made, and that you shall be a people holy to the LORD your God, as he promised.”

**Song:** [“What a Friend We Have in Jesus”](#)

When I was in Israel in 2006 I purchased an ancient oil lamp dating from 68 BC to 325 AD. It is the oldest humanly manufactured item in my house and is precious to me. I have some modern facsimiles of that lamp, but the ancient one is unique and precious. Though it is not highly valuable monetarily, I treasure that lamp because it came from ancient Israel.

Israel was the people of the promise of God, unique and uncommon. The people were holy to the Lord, because God set them apart to fulfill the promise he made to Abraham. They were to remain pure and holy, because the Messiah one day would come through their line. They were to be honored high above the other nations. They were God's treasured people.

The people of God keep his commandments not because of some legalistic enslavement but out of devotion and love. They understand their place in his plan and fulfill their role as his people. Jesus said, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (John 14:15). We are to be holy, because He is holy. Our devotion is derived from our relationship. That is what it means to be God's people.

We are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, help me to see how you have treasured me in Christ and help me become the person you want me to be. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I live like a person who loves the Lord completely? Do I understand how much God treasures me? Am I living the obedient and holy life?



# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

March 4

**Scripture Reading:** Deuteronomy 27:11-28:68

**Memory Verses:**

**Deuteronomy 28:13-14** And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you shall only go up and not down, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, being careful to do them, and if you do not turn aside from any of the words that I command you today, to the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

**Song:** [“There Is a Habitation”](#)

“If you faithfully obey...”; those words found in the midst of this chapter show the desire of God for his people. The Lord wants to bless his people, to make them the head not the tail, and to lead them onward and upward. He wants to bless them in the city and in the field, and His promises are abundant to those who faithfully obey him.

But God curses those of his people in Israel who will not faithfully obey him. While 14 verses tell of his great blessing, 54 verses tell of the curses God will give to those who stray from careful obedience. It is heartbreaking to think that the people at one time or another in the history of Israel endured each of the curses because of their disobedience.

It should not surprise us that God means what he says about faithfulness. He is consistent whether we are or not. He keeps his promises whether we remain faithful or not. God will do what is right towards us all and recompense or reward us according to our deeds (2 Corinthians 5:10). Israel was not an exception, nor shall we be in Christ.

Each day we choose blessing or cursing from the hand of God. Thankfully, as Christians we have the blood of Jesus to cleanse us from sin (1 John 1:7-2:2), but Christians who sow to the flesh still reap corruption (Galatians 6:7-8). Are you faithful?

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, forgive my sins and deliver me from temptation. Help me to be faithful to you in everything. I know I am weak and I need you, Father, so much. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Am I faithful in little things as well as in big things? Have I watched my steps carefully and kept the Lord's commandments? Have I kept my heart facing the path and avoided going to the right or to the left?



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March 5

**Scripture Reading:** Deuteronomy 29:1-32:14

**Memory Verse:**

**Deuteronomy 30:14** But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.

**Song:** ["Give Me The Bible"](#)

Moses affirmed the belief that people could do God's will. He had earlier noted that God's will is neither hidden nor too difficult to obey. "For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?'" God has neither hidden himself nor made his way so difficult men could not bear it.

Some complain to the Lord of Glory that he demands too much of us, but one must wonder at such a thought. To us he offers an easy, bearable yoke and a light burden (Matthew 11:28-30), while he himself set his face toward Jerusalem and bore a cross (Luke 9:51; Matthew 16:21). He bore the cross so that we would not have to bear our sins.

The apostle John said of the commandments of Jesus, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3). Love for God turns difficult tasks into meaningful and bearable ones.

The promise of Jesus is that we can know the truth, and the truth will make us free (John 8:32). The Bible everywhere assumes men can understand God's requirements. Ancient priests followed several detailed commandments dealing with sacrifices and leprosy. By comparison, Christianity is extraordinarily simple to understand. God is near to our hearts, and his commandments are not burdensome.

**Prayer:** "Oh Lord, take from me my moments of rebellion and replace them with peace and trust in your great wisdom. Keep me from complaining and let me be thankful for the tasks you have given me to do. I realize Father I am merely an unworthy servant. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I complain about God's commandments? Have I made an easy yoke into a cruel one? Have I put my mind to understanding the will of the Lord?



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March 6

**Scripture Reading:** Deuteronomy 32:15-34:12; Josh 1:1-9

**Memory Verse:**

**Joshua 1:6-7** Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go.

**Song:** [“On Jordan's Stormy Banks”](#)

The weight of a nation now lay on Joshua's shoulders, and he did not have Moses to tell him what to do. Joshua did not have Moses, but he did have the Lord as his help. The Lord's promise to Joshua:

*No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you (1:5).*

Joshua and Israel would march into the Promised Land in the coming days to overtake it. The giants still lived there, but God was with Israel and bigger than the giants.

Joshua knew his task; he needed courage and assurance. God gave him that courage by his promised presence. “I will not leave you or forsake you.” Jesus sent his apostles into the world with the promise, “I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

Even when we know the right thing to do, we need the faith and courage to do it. God will help us to what is right.

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, help me today to remember that you are with me always. Give me courage to do what is right and to avoid what is wrong. Grant me the peace of your abiding presence. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Have I recognized today the abiding presence of God in my life? Have I found the courage I needed to do what I ought to do, even when it is difficult? Have I relied on God?





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March 7

**Scripture Reading:** Joshua 1:10-4:24

**Memory Verse:**

**Joshua 3:13** “And when the soles of the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off from flowing, and the waters coming down from above shall stand in one heap.”

**Song:** [“Each Step I Take”](#)

The priests carrying the ark of the Lord stood firmly on dry ground, and the children of Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground. The waters stood up in a heap and did not flow into the Salt Sea (3:16-17).

The Lord worked this miracle just as he worked the miracle of the crossing of the Red Sea. This miracle, however, was to assure Israel that God was with Joshua as he was with Moses. They would indeed be able to conquer and possess the promised land; God would make that possible.

God can do through us what we cannot do alone. God works in and through his people to do what is right and to make a difference in their lives. He does far more abundantly than we ask and or than we think (Ephesians 3:20-21).

The ten spies who brought back a bad report were thinking about what *they* could do, not what *God* could do. How often men forget God and concentrate on their own abilities. God does not have our limitations or our weaknesses. God is God, and he is our helper. It is not what we can do; it is what God can do through us.

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, I'm asking, seeking, and knocking. Please help me. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Have I thought only of my own strength and forgotten God's strength? Am I thinking with my own wisdom and have I forgotten the promise of God? Have I looked back in my life to see how God has been working?



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March 8

**Scripture Reading:** Joshua 5:1-8:23

**Memory Verse:**

**Joshua 6:4-5** “On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. And when they make a long blast with the ram’s horn, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people shall go up, everyone straight before him.”

**Song:** [“Rise Up O Men of God”](#)

God promised to fight for Israel. Joshua had met the commander of the army of the Lord (5:13-18). God was for his people, and his promises came to be true. He did fight for them and brought the wall down so that the people could take the city. God is always with his people, when they are faithful to his instructions.

The battle of Jericho is an interesting case that demonstrates not only the grace of God but also the responsibility of men. God *gave* Jericho into the hands of Joshua with its king and its mighty men of valor (6:2). Yet they went up straight into the city and captured the city (6:20). God's gifts are free, but that does not mean people do not have to act. Gifts are free, but they are not always cheap. The Israelites had a responsibility to take the city.

The instructions for taking the city takes up much of the chapter (6:2-20). Though the instructions were somewhat complicated, Joshua walked with Israel every step of the way and kept them obedient to the will of God. No matter how far they walked or all that they did, God still gave them the city. Meeting God's conditions never earns a gift; it merely accepts it. But what might have happened had Joshua innovated or followed his own way? Faithfulness does not assert its right to a gift; rather it humbly submits to the will of the Father. Faithfulness doesn't presume upon grace or feel God owes the gift.

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, help me to accept the gifts you give me in the way that you ask. Keep me from presumptuousness; make my heart humble and pliant. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I accept God's gifts on his terms or on mine? Am I humble? Am I on the Lord's side and willing to keep his commandments?



# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

March 9

**Scripture Reading:** Joshua 8:24-11:9

**Memory Verse:**

**Joshua 8:34-35** And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded that Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, and the women, and the little ones, and the sojourners who lived among them.

**Song:** [“O Master Let Me Walk with Thee”](#)

Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim form the sides of an important east-west pass in central Israel known as the valley of Shechem. Ebal rises 3100 feet with its stark rock, bare of vegetation, giving the appearance of curse. On the north of Shechem, it stands opposed to the fruitful Mount Gerazim, the mount of blessing to the south. Shechem is located some 40 miles north of Jerusalem. The mountainous terrain makes it critical to the control of all the roads that pass through the central hill country of Israel.

When the Israelites conquered central Israel, Joshua carried out the instructions Moses gave him and placed half the tribes on Gerizim to pronounce the blessing (Deuteronomy 27:12). Joshua placed the other half on Mount Ebal to pronounce the curses (Deuteronomy 11:29; Joshua 8:30-35). He wrote a copy of the law of Moses on stones on Mount Ebal.

God communicated with Israel through the law. The law was his voice telling them how to love and serve him. Those who failed to keep the law found themselves cursed, while those who kept the law found blessing. Generations come and go, and every generation needs to hear what God says. Joshua read it all before the assembly, because they needed it all. Men live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4; Deuteronomy 8:3). Be a wise man (Matthew 7:24-27).

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, open my heart and my ears that I may hear the things you have taught. Help me to hear again the things I have learned in the past. Keep me humble and pliable, O Lord. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Have I been willing to hear God speak in His word? Have I considered the consequences of failing to hear God's word?



# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

March 10

**Scripture Reading:** Joshua 11:10-14:15

**Memory Verse:**

**Joshua 14:12** “So now give me this hill country of which the LORD spoke on that day, for you heard on that day how the Anakim were there, with great fortified cities. It may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall drive them out just as the LORD said.”

**Song:** [“Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus”](#)

Of their generation only Joshua and Caleb entered the promised land. Forty-five years earlier these two men brought back a good report to Moses and Israel, while the other ten spies brought back a bad report. In his younger days Caleb proclaimed, “Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it” (Numbers 13:30).

When the people believed the bad report, Joshua and Caleb said:

“The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land. If the LORD delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them” (Numbers 14:8-9).

Now at the age of 85 Caleb asked for his inheritance. Joshua gave him Hebron, because he wholly followed the Lord his God. Even at this age Caleb was ready to fight for God. He had seen the fulfillment of God's promise in sparing his life, and now he was ready to claim his inheritance. Faith inspires faith. Give me a man like Caleb to fight beside. A man who believed and asked, “Give me this mountain.” And God did!

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, help me to believe as Caleb did. Let me look back in my life to see where you have blessed me and fulfilled your promises. Remove all doubt from me, oh Father. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Can I look back in my life and see where God has blessed and shaped me for his cause? Do I have the faith and courage needed to fulfill the tasks God has given me?



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March 11

**Scripture Reading:** Joshua 15-17

**Memory Verse:**

**Joshua 17:13** It came about when the sons of Israel became strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but they did not drive them out completely.

**Song:** ["Will Your Anchor Hold?"](#)

The commandment of the Lord was that the children of Israel were to completely destroy the Canaanites. While this may seem harsh, God showed much wisdom in this commandment. The sons of Ephraim subdued the Canaanites but did not destroy them.

Like the root of a weed, the Canaanites caused problems for Israel for many years. Some things must be uprooted, stopped completely; or they will come back to trouble you for many years (Judges 2:10-12). Because the fathers did not completely destroy the Canaanites, the children were tempted to follow other gods.

God asks us to put to death the sins in our lives (Romans 8:12-3; Colossians 3:5-11). It is not enough to set aside sin for a while; nor is it enough to ignore it. When Christians compromise their standards and tolerate sin in their lives, the devil takes full advantage and multiplies the temptation. A man cannot walk upon hot coals and his feet not be scorched (Proverbs 6:27-28). We are not to give the devil an opportunity (Ephesians 4:27) to overcome us with any sin.

**Prayer:** "Oh Lord, help me to put to death the deeds of my body that offend You. Deliver me from evil. Give me a heart to fulfill all your commandments, so that I might in later days trip myself up or lead others to fall. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Am I compromising over any matter, large or small, that might lead those I love to be tempted and fall away from God? Am I permitting temptation to remain as a guest in life? Have I put to death the deeds of my body?



# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

March 12

**Scripture Reading:** Joshua 18:1-21:12

**Memory Verse: Joshua 20:2-3** “Say to the people of Israel, ‘Appoint the cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, that the manslayer who strikes any person without intent or unknowingly may flee there. They shall be for you a refuge from the avenger of blood.’”

**Song:** [“Be With Me Lord”](#)

The God of heaven is a God of grace and understanding. He designated six cities to be an asylum to the fugitive by sheltering and protecting him until a trial determined his guilt or innocence. If the elders determined the death happened accidentally, then the man would be allowed to stay in the city without fear that the dead man's relatives would take vengeance (Joshua 20:2-6). See also Exodus 21:12-14; Numbers 35:1-34 and Deuteronomy 19:1-13.

Prior to the establishment of these cities of refuge, God gave temporary safety to those who went into the sanctuary and grasped the horns of the altar. However, neither Adonijah nor Joab were innocent (1 Kings 1:50; 2:28); they were executed for their crimes.

The cross is our refuge today. Though condemned to spiritual death for our sins (Romans 6:23), we can find safety by coming to the blood of Jesus for cleansing from our sin. Those who went to the city of refuge might be innocent or guilty; but all who grasp the cross come guilty and worthy of death. God's grace, however, is greater than our sin (1 Timothy 1:12-16). If God could save Saul of Tarsus, he can save us from our sins. He is our refuge.

Let us with boldness approach the throne of grace to find mercy and help in a time of need (Hebrews 4:14-16).

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, grant me forgiveness and refuge in your son Jesus. Keep me in your love. Guard me from temptation. Deliver me from evil. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** When I have sinned, do I withdraw from God or do I confidently approach him for mercy and help? Am I ready to confess my sins when I have erred, or do I act as if I hadn't done anything wrong?



# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

March 13

**Scripture Reading:** Joshua 21:13-23:16

**Memory Verse:**

**Joshua 21:44-45** And the LORD gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the LORD had given all their enemies into their hands. Not one word of all the good promises that the LORD had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass.

**Song:** ["The Lord's My Shepherd"](#)

A promise or a guarantee is only as good as the one who promises. God keeps His promises every time and in every circumstance. God doesn't forget. God doesn't bait and switch. God doesn't speak rashly. God keeps His promises. I love God's promises:

- no temptation will overtake me (1 Corinthians 10:13)
- God will supply all my needs (Matthew 6:33; Philippians 4:19)
- God causes all things to work together for good (Romans 8:28)
- Jesus will come again to receive us to himself (John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-19)
- their sins will I remember no more (Hebrews 8:12)
- ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened (Matthew 7:7-8)
- and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world (Matthew 28:20)

These and many other promises have I seen the Lord keep in my life. Not one word of all the good promises that the LORD had made to us had failed; all came to pass.

**Prayer:** "Oh Lord, thank you for keeping all your promises. I know I can count on you. Help me to be faithful toward you, just as you have been faithful to me. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Have I counted my blessings? Do I keep all my promises to God? Am I faithful as a steward of God's gifts? Is God glad to count me as one of his servants?



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March 14

**Scripture Reading:** Joshua 24 to Judges 2

**Memory Verse: Joshua 24:15** And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

**Song:** [“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”](#)

The Israelites had settled Palestine, living in houses they did not build and eating from vineyards they did not plant. Moses feared the people would prosper and become complacent, forgetting what God had done for them. This complacency left them vulnerable to the gods of the nations around them. When a person does not wholeheartedly fill his life with the Lord, he will inevitably fill it with it something. His choices in prosperity and complacency are often critical to his eternal soul.

Dependent people have few choices, and often stay with the Lord. But when people become prosperous, when they are empowered to do as they please, they can choose whatever they wish. David fell to temptation with Bathsheba because he thought he could. King Uzziah fell to temptation in the temple, because he thought he could.

The Calvinist view that God makes our choices for us cannot be reconciled with passages such as Joshua 24:15, which puts the responsibility to choose on the individual. Christianity is ultimately a choice of the heart (Luke 8:11-15); each one must choose whom he will serve (Romans 6:16-18). God did not arbitrarily choose who would be saved and who lost. He offered salvation to all (Titus 2:11-14), but men must choose to follow the instruction of grace. We are each day deciding whom we will serve. We must remain faithful to our calling.

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, I thank you for the gift of salvation through the blood of Jesus, given to me when I was baptized. Now that I am yours, Father, help me each day to keep choosing to bear my cross. Forgive me when I have forgotten you. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Are you choosing to bear your cross with the Lord today? What about yesterday? What will you choose tomorrow? Are you allowing the temptation of the world to weaken your resolve to serve the Lord?





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March 15

**Scripture Reading:** Judges 3-5

**Memory Verse: Judges 3:4** They were for the testing of Israel, to know whether Israel would obey the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

**Song:** [“My Eyes Are Dry”](#)

The people of God must live in the world and yet not be a part of the world (Romans 12:1-2; 1 John 2:15-17). One would go out of the world to escape the temptation that comes from worldly people (1 Corinthians 5:10). Because Israel failed to drive fully out the other nations, they became a test and a stumbling block to Israel time after time.

The people of Israel lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. And their daughters they took to themselves for wives, and their own daughters they gave to their sons, and they served their gods (Judges 3:5-6). God never wanted his people to intermarry with the nations surrounding them, because he knew family ties could break down their willingness to serve Him wholeheartedly. “They served their gods” is an indictment to the loyalty the Israelites should have shown to the Lord God.

Solomon, though the wisest man of all Israel, had his heart turned from the Lord by marrying foreign wives and following their gods. We should take heed lest we fall (1 Corinthians 10:12). One cannot play with sin and not be hurt by it. Anyone who comes to Jesus must hate (love less) his own father, mother, brother, sister, wife, and children, or he cannot be a disciple (Luke 14:26).

God may be testing your resolve by allowing something in your life that makes you choose between Him and your neighbor. What are you choosing?

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, help me to put you first in everything and over everyone. Forgive me for letting others sway my thinking from you and your will. Your will be done. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Can I pray “your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”? Have I allowed anyone or anything to come between God and me? Is the Lord my God?



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**March 16**

**Scripture Reading:** Judges 6-7

**Memory Verse: Judges 6:30-31** Then the men of the town said to Joash, “Bring out your son, that he may die, for he has broken down the altar of Baal and cut down the Asherah beside it.” But Joash said to all who stood against him, “Will you contend for Baal? Or will you save him? Whoever contends for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because his altar has been broken down.”

**Song:** [“Lord We Come Before Thee Now”](#)

Gideon was indeed a reluctant warrior. One can only imagine his feels when the angel of the Lord greeted this man prone to hide with the words, “The Lord is with you, O mighty man of valor!” Yet Gideon, as shy and fearful as he was, did as he was told. He tore down the altar of Baal, even though it endangered his life.

Gideon twice asked God to prove himself with the dew and the fleece, but God responded to Gideon and kept his promise of freeing Israel from the domination of the Midianites. God was willing to meet Gideon's humble request for reassurance. There are times when we too need reassurance from God. He gives that reassurance through the resurrection and the Word. He also answers our prayers.

With but 300 men, God worked through Gideon to confound the Midianites and defeat them. The fearful 22,000 went home, and the 9,700 who knelt to drink water went home. With only 300 out of the 30,000 men called to fight, God won the victory for Israel by the blowing of trumpets and the breaking of jars.

Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the jars. They held in their left hands the torches, and in their right hands the trumpets to blow. And they cried out, “A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!” Every man stood in his place around the camp, and all the army ran. They cried out and fled. When they blew the 300 trumpets, the LORD set every man's sword against his comrade and against all the army (Judges 7:20-22).

God keeps his promises.

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, keep me from doubting You or Your promises. May my faith stay reassured and my heart dedicated to serving You always. Forgive me for lacking faith. Help my unbelief. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I have a hard time believing? Does the assurance God gave Gideon reassure my heart of his love and commitment to his servants?



# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

**March 17**

**Scripture Reading:** Judges 8-9

**Memory Verse: Judges 8:22-23** Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, “Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson also, for you have saved us from the hand of Midian.” Gideon said to them, “I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the LORD will rule over you.”

**Song:** [“Jesus Is Lord of All”](#)

Charles Hodge observed, “God is God, and I am not.” That is perhaps the simplest statement but the hardest lesson to learn. In all our excitement to honor men, we forget the greatness of God. Only the Lord will rule over Israel. Unfortunately, the people of Israel would again reject God as their king and call for a man. The prophet Samuel appointed Saul.

Who is king of your life? Jesus once asked, “Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?” (Luke 6:46). Gideon was right to point to the Lord as the one and only ruler.

But Gideon took the spoil of the gold earrings taken from the Midianites, which weighed 1700 shekels. “And Gideon made an ephod of it and put it in his city, in Ophrah. And all Israel whored after it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and to his family” (8:27).

An ephod is likely a priestly garment, often associated with seeking a word from the Lord. Here this gold garment is used inappropriately in idolatry. The devil loves to use that which is good and right to do that which is evil.

While Gideon proved faithful in some things, his pride or greed led him to lead the people and his family astray. Here victory over enemies led to a great defeat.

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, keep me from being proud; keep me from wanting gain from my victories. Help me to refrain from using what You have given me to serve evil. Forgive me for thinking too highly of myself. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Have I proven faithful at one point in my life only to fail at another? Could great victory open a door of temptation for me? Am I willing to let the Lord rule in my life always?



# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

**March 18**

**Scripture Reading:** Judges 10-13

**Memory Verse: Judges 11:30-31** And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD and said, “If you will give the Ammonites into my hand, then whatever comes out from the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the Ammonites shall be the LORD’s, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.”

**Song:** [“My God, My Father, Though I Stray”](#)

Jephthah is perhaps better known for his rash vow than for his victories over the Ammonites. Sadly, after his victory his daughter came out to meet him with tambourines and with dances. She was his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter. And as soon as he saw her, he tore his clothes and said, “Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low, and you have become the cause of great trouble to me. For I have opened my mouth to the LORD, and I cannot take back my vow” (11:34-35).

Jephthah spoke rashly and to his own harm. The Scriptures honor a man who swears to his own hurt but will not take back his word (Psalm 15:4). The Scriptures make it clear that one must keep his vows to God (Ecclesiastes 5:4-5). It is better not to make it than to be late or fail to pay a vow to the Lord. The Lord is holy, and he will not hold blameless those who make vows. Fear God. Fulfilling a vow was a considered a holy and binding duty (Proverbs 20:25). People in ancient times took very seriously what they uttered from their lips. Vows were not binding until they were spoken.

While one may honor his integrity, Jephthah spoke foolishly and to his great dismay. How much better to have spoken clearly of an animal or of some other possession. Our own emotions and excitement can fool us into speaking without thinking. We must be careful with our words.

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, help me to think before I speak. Give me patience with others, and help me to keep my promises to you, just as you keep your promises to me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do you regularly speak words you should not? Do you wish you could take back that promise, that harsh criticism, or that gossip?



IN  
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**March 19**

**Scripture Reading:** Judges 14-16

**Memory Verse: Judges 16:19-20** She made him sleep on her knees. And she called a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then she began to torment him, and his strength left him. And she said, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” And he awoke from his sleep and said, “I will go out as at other times and shake myself free.” But he did not know that the LORD had left him.

**Song:** “Be with Me, Lord”

God had given to Samson a power no other man on earth had known. Samson struck down over a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey (15:15-16) and did many other mighty deeds.

But Samson had a weakness for women, and Delilah preyed upon that weakness. She seduced him to tell the secret of his power. Four times she begged him to tell her the secret of his strength. Three times he lied but got ever closer to telling her the truth. On the fourth time, he told her all his heart. Then she sprung her trap and received her pay.

Samson said, **“A razor has never come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother’s womb. If my head is shaved, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak and be like any other man.”**

**Samson became what he did not intend. Samson was not static; he could change and become like any other man. We are all in a state of becoming something. Samson never thought he would become a blind man or a mockery to God, but he did. He never thought he would be reduced to a Philistine prisoner, but he was. He became blind, imprisoned, and a beast of burden because he could not conquer his passions.**

**Out of grace, God gave him an opportunity to redeem himself and avenge his two eyes. Even at our lowest point, a man who loves God can become the man God made him to be.**

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, help me to see what I am becoming. Keep me from dark passions and renew a right spirit within me. Forgive me for flirting with sin. Deliver me from evil and strengthen my heart to love you always. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** What are you becoming? Are you closer to God today than you were a year ago? Have you let sin and desire cloud your mind so that you might become what you despise?



# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

**March 20**

**Scripture Reading:** Judges 17:1 – 20:11

**Memory Verse: Judges 17:12-13** And Micah ordained the Levite, and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah. Then Micah said, “Now I know that the LORD will prosper me, because I have a Levite as priest.”

**Song:** [“O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee”](#)

Micah, who lived in the hill country of Ephraim, took 1,100 pieces of silver from his mother. When the money was recovered, the mother rejoiced that her son had restored her money and decided to fashion a carved image with it. Micah set up the image in his house. And the man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and household gods, and ordained one of his sons, who became his priest. In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

However, a young Levite from Bethlehem found his way to the hill country, looking for a place to serve. And Micah said to him, “Stay with me, and be to me a father and a priest, and I will give you ten pieces of silver a year and a suit of clothes and your living.” And the Levite went in. And the Levite was content to dwell with the man, and the young man became to him like one of his sons (17:10-11).

Micah thought that because he had a Levite as a priest the Lord would prosper him. It did not occur to him that his idolatry violated God's law (Exodus 20:2-6). He simply did what was right in his own eyes, thinking that was just as good as if he had followed the Law.

How human it is to deceive ourselves into thinking our self-made religion is as good as God's revealed will for our lives. Such folly is almost humorous were it not so serious a matter. Having a Levite in the house does not make up for idolatry any more than giving money at church makes up for adultery or lying.

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, keep me from lying to myself about my sins. Help me never to presume upon your grace by focusing on some good thing I do, so that I may ignore the evil I do. Help me to be honest about my behavior and my attitudes. May my worship and heart always please and show love to you, O Father. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I have any idols at my house, man-made objects that come between my God and me? Have I deceived myself in thinking that a good work will cancel out the sin of bad work?



# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

**March 21**

**Scripture Reading:** Judges 20:12-21:25; Ruth 1:1-2:13

**Memory Verse: Ruth 1:16-17** But Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you.”

**Song:** “Sing On, Ye Joyful Pilgrims”

With the loss of her husband, Elimelech, and her two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, Naomi found life bitter and sought to return to her home in Bethlehem Ephrathah. Ruth's pledge was not to her husband but to his mother, her mother-in-law. One can hardly say better words of love and commitment! What an amazing woman Ruth was!

But there must have been something in Naomi and perhaps her husband that led Ruth to commit herself to Naomi. We believe it was her faith in God that made her what she was and why Ruth would cling to her. Naomi took Ruth and returned to the fields near Bethlehem, hoping that Ruth could be redeemed by a kinsman. Ruth's marriage would insure a future for them both.

Ruth left her gods for the God of Naomi and her husband. She must have seen something in them that she could not have seen in her own people. It could be love, it could be a moral standard, or it could be an abiding faith and hope. Ruth would rather have a future with her mother-in-law in a strange land than remain in the comfort of her home. She would go and die with Naomi.

Boaz must have seen in her a beauty of character and commitment that pleased him. He would redeem her, even if a nearer kinsman would not. And to their union and lineage came Obed, Jesse, and David. And the son of David was Jesus our Lord.

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, help me to so live that others will see your love and goodness in me. Help me to be a better spouse, so that my spouse will love you even more. Help me to see beyond the tears of the day into the hope of tomorrow. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Have I so lived that others see God in me? Am I the salt of the earth or the light of the world, as I should be? Are other people better because they came to know me?





# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

**March 22**

**Scripture Reading:** Ruth 2:14-4:22; 1 Sam 1

**Memory Verse:** 1 Samuel 1:11 And she vowed a vow and said, “O LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head.”

**Song:** [“All to Jesus I Surrender”](#)

God can take our prayers in great weakness and do great things with them. Hannah made a vow and kept it. God took her vow seriously and used her son Samuel to bless all Israel.

Hannah was childless, and her rival Peninnah provoked her grievously to irritate her. Hannah desperately wanted a child and vowed to God that if would give her a son, she would give him to the Lord all the days of his life. She also promised that no razor would touch his head. God granted Hannah's wish, and Hannah gave Samuel to God as soon as he was weaned.

Hannah said, “For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition that I made to him. Therefore I have lent him to the LORD. As long as he lives, he is lent to the LORD” (1 Samuel 1:27-28). She gave to the Lord the most precious thing she possessed, her only son. She gave up the person she longed for most.

What have you surrendered to the Lord? Many of us know what giving is, but not many people sacrifice what is most precious to them. God doesn't ask for our children, but he does ask us to give up our sins and our wrong attitudes. Some hang on to their sins and count them more precious than God.

Hannah gave up her son in thankfulness. She took care of him as she could, but she was willing to give him to God's service for life. Her gift was not selfish but lavish. She would only see him occasionally, she could only bless him occasionally, and she could only enjoy him occasionally. She lent her heart to God in the form of her son, Samuel.

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, I know that all I am and all I have come from Your gracious hand. I thank you for your many gifts. Please take my heart, my life, my mind, and my service as a gift of myself to you. Let me surrender my passions, so that I may serve You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Have I ever surrendered anything to God? Have I given God my heart? My life? My time? My service? Am I thankful for all that God has done for me?





# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

## March

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Samuel 2-4

**Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 2:22-24** Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting. And he said to them, “Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the LORD spreading abroad.

**Song:** [“Purer in Heart, O God”](#)

Eli failed to discipline his sons and will always be known as the example of a permissive parent. While he showed disappointment in his sons, he took no action to stop the evil of their fornication with the women who served at the entrance of the tabernacle. They were a disgrace to Israel, and their father simply complained of a bad report.

Eli's blindness is not unique. Affection can sometimes warp common sense. Each of us has filters that block out the things we do not want to hear. A young man or woman blindly marries a person he or she knows will cause ruin. Ears closed, they don't want to hear the truth about another.

When someone has long held to error, the truth appears impossible or offensive. Some simply are content to deceive themselves and have lost a love for the truth.

We should all think the best about others; but when we ignore an ugly truth and allow sin or error to continue, we show no kindness. Kindness does not ignore sin; it corrects it. Parents who laugh at their children's sinful behavior or ignore it do an irreparable harm to them. Would Eli have not done much better to have corrected his sons while there was hope?

**Prayer:** “Oh Lord, keep me free from laughing at something so serious at sin. Help me to see sin the way You see it. Help me to be sensitive to the heartache it causes. Help me, Father, to correct the sin in my own life. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Have I hardened my heart to the deceitfulness of sin? Have I laughed at sin, when I should have cried at the consequences of the sinner? Have I been willing to confront others for their sinfulness?



# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

**March 24**

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Samuel 5:1-9:10

**Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 7:3-4** And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, “If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroath from among you and direct your heart to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.” So the people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroath, and they served the LORD only.

**Song:** “[Father of Mercies](#)”

God is close to those who see their sin and return to Him. The Philistines dominated Israel as long as Israel lived in idolatry. But when Israel repented and put away the foreign gods, God relented and delivered them from the hand of the Philistines.

The Philistines were not content to let Israel go so easily. The lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. The Israelites in fear cried out to the Lord, and Samuel offered a sacrifice. The Philistines drew near for battle. But the LORDthundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were routed before Israel (7:10).

Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and called its name Ebenezer; for he said, “Till now the LORDhas helped us.” So the Philistines were subdued and did not again enter the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORDwas against the Philistines all the days of Samuel (7:12-13).

In our moments of crisis, we too can call to our Father, the God of Heaven, for help. The throne of grace can grant us grace and mercy to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:14-16). God gives us strength to meet the need and the ability to escape when the challenge is too big for us (1 Corinthians 10:13). When we are with Him, He is with us.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for giving me the help I have needed in days past; and thank you for the help you give me each day. Oh Father, I am thankful that I can rest my soul in Your hands, and that You give me the victory in Christ Jesus. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Have I remembered the times God helped me to overcome? Have I put away my sins and gods, so that I can come to God with my requests?



# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

**March 25**

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Samuel 9:11-12:18

**Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 10:8** “Then go down before me to Gilgal. And behold, I am coming to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, until I come to you and show you what you shall do.”

**Song:** [“My Hope is Built on Nothing Less”](#)

The people of Israel rejected God as their king, and God gave them Saul to be their king. About Saul, the Scripture says, “There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people” (9:2). God gave Saul the powers to be a prophet (10:12). He blessed him richly.

When Saul as king was to meet the Philistines, however, Samuel wanted him to go to Gilgal and wait. During that time, Saul delivered the people of Jabesh-Gilead from the hands of the Ammonites, winning their perpetual gratitude. He returned to Gilgal, and “all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal. There they sacrificed peace offerings before the LORD, and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly” (11:15).

In spite of the fact that the people of Israel rejected God as their king, God was good to them. When they cried out for rain, God sent thunder and rain that very day, and the people feared God (12:18).

It is amazing that God is better to us than we deserve. The people demanded a king, a desire that must have grieved the Lord. Yet He still heard their cries and blessed them. God is gracious even to His people even when they forget Him and long to be like the nations around them. God did Saul good up to this point and blessed the people. He is so patient. But no one can presume upon the patience of God and continue to go their own way. Chapter twelve is encouraging, but there is a chapter thirteen.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep me from presuming that I can live as I please and still be able to please You. You have been so good to me; help me to give myself to You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Have I counted all the good things God has done for me lately? Have I ever presumed upon the grace of God? When I was in need, did I cry out to God? Am I looking at those around me and wishing I were like them, even if it offends God?



# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

**March 26**

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Samuel 12:19-14:42

**Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 13:13-14** And Samuel said to Saul, “You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the LORD your God, with which he commanded you. For then the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you.”

**Song:** [“Will Your Anchor Hold?”](#)

Samuel asked Saul to wait seven days at Gilgal for Samuel to come and offer a sacrifice before the battle with the Philistines. Because Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin and not Levi, it would be presumptuous for him to offer the sacrifice; but Saul acted.

Samuel said, “What have you done?” And Saul said, “When I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines had mustered at Michmash, I said, ‘Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the favor of the LORD.’ So I forced myself, and offered the burnt offering” (1 Samuel 13:11-12).

Because of this presumptuous act, God decided to take the kingdom away from Saul and to give it to another. From this day forward Saul knows that he will not be able to keep the kingdom in his family. God could not use a man who acted on his own authority; He wanted a man “after his own heart” who would love and obey Him.

When people think of religion as their tool to use as they please, they cease to be obedient to the will of God. Though Saul would lose the kingdom to David in years to come, God did give Saul the victory at the pass of Michmash. God would use Saul until David was ready, but the kingdom had early on his reign departed from him.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep me from acting on my own authority and forgetting to wait upon You. Help me not to think that I have the right to do as I please. Keep me, Father, close to You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Have I taken matters into my own hands rather than waited upon God? Could God look down upon me as a man after His own heart? Can God use me?



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**March 27**

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Samuel 14:43-17:25

**Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 15:22-23** And Samuel said, “Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king.”

**Song:** [“Give Me the Bible”](#)

Saul was to destroy the Amalekites completely. He was to devote all that they had to destruction. “Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey” (15:3). “But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fattened calves and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them. All that was despised and worthless they devoted to destruction” (15:9).

When Samuel confronted Saul for his disobedience, Saul defended himself by saying the people were bringing back the best to sacrifice at Gilgal. Sacrifices, however, were not what God wanted; He wanted obedience. Obedience is better than sacrifices, and listening to the voice of the Lord than the fat of rams.

Some think it is easier to get forgiveness than it is to listen to authority, but this is presumption upon the grace of God. Some act as if God ought to be grateful to us that He gets anything out of us, but this mindset shows no respect for God. God is God, and we are not. We must learn that our place is to listen to God and do His will (Matthew 7:24-27).

Some think God is too gracious to reject anyone, but He rejected Saul from being king. He kept Moses out of the Promised Land. He would not let David build the temple. Sin has consequences, and we must never presume that we can take God's grace for granted.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me to keep my ears and my heart open to Your will. Deliver me from the temptation of thinking I can walk my own way and still please You. Forgive me for taking Your grace for granted. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Have I ever hardened my heart against the will of God? Have I ever listened to the people around me and preferred their way over God's way? Have I acted on my own will, taking the grace of God for granted? Have I thought it easier to get forgiveness than to get permission?



# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

**March 28**

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Samuel 17:26-19:24

**Memory Verses: 1 Samuel 17:45-47** Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD’s, and he will give you into our hand.”

**Song:** [“Rise Up, O Men of God!”](#)

David knew what we should know: the battle belongs to the Lord! David's faith in God was greater than the might of a giant. It is easy for us to believe only our physical senses and miss the spiritual. No matter how strong or how capable the blasphemous Goliath was, he was nothing compared to the power of God.

David used his faith and his weapon to defeat the warrior. The staff, the five stones, and the sling he carried were not just for dogs (17:43). They proved powerful weapons in the hand of a skilled shepherd. David had killed both lions and bears; he knew he could also kill the uncircumcised Philistine (17:36-37). The Lord was with him.

David understood he was fighting for the God of Israel. Far more was at stake than merely his life. While others feared the giant for their lives, this man of faith ran quickly to meet his opponent (17:48). Such faith and commitment to the God of Israel proved powerful; no wonder David was the “man after God's own heart.”

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me in my challenges to keep my faith in your strength rather than look at the strengths of the world. Forgive me for doubting You and looking to the ways of the world. I know You, Father, can do all things. Give me victory in my spiritual battles. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Have I given my confidence to God's ability to work in my life? Do I see the sufficiency I have in Christ (2 Corinthians 3:5)? How can God use me to defeat the goliaths of life?



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**March 29**

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Samuel 20-22

**Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 20:16-17** And Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "May the LORD take vengeance on David's enemies." And Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him, for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

**Song:** "[A Common Love](#)"

The love that Jonathan and David showed each other was pure and honorable; it was born of respect and trust. Such friendship is desirable before God and is to be treasured. "A friend loves at all times" (Proverbs 17:17).

The Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him (1 Samuel 16:14). After his disobedience in the matter of the Amalekites, Saul rarely found comfort. But the evil spirit departed from Saul when David played his lyre (16:23). Jonathan likely noticed this.

Though Saul had grown angry at David out of jealousy over David's superior victories (18:7-8), Jonathan remained a friend to him. Jonathan was a man of great spirit and sterling character. As Saul's heir he would have been king, if the kingdom had not departed from Saul. It is remarkable that Jonathan knit his soul to the man who would be given what he himself might have had. Jonathan may well have known what Samuel told his father, yet he never showed David any unkindness.

Jonathan risked his life more than once to save David from harm. Such devotion goes far beyond mere fondness. Such concern for the welfare of others is the kind of love our Savior showed to us in dying for our sins (John 15:13).

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, help us to love others the way you have loved us. Help us to forgive as we have been forgiven. Help us, O Father, never to forget Your love. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I overlook other people's faults? Am I jealous? Am I willing to risk myself in order to ensure the safety of others? Do I know how to love as Jesus does?



# IN **SEARCH** OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

**March 30**

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Samuel 23:1-25:31

**Memory Verses: 1 Samuel 24:6-7** He said to his men, “The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD’s anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the LORD’s anointed.” So David persuaded his men with these words and did not permit them to attack Saul. And Saul rose up and left the cave and went on his way.

**Song:** [“Hide Me, O My Savior”](#)

Saul worked ceaselessly to capture David and his men. Saul would not be content to leave David alive, since Samuel anointed him as the one who would take the throne of Israel. Though Saul sought his life, David would not take the life of Saul.

Having delivered the people of Keilah from the Philistines, David had to flee to the wilderness of Ziph to save his life. Eventually David and his men found their way to Engedi, which has a river flowing into the west shore of the Dead Sea. Engedi was welcome paradise in an area that was generally dry and barren.

Hiding in a cave at Engedi, David had an opportunity to take Saul's life. He was even able to cut off a corner of Saul's robe, when Saul entered the cave to relieve himself. David could easily have killed a vulnerable Saul, but he didn't. David showed kindness and mercy to one who was unwilling to give him mercy.

David more than once referred to Saul as “the Lord's anointed” (24:10; 26:9, 11, 16, 23). He would not put his hand against God's chosen one, because God chose him. David respected the Lord and gave love to another out of his love and devotion to God. We should do the same (Matthew 5:43-48).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me to love those who do not love me. Help me to be as You are to give good to those who deserve it and those who do not. Lord, bless my enemies. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I lift my hand or my voice against those I do not like? Do I find ways to hurt others, when I know they wish to do me harm? Am I content to let God handle others?





IN  
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**March 31**

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Samuel 25:32-30:10

**Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 30:6** And David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because all the people were bitter in soul, each for his sons and daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

**Song:** [Be Still and Know](#)

The Amalekites “had overcome Ziklag and burned it with fire and taken captive the women and all who were in it, both small and great. They killed no one, but carried them off and went their way. And when David and his men came to the city, they found it burned with fire, and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. Then David and the people who were with him raised their voices and wept until they had no more strength to weep” (30:1-4).

One can only imagine the pain David and his men felt at the loss of their houses, their families, and their possessions. David's two wives also went into captivity with the rest. Their pain was deep and personal. David bore the additional burden of hearing talk of the men stoning him. How tragic!

David “strengthened himself in the Lord his God.” He found strength in his Rock.

*I love you, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold (Psalm 18:1-2).*

When our hearts are broken, we too can find strength and solace in God our Rock, who will walk with us through every valley (Psalm 23).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me to find my strength in Your promises and Your love. Be with me, oh Father, when my darkest days come, that I might not lose heart. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do you see God as your strength and comfort? Have you cried out to Him when your world was shattered? When you have wept till you have no more strength, where do you turn?



**April 1**

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Samuel 30:11-31:13; 2 Sam 1-2

**Memory Verses: 1 Samuel 31:11-13** But when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men arose and went all night and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan, and they came to Jabesh and burned them there. And they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh and fasted seven days.

**Song:** [“Higher Ground”](#)

The Philistines defeated Saul and his sons at Mount Gilboa. For them it was not enough to slay them, they also felt the need to shame them. “So they cut off his head and stripped off his armor and sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines, to carry the good news to the house of their idols and to the people. They put his armor in the temple of Ashtaroth, and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan” (31:9-10).

But the people of Jabesh-Gilead remembered the kindness of Saul. When the Spirit of the Lord was still with Saul, Saul delivered the city of Jabesh-gilead from the hands of Nahash the Ammonite. Nahash had besieged the city, and the people sought a covenant with Nahash. Nahash said he would make a covenant with the people on this condition, “that I will gouge out the right eye of every one of you, thus I will make it a reproach on all Israel” (11: 2).

With zeal Saul gathered an army of 330,000 men. The Lord was with Saul and “accomplished deliverance in Israel” (11:11-13). The men of Jabesh never forgot what God through Saul had done for them. With courage they took down the shamed bodies of Saul from the walls. These walls faced the valley of the Jordan River and could be seen for many miles. Since Jabesh-gilead was not far from Beth-shan, they felt the shame of Israel and would not allow it to last.

Love for others will not allow shame to remain. Love for others remembers a kindness and helps in a time of need. Love for others is willing to take a risk to bless another.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me to love others the way You have love me. Help me, Father, to treat others with the respect that I would want for myself. Oh, Father, remind me of the good others have done for me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I defend my brethren when I hear someone speak ill of them? Am I guilty of ungodly gossip? Have I allowed others to be shamed and done nothing?



**April 2**

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Samuel 3:1-6:11

**Memory Verses: 2 Samuel 5:9-10** And David lived in the stronghold and called it the city of David. And David built the city all around from the Millo inward. And David became greater and greater, for the LORD, the God of hosts, was with him.

**Song:** [“Sing to Me of Heaven”](#)

Up to this time David as king over Judah had made his home in Hebron, but now he is king over all Israel. David captured the stronghold of Zion from the Jebusites at Jerusalem and built the “city of David.” The city of Jerusalem has such a tremendous history as a sacred site, the place where the name of the Lord dwells (Deuteronomy 26:2).

The Temple mount which lies next to the city of David is the place where Abraham offered up Isaac (Genesis 22:1-13). It would be the place where Solomon would build the Temple. While the city of David is Jerusalem, the heavenly city of God is the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:1-4).

For a thousand years the people of God offered sacrifices in the place where God established his name, Jerusalem. There Jesus taught, there the church began, and there the gospel was first preached. The Son of David still sits on His throne (Acts 2:25-36).

The city of David still lies just south of the temple mount, and David’s tomb remains a popular tourist site. While we may never get to see the tomb of David on earth, faithful Christians have the promise of entering the New Jerusalem.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, I am grateful that You have provided for my every need. You have blessed me with hope of a home in the New Jerusalem. Help me to live with faith and love, so that one day I may enter the place where You dwell. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I live with faith and love? Am I seeking a city that has foundations in God? Have I seen myself as a sojourner in this life?



**April 3**

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Samuel 6:12-10:19

**Memory Verse:** **2 Samuel 6:6-7** But when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen nearly upset *it*. And the anger of the LORD burned against Uzzah, and God struck him down there for his irreverence; and he died there by the ark of God.

**Song:** [“Lord of All Being, Throned Afar”](#)

Sometimes the best of intentions leads one astray. Uzzah was the son Abinadab, at whose house the ark of God had resided for many years (1 Samuel 7:1-2). Now, at last, David is bringing the ark to Jerusalem.

But David and the priests did not do their homework. They put the ark of God on a new cart pulled by oxen. This was not God’s way. The sons of Kohath, of the tribe of Levi, were to carry the holy objects on poles, so they might not touch them and die (Numbers 4:15; 1 Chronicles 15:2).

When Uzzah reached out to steady the ark, he had no thought of doing ill; but God forbid anyone from touching the ark. What he thought was a good thing, God considered irreverence. God is holy, and he will be treated as holy by those who draw near (Leviticus 10:1-3).

David got angry, and many today get angry when they find out something they think is right is really wrong. David said to the priests, “Because you did not *carry it* at the first, the LORD our God made an outburst on us, for we did not seek Him according to the ordinance” (1 Chronicles 15:13).

Doing things right is important. We have no right to act on our own without consulting the word of God; this is presumptuous and great sin (Psalm 19:13).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins. Open my heart and open my ears to Your will in every aspect of my life. O Lord, keep me from thinking I need to edit your ways to suit my own desires. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I consult Scripture before I act? Have I become angry at God when I did not understand why He does what He does?



April 4

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Samuel 11-13

**Memory Verse: 2 Samuel 11:2** It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful.

**Song:** ["Have Thine Own Way"](#)

In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel. And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem (11:1). David stayed home when he should have been out doing his duty. Idleness can breed wrongful desires.

When David saw the bathing beauty from his roof, he felt lust in his heart and had to have her. David sent for Bathsheba and lay with her. David knew she was married when he took her, but his lust was stronger than his reason.

Bathsheba conceived a child, and David had to find a way to cover up his sin. Uriah's sense of duty kept him from his wife on more than one occasion. Even when David got Uriah drunk, he did not go to his wife and lie with her. David saw no way to cover up his sin except to murder Uriah and marry Bathsheba, so he did. One sin inevitably leads to others. David's lust led to adultery, deceit, murder, and shame. This was David at his lowest.

Nathan came to David with the story of the little ewe lamb, ending with the accusation, "You are the man" (12:7). Because of his sinful behavior, David lost his first child with Bathsheba. Nathan predicted, "Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife" (12:10). David lost four of his children before his own death. The crime was punished fourfold.

One little act of lust can have years of consequence. Those who love the Lord must be careful not to despise the will of God and do what is evil.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, keep me from the lust of the flesh. Keep me from another man's wife. Keep me from women who have no morals. Oh Lord, I confess my sins to You. Deliver me from evil. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I keep my heart and my eyes under control? Do I see what I know might cause me to lust? Do I act when I know what I am doing is wrong? Do I tend to cover up my sin? Have I seen myself as I am?



April 5

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Samuel 14-16

**Memory Verse:** **2 Samuel 15:4** Then Absalom would say, “Oh that I were judge in the land! Then every man with a dispute or cause might come to me, and I would give him justice.”

**Song:** [“In Heavenly Love Abiding”](#)

Absalom was very winsome. Now in all Israel there was no one so much to be praised for his handsome appearance as Absalom. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him (14:25). Though he had wickedly killed his brother Amnon for defiling his sister Tamar, David still loved and longed for his son Absalom.

For some time Absalom fled to the king of Geshur to avoid being punished, but David let him come home. For two years David did not allow Absalom in his presence, but the time came when the two were reunited. Absalom “came to the king and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king, and the king kissed Absalom” (14:33).

Being restored to his place, Absalom began a campaign to win the hearts of Israel from David. He had fifty young men run before his chariot. Absalom greeted and kissed everyone coming to the king for justice and promised to grant their requests. “So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel” (15:6). In the meantime, Absalom plotted to steal the throne.

But those who plot evil often get caught in their own trap. While fleeing, Absalom’s head caught in the oak tree; and Joab “took three javelins in his hand and thrust them into the heart of Absalom while he was still alive in the oak” (18:14).

David mourned his son Absalom. “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!” Such was the love of a father, even for his rebellious son. God loves us too, even in our sins and wishes we would love Him.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me never to be disloyal to You. Keep me in Your love, and may my heart never grow weary of serving You. Keep me from selfishness and pride. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I lift my heart and hand up against my Father in heaven? Have I forgotten all that the Father has done for me? Am I living in good faith with my Father in heaven?



**April 6**

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Samuel 17-19

**Memory Verse: 2 Samuel 18:33** And the king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And as he went, he said, “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!”

**Song:** [“Father of Mercies”](#)

The loss of a child, even when the child is rebellious and disobedient, is heart-breaking and nearly inconsolable. Absalom had led a revolt to destroy David and take his throne. He had spent considerable time gaining the favor of the people and undermining his father.

One might think David would be glad to take vengeance on his son, but he had given strict orders to his commanders, Joab and Abishai and Ittai, “Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom.” And all the people heard when the king gave orders to all the commanders about Absalom (18:5).

Nonetheless Joab and his armor-bearers found Absalom caught in a tree. “Absalom was riding on his mule, and the mule went under the thick branches of a great terebinth, and his head caught fast in the oak, and he was suspended between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him went on” (18:9). Joab threw three javelins into Absalom’s heart, and his armor-bearers finished him off.

David wept as a father, wishing he had died instead. Absalom never knew the extent of the undeserved love he had from his father. In his selfishness Absalom rebelled. David loved his son anyway.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me to love others, even when they do not love me. Help me to forgive those who hate and trespass against me. Help me to love others the way the Lord Jesus has loved me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I hold grudges? Am I willing to deal gently with my enemies? Do I forgive others the way God has forgiven me?



April 7

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Samuel 20:1-22:34

**Memory Verses: 2 Samuel 22:2-4** “The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge, my savior; you save me from violence. I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.”

**Song:** [“There is a Fountain”](#)

David was once again at war with the Philistines, but this time David grew weary during the battle (21:15). And Ishbi-benob, one of the descendants of the giants, whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of bronze, and who was armed with a new sword, thought to kill David. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah came to his aid and attacked the Philistine and killed him. Then David’s men swore to him, “You shall no longer go out with us to battle, lest you quench the lamp of Israel” (21:16-17).

We all find ourselves limited by time and strength. We wished we never needed the help of others and that we could all we desire by ourselves, but we cannot. The one who had killed his “ten thousands” found himself unable to fight this day.

God rescued him through Abishai, even though the opponent was a giant. David was thankful for what God had done for him. God was his rock and fortress, the one who protected him from the harmful. God was the “horn of my salvation,” the power behind his deliverance. God was his savior, when he could not save himself.

God is a deliverer to us. Paul said, “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me in my times of weakness. I know that I can do nothing apart from You and Your Son Jesus. I thank You, Father, for delivering me when I knew it and when I did not know it. Be with me and help me always. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I look to God in times of trouble? Can I look back in my life and see how God rescued me from harm and from temptation?





April 8

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Samuel 22:35-24:17

**Memory Verse: 2 Samuel 24:14** Then David said to Gad, “I am in great distress. Let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is great; but let me not fall into the hand of man.”

**Song:** [“His Grace Reaches Me”](#)

Israel had sinned against God, and the Lord incited David’s heart against them to number Israel. David’s heart struck him after he had numbered the people. And David said to the LORD, “I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have done very foolishly” (2 Samuel 24:10).

“Thus says the LORD, Three things I offer you. Choose one of them, that I may do it to you.’ So Gad came to David and told him, and said to him, “Shall three years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days’ pestilence in your land? Now consider, and decide what answer I shall return to him who sent me” (24:12-13).

David chose to put himself in the hands of God, and God punished Israel with pestilence. From Dan to Beersheba (north to south) 70,000 men died.

While the wrath of God is great, David would rather put himself in God’s hands than in the hands of men who do not care at all. Wrath often comes out of love and caring, but only ugliness comes from those who do not care. God limits his wrath, but men frequently know no limits to their ugliness.

God disciplines us but always for our good (Heb. 12:5-12). Rather to have one who disciplines for our good than to fall into the hands of someone who has no interest in your spiritual welfare. We can always put ourselves in the hands of God (1 Pet. 4:19), even in the hardest times of our lives.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep me in your hands. May my love for you and your love for me never fail. Help me to trust You in every circumstance. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I keep God in my heart in good times and in bad? When I have sinned, am I willing to accept the discipline of the Lord as being for my good? Can I trust God, even when I have sinned?



April 9

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Samuel 24:18-25; 1 Kings 1:1-2:18

**Memory Verse: 1 Kings 2:2-3** “I am about to go the way of all the earth. Be strong, and show yourself a man, and keep the charge of the LORD your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his rules, and his testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn.”

**Song:** [“Home of the Soul”](#)

If you were preparing to die, what would you tell your son? These are the words of King David to his son Solomon, whom Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada had anointed as the new king in Gihon.

Passing on the faith is most important in life. Solomon started his kingdom strong but marriages to foreign women stole his heart from God. The path to contentment and prosperity in life can always be found in a relationship with the God of heaven. Solomon heard that from his father, but this wise man had to learn it for himself through experience (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Every loving parent wants his son to be strong and show himself a man, to do the right thing and avoid sin and compromise. Every loving parent wants his son to remain faithful to God. David, the man after God’s own heart, had seen enough bitterness with some of his other sons. Now this son, Solomon, was the king. David knew that his life would influence an entire nation.

A man can only influence his own day and the generation that follows. David did his best to speak to Solomon about his soul, hoping to keep him faithful to God. We must all be responsible parents and encourage our children to do right and avoid the wrong.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me to be a wise father to my children, to lead them in the right path. Father, help me in my times of weakness to overcome temptation, so that I may lead others in the right way. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do you pause to consider your example before your children? What legacy of faith will you leave for your children?



**April 10**

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Kings 2:19-4:19

**Memory Verse: 1 Kings 3:8-9** “And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?”

**Song:** [“Learning to Lean”](#)

God offered Solomon the opportunity to ask for anything he wanted: “Ask what I shall give you” (3:5). Solomon could have asked for anything he desired, but he asked for an understanding mind to govern God’s people. He thought of others before himself.

It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. And God said to him, “Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days” (3:10-14).

Perhaps no one in all history has enjoyed the blessing of God more than Solomon, and the source of this blessing came because he asked the ability to do well the task God had granted him. God hears unselfish prayers (James 4:3). The Lord offers to us “wisdom” to live our lives too (James 1:5-8). The Word of God is the source of great wisdom, and we must be diligent to go to God and lean on his understanding (Proverbs 3:1-8).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, I realize I don’t always know how to come in and go out and need your help. Give me wisdom to know how to deal with life’s pressures. Grant me an understanding heart that I may serve others with love and do what is best for them. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I think of others when I pray for God to help me? Do I have a servant’s heart? Are my prayers selfish? Do I lean upon God?



April 11

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Kings 4:20-7:39

**Memory Verse: 1 Kings 6:37-38** In the fourth year the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid, in the month of Ziv. And in the eleventh year, in the month of Bul, which is the eighth month, the house was finished in all its parts, and according to all its specifications. He was seven years in building it.

**Song:** ["Lord We Come Before Thee Now"](#)

Seven years. At the beginning it seems like such a long time, but at the end it seems to have past far too quickly. Solomon's Temple was glorious, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Solomon spared no expense in building it to glorify the God of heaven. The temple would stand for centuries.

The temple's construction most likely took place between 967-957 B.C. The temple would serve Israel until Nebuchadnezzar's army destroyed it in 587 BC. The site of the Temple was on the eastern of the two hills on which Jerusalem was built—that known in Scripture as Mt. Moriah (Genesis 22:1-14; 2 Chronicles 3:1) or Mt. Zion.

However glorious a building the Temple was, the most important thing is that it was the house of God, the place where God dwelled. Today, God dwells not in houses made of wood or stone but in his saints. "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

It is an amazing and marvelous thing to know that as Christians our body is a temple, to know that God dwells within us. Such knowledge (only known by Scripture) ought to humble us and assure us of God's presence in our lives. We should therefore live holy lives to honor God and live with confidence in God's help.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, I am thankful that You know me and stay close to me every day. Help me, Father, to rely on Your strength when I am weak and keep me from temptation. Help me to live a holy life that I may reflect Your holiness. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I recall the presence of God in my life when I am tempted? When I hurt? When I have been mistreated? Do I realize God knows all about me? Do I treat my body as a temple of God?



April 12

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Kings 7:40-9:9

**Memory Verse: 1 Kings 9:3** And the LORD said to him [Solomon], “I have heard your prayer and your plea, which you have made before me. I have consecrated this house that you have built, by putting my name there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time.

**Song:** [“Oh Lord, We Praise Thy Name”](#)

I have had few experiences in my life more memorable than my opportunity to walk the grounds of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The 14-acre site now hosts the Islamic Dome of the Rock and a mosque. Cedar trees now grow not far from where scholars believed the temple stood. I was able also to go near the Wailing Wall, where the Jews pray. God’s eyes and heart are still upon Jerusalem, and He seeks people whose heart are completely His (2 Chronicles 16:9).

There are some tunnels underneath the Temple Mount and a museum nearby, which tell much about the Temple in the days of Solomon and the later temple where Jesus preached. There are some steps up to the temple that were present in the days of our Lord. Perhaps he used them to enter the temple at some time. Worshipers took ritual baths before entering the holy ground of the temple. They did not want to appear before God unclean.

Faithful Jews went up to the Temple to worship. Christians need not make pilgrimages to worship (as the Eunuch did). God does not ask them to travel but to worship Him in spirit and in truth. God seeks such worshipers (John 4:23-24).

When we worship God, He is near us—wherever we are. Let us worship in love and with reverence when we draw near to Him.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, I thank You for all that You have done for me. I pray that my worship will glorify Your name and be pleasing to You. May You, Father, never be ashamed that I wear Your name in Christ. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I respect the fact that I wear the name of Jesus Christ each day? Am I willing to be God’s man? If the Lord were looking for a heart completely His, would He look at me?



April 13

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Kings 9:10-11:25

**Memory Verse: 1 Kings 11:9-10** And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice <sup>10</sup>and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. But he did not keep what the LORD commanded.

**Song:** ["Near to the Heart of God"](#)

Solomon, though wise in many things, was not wise about his own behavior and soul. King Solomon loved many foreign women from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the people of Israel, "You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love (11:1-2).

He had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart. For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father (11:3-4).

No matter how wise we think we are, we are all vulnerable to temptation and sin. Solomon loved God wholeheartedly early in his reign, but in his old age had lost his commitment by giving his love to foreign women, women he had no right to marry. One cannot repeatedly transgress God's law and remain passionate toward God.

Sin dulls the heart (Hebrews 3:12-13). When lawlessness increases, love tends to grow cold (Matthew 24:12). Solomon advised, "Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life" (Proverbs 4:23). Jeremiah observed, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). Let us work hard to keep our hearts with all diligence.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, I thank You for loving me and giving me your marvelous grace. Help me to remain close to You. May I never outlive my love for You or let my heart dull because of sin. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Am I as close to God today as I was a year ago? A month ago? Have I allowed myself to commit the same sin again and again? Am I willing to let other people drive a wedge between God and me?



**April 14**

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Kings 11:26-13:34

**Memory Verse: 1 Kings 12:8** But he abandoned the counsel that the old men gave him and took counsel with the young men who had grown up with him and stood before him.

**Song:** [“Give Me the Bible”](#)

Jesus said, “Pay attention to what you hear” (Mark 4:24). A person who counsels with a foolish person will get foolish counsel. Rehoboam foolishly listened to the young men and rejected the counsel of the older men who could have helped him. Arrogance and selfishness led Rehoboam to alienate the ten tribes.

Rehoboam said, “My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.” So the king did not listen to the people, for it was a turn of affairs brought about by the LORD that he might fulfill his word, which the LORD spoke by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

Because of the idolatrous sin of Solomon, God promised to give ten tribes of Israel to Jeroboam and leave the son of Solomon to reign over only two tribes, Judah and Benjamin (1 Kings 11:31-40). While this was God’s plan, Rehoboam acted foolishly on his own. His selfish desire for power turned the hearts of Israel away from him.

Pride still goes before a fall, and Solomon tried to tell this to his son (Proverbs 11:2; 16:18; 29:23).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, I thank You for all that You have done for me. Keep me from haughty pride and arrogant assumptions. Remind me always of Your grace. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I assume too much authority? Have I overstepped my bounds? Have I treated others with unnecessary pride?



April 15

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Kings 14-17

**Memory Verse: 1 Kings 16:34** In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation at the cost of Abiram his firstborn, and set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spoke by Joshua the son of Nun.

**Song:** ["I Know Who Holds Tomorrow"](#)

Our memory verse sends us back to Joshua 6:26: Then Joshua made them (Israel) take an oath at that time, saying, "Cursed before the LORD is the man who rises up and builds this city Jericho; with *the loss of* his firstborn he shall lay its foundation, and with *the loss of* his youngest son he shall set up its gates."

Joshua had pronounced a curse on anyone who would rebuild the city of Jericho. The curse *was* fulfilled more than five hundred years after it was uttered. It has been supposed that the act against which the curse was directed, was an attempt at the restoration of the walls—the very walls which had been miraculously cast down. We do know that people had at some point lived within the city after the walls fell (Judges 3:13; 2 Samuel 10:15), but no one had sought to rebuild the walls of the city until Hiel.

Time passes, and people think God forgets. He doesn't. He doesn't forget old sins, for which we do not repent. He doesn't forget His promises. He doesn't forget His warnings. Though it escapes the notice of men (2 Peter 3:5), God is not a man. Time does not remove the truth God speaks. This is why we ought to keep our lives right before God. This is why we can trust the promises of God. God does not forget.

But when we repent and confess our sins, God does forget (Hebrews 8:12; 1 John 1:9; 2 Corinthians 5:21) and remembers no more.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, I thank You for keeping your promises. Thank you for forgetting my sins against me. Oh Lord, help me not to look the other way concerning my own sins. I confess them to you freely; please forgive me and do not hold them against me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I willingly forget my sins or do I confess and repent of them? Does God look the other way when I violate His commands? Can I sin with impunity?





**April 16**

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Kings 18:1-20:25

**Memory Verse: 1 Kings 18:21** And Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.” And the people did not answer him a word.

**Song:** [“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”](#)

Fear is the cause of much hesitancy, and sometimes it takes a spark of faith in God to move people out of indecision. Elijah and Jezebel had bullied the people with their idolatry. One hundred prophets hid in caves, and the people would not openly own their faith in Jehovah God for fear of the wicked king and queen.

Ahab called Elijah “the troubler of Israel,” but Elijah knew who really troubled Israel (18:17-18). Ahab gathered his 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah to Mount Carmel for the showdown. Which God would bring fire to consume the sacrifice?

Baal’s prophets prepared their bull and called upon the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, “O Baal, answer us!” But there was no voice, and no one answered (18:26).

God answered Elijah’s prayer, however, even after the sacrifice was doused three times with much water. “Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.” And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, “The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God” (18:38-39).

God proves Himself again and again. He is not afraid as men are. Let us not fall into indecision and unwillingness to stand. When we are willing to stand with God, He is willing to stand with us (18:36). If we stand, we may turn other hearts back as well.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, I thank You for all that You do. Help me to stand in faith, even if I am alone. Help me to grow in my willingness to serve You and to encourage others. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I stand up for Jesus? Have I decided to serve Him always and not give in to the world’s religions? Do I believe as I ought?



April 17

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Kings 20:26-22:36

**Memory Verse: 1 Kings 20:28** And a man of God came near and said to the king of Israel, “Thus says the LORD, „Because the Syrians have said, “The LORD is a god of the hills but he is not a god of the valleys,” therefore I will give all this great multitude into your hand, and you shall know that I am the LORD.””

**Song:** [“Glorious Is Thy Name”](#)

Throughout the centuries men have tried to put God in a box and limit Him. They cannot; God is the God of all people in all places for all time.

God gave the wicked king of Israel, Ahab, victory over Ben-hadad and the Syrian army. In their defeat the servants of Ben-hadad said, “Their gods are gods of the hills, and so they were stronger than we. But let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they” (20:23).

Some people think God forgives some sins but not others. Some people claim God means some laws but not others. Some people hold to some promises of God but ignore others. Some want Jesus as Savior but do not regard Him as Lord. They put God in a box, or so they think.

I wonder if the God we believe in is too small. Have we limited His power, His wisdom, or His grace? Do we think God is blind to what happens outside of church? Is our God only a Sunday God but absent on other days?

Our God is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. He is also the God of all grace and comfort. We have a glorious, awesome, wonderful, majestic, and able God. Let us give thanks and remember that He can do all things. Nothing is impossible for Him (Matthew 19:26).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, I thank You for all You have done in my life to bless me and save me. Help me to keep You at the center of my heart. Lord, forgive me if I have ever thought You to be small, for I know You can do all things. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I see God for who He truly is: omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent? Have I ever put God’s grace or His love in a box? Have I ever tried to make God over in my own image?



**April 18**

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Kings 22:37-53; 2 Kings 1:1-4:28

**Memory Verse: 2 Kings 4:6-7** When the vessels were full, she said to her son, “Bring me another vessel.” And he said to her, “There is not another.” Then the oil stopped flowing. She came and told the man of God, and he said, “Go, sell the oil and pay your debts, and you and your sons can live on the rest.”

**Song:** [“A Wonderful Savior”](#)

A widow of a servant of Elisha found herself in real trouble. “The creditor has come to take my two children to be his slaves” (4:1). She had nothing to pay and feared losing her children to the creditor, so she came to Elisha for help. He asked her what she had in the house.

And she said, “Your servant has nothing in the house except a jar of oil.” Then he said, “Go outside, borrow vessels from all your neighbors, empty vessels and not too few. Then go in and shut the door behind yourself and your sons and pour into all these vessels. And when one is full, set it aside.” So she went from him and shut the door behind herself and her sons. And as she poured they brought the vessels to her (4:2-5).

God provides what we need when we need it. He often gives to us at the time we need it and not before. God’s eye is on his servants to help them. He does not forget. When we seek His kingdom and His righteousness, He provides for our needs (Matthew 6:33). Have faith. We all find times in our lives when we cannot manage on our own. We need the Lord. We can be thankful that He opens His heart to us.

Paul said, “And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for providing for my every need every day. Thank You for taking care of my spiritual needs and saving my soul. Oh Father, may I never forget how gracious You are. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I seek God’s help when I have needs, or do I try to manage my life on my own? Have I forgotten how gracious God is to my every need?



April 19

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Kings 4:29-8:15

**Memory Verse: 2 Kings 5:11** But Naaman was angry and went away, saying, “Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper.”

**Song:** [“Buried with Christ”](#)

“Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean” (5:10). God wants our simple obedience to His instructions.

“I thought...” God speaks; but when He says something that men don’t expect, people start thinking on their own. Naaman not only heard something he didn’t expect, he also got angry.

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD. For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:8-9).

Elisha had told the leper Naaman to dip himself seven times in the Jordan River. Such an easy request was to Naaman inconsequential. He thought to give Naaman great wealth for healing him in a dramatic way. Instead he heard that he needed to go dip seven times in a muddy river. It just didn’t make sense to Naaman.

God didn’t want payment or show; He wanted obedience. If Naaman wouldn’t dip in the Jordan, he wouldn’t do anything. Dipping didn’t earn his cleansing, but it did comply with God’s request. Rather than getting mad at God’s instructions, why not do what the servants of Naaman advised their master, “My father, it is a great word the prophet has spoken to you; will you not do it? Has he actually said to you, „Wash, and be clean’?”

So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean (2 Kings 5:13-14).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me to humble myself, simply listen, and obey what You say. Remove my angry pride and self-serving wisdom from me. Grow in me an obedient servant’s heart. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I get angry at God when I don’t understand or disagree with His teaching? Do I believe God to be wiser than I am or do I trust my own judgment? Do I obey the Lord only when He agrees with me?



**April 20**

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Kings 8:16-10:24

**Memory Verse: 2 Kings 10:16-17** And he said, "Come with me, and see my zeal for the LORD." So he had him ride in his chariot. And when he came to Samaria, he struck down all who remained to Ahab in Samaria, till he had wiped them out, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke to Elijah.

**Song:** ["Come, We That Love the Lord"](#)

Once Jehu was made king of Israel, he sought to fulfill the word of Elijah the prophet that the house of Ahab would be completely wiped out (1 Kings 21:21; 2 Kings 9:8-10). Jehu met Joram on the plain of Jezreel, drew his bow with his full strength, and shot Joram between the shoulders, so that the arrow pierced his heart, and he sank in his chariot. Jehu said to Bidkar his aide, "Take him up and throw him on the plot of ground belonging to Naboth the Jezreelite." The Lord promised to repay Ahab for his treachery against Naboth and his sons (1 Kings 21:13).

Jehu killed Ahaziah, who married Ahab's daughter (2 Kings 9:26-27). He had Jezebel's servants throw her down from the window of her house to the streets. The horses trampled her, and dogs ate her body according to the word of the Lord through Elijah (1 Kings 21:23).

Some sins are so offensive to God that He swears to remove completely those who commit them. No matter how powerful some think they are, there comes a time when God steps in and recompenses people for their works.

For all time the name "Jezebel" will stand for a wicked woman. No one today would name his daughter "Jezebel," because of all the ugliness the name suggests. Let no one think that sin is free from consequences.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, help me stay free from sin. Deliver me from evil and give me strength in times of temptation. Forgive my weaknesses and grow in my heart zeal for what is right. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I permit in my heart the luxuries of sin for a season? Am I able to see beyond the present to the future consequences of my behavior?



**April 21**

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Kings 10:25-14:10

**Memory Verse: 2 Kings 11:17** And Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and people, that they should be the LORD's people, and also between the king and the people.

**Song:** "[Great Is Thy Faithfulness](#)"

Athaliah exercised great political influence during her son's reign of one year (1 Kings 8:27-28). At her son's death from battle wounds, she tried to gain power for herself by having all male heirs killed. She managed to rule Judah for six years (2 Kings 11:1-4), being the only woman to do so. Finally, Jehoiada, the priest, led a revolt, crowning the child Joash as king and bringing about Athaliah's death (2 Kings 11:5-20).

Jehoiada, the priest, crowned Joash (also called Jehoash), the legitimate heir to the monarchy of Judah (2 Kings 11:4). At the time, Joash was a child of seven, and Jehoiada evidently acted as regent for a number of years. Jehoiada's role was positive and beneficial; he influenced the young king to restore the Temple. The death of Jehoiada marked a precipitous decline in the king's goodness and faithfulness to the Lord (2 Chronicles 22-24).

A covenant was a sworn, legally binding, enduring relationship between two parties. Both parties made promises of loyalty. In a covenant with the Lord, the people swore to be obedient to His will. In the covenant with the king, the people swore to follow him. In response the Lord promised to act with covenant lovingkindness with Judah as long as they were faithful.

A contract has a beginning and ending point when promises are fulfilled, but a covenant endures forever. "But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments" (Psalm 103:17-18).

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for all Your enduring promises. Help me, Father, to be faithful to the covenant I entered with You through the blood of Christ. Help me to do Your will always. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Have I honored in my life today the covenant I entered with Christ when I became a Christian and His blood cleansed me? Am I as faithful to the Lord as He is to me?



April 22

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Kings 14:11-17:18

**Memory Verse: 2 Kings 16:14** And the bronze altar that was before the LORD he removed from the front of the house, from the place between his altar and the house of the LORD, and put it on the north side of his altar.

**Song:** [“Bind Us Together”](#)

King Ahaz burned incense under every green tree and was never faithful to the God of Israel. He sought the help of Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, rather than the help of God. When Ahaz went to Damascus to meet the Assyrian king, he saw an altar he liked better than the bronze altar in the house of the Lord.

Consequently, Ahaz sent a model of the altar to Uriah the priest along with its pattern and exact details. He ordered Uriah to build this altar and have it ready by his return from Damascus, and Uriah did so. As a priest, Uriah was as disloyal to God as Ahaz. Unlike Jehoiada who stood up to wicked Athaliah, Uriah allowed the king’s instructions to defile the Temple.

In later years Hezekiah, out of respect to God and His Word, removed the wicked things Ahaz added to the Temple (2 Chronicles 29:15-19).

Ahaz moved God’s altar over to the side and demanded that his own altar be used. Ahaz had no right to add his own altar, any more than one today has a right to add elements to the worship. One may like roast lamb, but it would be evil to add it to the Lord’s Supper. One may like instrumental music, but it would be evil to add it to the worship of the church.

Rather than think about what we like, let us give ourselves wholly to the will of God and do only those things that please Him and give Him glory. God tells us what He likes, and we should always be content to please Him and not ourselves.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, may my heart melt inside of Yours, to do Your will and not my own. Keep me, Father, from selfish ways that forget You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I think I must have my own way in worship? Have I, like Uriah, been weak to outside pressures and allowed the worship of the Lord to be corrupted? Would I stand for God against the king?



April 23

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Kings 17:19-19:24

**Memory Verse:** **2 Kings 18:6-7** For he held fast to the LORD. He did not depart from following him, but kept the commandments that the LORD commanded Moses. And the LORD was with him; wherever he went out, he prospered.

**Song:** ["Higher Ground"](#)

What is your definition of success? This is perhaps the best definition of all. Hezekiah held fast to the Lord, and the Lord prospered him. Hezekiah did right in the sight of the Lord. "He removed the high places and broke down the sacred pillars and cut down the Asherah" (18:3-4). Hezekiah "trusted in the LORD the God of Israel, so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those who were before him" (18:5).

Hezekiah "did what was good and right and faithful before the LORD his God. And every work that he undertook in the service of the house of God and in accordance with the law and the commandments, seeking his God, he did with all his heart, and prospered" (2 Chronicles 31:20-21).

God is with those whose hearts are completely His (2 Chronicles 16:9); the Lord goes to and fro throughout the earth seeking such people to strongly support.

Our task is to set our hearts wholly upon serving Him and living for Him. Let us also clear out the offensive from our lives. Let us too put away greed and lust. May our hearts be set fully upon serving the Lord, focused on the glory to be revealed and not the passing pleasures of sin!

Perhaps Hezekiah saw the ugly end of Israel to the north, which was destroyed and taken into captivity by the Assyrians because they did not fear the Lord but practiced idolatry. They did not listen to the prophets but lived in rebellion. Samaria ultimately became a religiously pluralistic nation that "feared the Lord" but "served their own gods" (2 Kings 17:7-41). Such a course is destined for utter failure. Hezekiah followed the better course, and the Lord prospered him.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, help me to set my heart wholly upon serving You. May I trust You, Your wisdom, and Your promises in every matter. Help me to be patient and to rely on Your kindness in Your time. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Is my heart fully fixed on pleasing the Lord? Have I grown in my love for God this year? When I am worried and challenged, do I call upon the Lord (19:2)?





April 24

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Kings 19:25-23:9

**Memory Verse: 2 Kings 22:10-11** Then Shaphan the secretary told the king, “Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.” And Shaphan read it before the king. When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes.

**Song:** [“O Master Let Me Walk with Thee”](#)

Unlike his grandfather King Manasseh, who “led them [Judah] astray to do more evil than the nations had done whom the LORD destroyed before the people of Israel,” Josiah’s heart was tender toward the Lord. “He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and walked in all the way of David his father, and he did not turn aside to the right or to the left” (22:2).

Manasseh “shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another” (21:16). So wicked were Manasseh and Judah that the Lord said, “Behold, I am bringing upon Jerusalem and Judah such disaster that the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle” 21:12). In days to come Nebuchadnezzar would march into Jerusalem three times and fulfill the promise of God by completely destroying the city.

But before that time, Josiah brought about a restoration of Judah to the Lord, destroying the idolatry of his nation and turning his heart toward God (23:4-25). What caused his change? He heard the Book of the Law of the Lord. Hezekiah immediately humbled himself, tore his clothes, and wept. He commanded that the Book of the covenant be read to all the people. He could not hold the truth to himself.

There is power in the Word to convert hearts and to change lives. Josiah heard the truth and changed his life and his nation—at least for a time. The greatest need of our day is to hear the Word of the Lord and to repent of our sins. God’s Word is His gift of truth, love, and righteousness. Let us read it, take it into our hearts, meditate on it, and practice it.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, may my heart never harden against You. Keep me tender and humble that I may hear what You have said. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I weep over my sins? Do I care that people around me are lost in sin? Have I humbled my heart and looked at my own behavior? Am I willing to restore God’s way in my life?



April 25

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Kings 23:10-25; 1 Chronicles 1:1-16

**Memory Verses: 2 Kings 24:3-4** Surely this came upon Judah at the command of the LORD, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, and also for the innocent blood that he had shed. For he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the LORD would not pardon.

**Song:** ["Glorious Is Thy Name"](#)

God is full of grace and comfort to those who seek to do His will. When men, however, forsake His will, God does not forget evil; He punishes it. There is always a day of reckoning for the wicked who harden their "faces harder than rocks" and refuse to repent (Jeremiah 5:3). Judah believed the lie that God would not send them sword or famine (5:12-13). Though Josiah had restored Judah, the nation went right back to their sins at his death. For a time God spared them, but the nation had gone too far.

Judah had done an appalling and horrible thing in that their prophets prophesied falsely and their priests ruled on their own authority; and the people loved it (5:30-31). They were not ashamed of their abominations, and the people did not even know how to blush over their sins (Jeremiah 6:15).

The grace of God is abundant to the penitent but not limitless. There comes a time when God's wrath comes fully on those who refuse to repent of their sins. "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life" (Galatians 6:7-8).

In 607 BC Nebuchadnezzar marched into Jerusalem with the Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites "according to the word of the Lord, which He had spoken through His servants the prophets. "Be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23).

The best day to repent is today.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, keep me from ever doubting Your love or Your wrath. Keep me from presuming I can continue in sin. Forgive me, Father, for arguing against You over my sins. May my heart ever be tender and penitent in Your eyes. Keep me from hardening my heart against Your will. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I sometimes ignore God's will and do as I please? Have I assumed I could sin with impunity? Do I blush over sin?



April 26

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Chronicles 1:17-3:9

**Memory Verse: 1 Chronicles 2:7** The son of Carmi: Achan, the troubler of Israel, who broke faith in the matter of the devoted thing.

**Song:** ["Take Time to Be Holy"](#)

Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I implore you, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and give praise to Him; and tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me." So Achan answered Joshua and said, "Truly, I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel, and this is what I did: when I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I coveted them and took them; and behold, they are concealed in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it" (Joshua 7:19-21).

Then Joshua and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the mantle, the bar of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent and all that belonged to him; and they brought them up to the valley of Achor. Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day." And all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. They raised over him a great heap of stones that stands to this day, and the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the valley of Achor to this day (7:24-26).

The things devoted to destruction belonged to God (Joshua 6:18-21) Achan had no right to them. Because Achan took what did not belong to him, Israel lost the battle over Ai. God takes what is His seriously, whether we do or not. We trouble ourselves and the church when we take matters into our own hands and act beyond our authority.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, I know that You are holy; and all that belongs to You is holy. Help me not to treat as common the things that are not. Let me not keep to myself what really belongs to You. May I hold You as God always and myself as Your servant. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I act without regard to the Holiness of God? Have I treated God and the things that are holy as if they were common? Have I taken from God what should only have belonged to Him? Have I troubled others by my selfishness?



April 27

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Chronicles 3:10-6:30

**Memory Verse: 1 Chronicles 5:20** They were helped against them, and the Hagarites and all who *were* with them were given into their hand; for they cried out to God in the battle, and He answered their prayers because they trusted in Him.

**Song:** ["My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less"](#)

The sons of Reuben and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, *consisting* of valiant men, men who bore shield and sword and shot with bow and *were* skillful in battle, *were* 44,760, who went to war. They made war against the Hagarites, Jetur, Naphish and Nodab (5:18-19). They trusted in God, and God gave them into the hands of the three tribes. The Israelites took away their cattle: their 50,000 camels, 250,000 sheep, 2,000 donkeys; and 100,000 men. For many fell slain, because the war *was* of God. And they settled in their place until the exile (5:21-22).

When you are under great pressure, to whom do you turn? When the burden is heavier than you can bear, where is your source of strength and deliverance? When life has crashed down upon you, where is your help?

While later generations were unfaithful, the generation of the two and a half tribes that settled the land across the Jordan trusted in God and cried out to Him. Many decisions we think are man's are not really. God is behind it.

We do not know what the future holds. Life takes many twists and turns. But we can hold tight to His hand and can know that he will watch over His own.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, we put ourselves into Your hands, because we know You are a great and powerful God. Help us to do the work You have given us without fear. Stand by us and give to us the help we need to conquer the lands You have given us. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I trust God over my own judgment? Do I cry out to God for help? Have I seen times in my life when God has helped me through my struggles?



April 28

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Chronicles 6:31-8:28

**Memory Verse: 1 Chronicles 7:22** Their father Ephraim mourned many days, and his relatives came to comfort him.

**Song:** ["Because He Lives"](#)

The men of Gath killed the sons of Ephraim. This interesting little episode gives us a glimpse of the state of Hebrew society in Egypt; for this story seems to have taken place before the exodus. The patriarch Ephraim was advanced in age. We know nothing more of this story than what we learn in this passage.

Jameson, Fausset, and Brown observe: "It was in perfect consistency with the ideas and habits of Oriental shepherds that they should have made a raid on the neighboring tribe of the Philistines for the purpose of plundering their flocks. For nothing is more common among them than hostile incursions on the inhabitants of towns, or on other nomad tribes with whom they have no league of amity."

Ephraim mourned many days. The loss of a child is a bitter occurrence, and those who suffer such a fate do not "get over it" quickly. Those who lose a loved one need comforting, and Ephraim's relatives came to comfort him. While Ephraim had other children, no one can replace the children he lost.

While we cannot retrieve those lost to death, we can take comfort in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We do not have to grieve as do the rest who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). We can have the assurance of life beyond this life and know Christ is coming for us to take us home to be with him forever.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, I thank You for being the God of all comfort. I thank You for helping me through my saddest times and giving me the comfort of Your love. Help me to comfort others as You have comforted me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Have I found comfort in God's promises? Have I trusted in Him when my life falls to pieces? What does the resurrection of Christ say to me at the cemetery?



April 29

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Chronicles 8:29-11:21

**Memory Verse: 1 Chronicles 11:14** But he took his stand in the midst of the plot and defended it and killed the Philistines. And the LORD saved them by a great victory.

**Song:** [“He Leadeth Me”](#)

Eleazar, the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, was one of David’s three mighty men. He was with David at Pas-dammim when the Philistines were gathered there for battle. Pas-dammim was a spot somewhere between Socoh and Azekah, north of the Valley of Elah. This area was a common battleground between Israel and the Philistines. There was a plot of ground full of barley, and the men fled from the Philistines (11:13). But Eleazar stood his ground in the midst of the barley and defended Israel’s right to the land. Eleazar killed the Philistines.

2 Samuel tells us a little more about this incident: Eleazar “arose and struck the Philistines until his hand was weary and clung to the sword, and the LORD brought about a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to strip *the slain*” (2 Samuel 23:10).

One man worked so hard the muscles of his hand would not let go of the sword. The people who retreated then came back in only to get the booty. How like human nature; one man was working, while others took the spoil.

Because one man had faith in God and for what was right, the Lord gained the victory. The Lord used Eleazar to bring about a great victory. He used one man to save the rest from harm and death. The Lord’s hand gave to Eleazar strength to win.

The Lord can strengthen you to win, even if you are alone and others desert you. The Lord can strengthen you to win regardless of the number of the enemy.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me not to fear but to stand for what is right. Use me, Father, to do Your will and to win for Your cause. Forgive me for being afraid; strengthen my heart and my hand in every difficulty. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I stand for the Lord when others withdraw? Am I willing to let the Lord fight through me? Am I willing to exhaust myself in God’s service and yet still give the Lord the glory?



**April 30**

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Chronicles 11:22-15:29

**Memory Verse: 1 Chronicles 12:32** Of Issachar, men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, 200 chiefs, and all their kinsmen under their command.

**Song:** ["I Need Thee Every Hour"](#)

To say that the times are changing is an understatement. Every year we grow older a new generation marches in to take our place. They do not understand our experiences like we do; they may not have had the priorities we had; they speak a common language with new meanings; and they often disdain the things we celebrate.

The men of Issachar understood the times. This is no small feat. Understanding the times takes effort, patience, and lots of observation. It takes an open heart and a keen mind. One must be able to see the obvious, on one hand, and what lies beneath the surface, on the other.

The times are as much about attitudes as they are about events. The Exodus reminds us that a new king arose over Egypt that did not know Joseph (1:8). This new king quickly enslaved the children of Israel. How easily transitions happen that affect our very existence!

The sons of Issachar not only understood the times they also knew what Israel ought to do. To know what we ought to do is a great blessing. To know how to solve conflicts, how to overcome defeats, how to avoid problems, and how to react to changes is a great advantage in life. David was blessed to have them on his side in times of war.

The Scripture promises, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him" (James 1:5). We may find ourselves confused and wondering what happened. Thankfully, we have the promise of God to give us that daily wisdom to help us through our struggles.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, grant to me wisdom to know what I ought to do when tough times come. Give me wisdom to handle my stress, my frustrations, and my fears. Forgive my weaknesses, and strengthen me with Your loving assurance. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I pray when I don't know what to do? Do I trust God to give me the wisdom I need?



May 1

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Chronicles 16:1-19:9

**Memory Verse: 1 Chronicles 19:3** But the princes of the Ammonites said to Hanun, “Do you think, because David has sent comforters to you, that he is honoring your father? Have not his servants come to you to search and to overthrow and to spy out the land?”

**Song:** [“Nearer, Still Nearer”](#)

Have you ever been misunderstood? David sent messengers to Hanun, the son Nahash, to comfort him at the time of his father’s death. David thought, “I will deal kindly with Hanun the son of Nahash, for his father dealt kindly with me” (19:2)

But the servants of Hanun, king of the Ammonites thought differently. They suspect the messengers to be spies. So Hanun took David’s servants and shaved them and cut off their garments in the middle, at their hips, and sent them away; and they departed. When David was told concerning the men, he sent messengers to meet them, for the men were greatly ashamed (19:4-5).

Hanun assumed the worst about David and reacted with such utter disrespect that the two nations prepared for battle. What David meant as a kindness, Hanun treated as a threat; and the result was war. How people react to the things others do makes such a difference! Ammon and Israel could have been friends! Ammon and Israel could easily have avoided a war!

We must be careful not to assume too quickly the worst about others. We must not foolishly strike out at others when there is no threat. A question to clarify another’s motives would have been so much better than assuming the worst.

People are most gullible to the lies they tell themselves. They see what is not there and act without evidence. The “sensible” person is one who thinks before he acts (Tit. 1:8).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep me from acting before I think. Slow me down, Father, and give me compassion and understanding of those who are around me. Help me to see the best in others and blind me to false assumptions. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I act without thinking? Do I ask questions when I don’t understand or am suspicious?





May 2

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Chronicles 19:10-23:11

**Memory Verse: 1 Chronicles 21:24** But King David said to Ornan, “No, but I will buy them for the full price. I will not take for the LORD what is yours, nor offer burnt offerings that cost me nothing.”

**Song:** [“His Name Is Wonderful”](#)

David and Israel had sinned against the Lord. When David numbered Israel, God gave him a choice of punishments. David chose three days of pestilence by a destroying angel. The Scriptures reveal 70,000 men of Israel fell from the pestilence (21:14).

When God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it but relented. God said, “It is enough; now relax your hand.” The angel was standing at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite (21:15). David took the blame for the sin and beseeched the Lord not to continue to punish Israel.

The angel of the Lord through Gad told David to build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Ornan in order to stay the plague. The Scripture gives an interesting conversation between Ornan and David over the purchase of the threshing floor. Ornan, having seen the angel (21:20), offered the land, the oxen, the wood, and the wheat for an offering to David for nothing. But David would not take it.

David purchased it all for a full price, 600 shekels of gold. What is an offering to God that costs the giver nothing? Is there any sacrifice in that? David knew that he had sinned and wanted to make a sin offering for himself.

No one can believe, repent, or confess our sins for us. No one can worship for us. No one can contribute for us. Let us not offer to God that which costs us nothing; let us truly sacrifice.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, I thank You for all You have done for me. I praise Your name. Please accept from my heart and my hands my gifts I give to You. May they say to You my love and my loyalty. Oh Lord, accept my offerings. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I sacrifice or merely give? Do I think about how God might see the gifts I give? Do I act sincerely from the heart or do I routinely go through the motions?



**May 3**

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Chronicles 23:12-26:19

**Memory Verse: 1 Chronicles 23:25-26** For David said, “The LORD, the God of Israel, has given rest to his people, and he dwells in Jerusalem forever. And so the Levites no longer need to carry the tabernacle or any of the things for its service.”

**Song:** “[Abide with Me](#)”

The angel had appeared at the threshing floor of Ornan, and fire from heaven came down to consume the burnt offering. This is the place! Then David said, “Here shall be the house of the LORD God and here the altar of burnt offering for Israel” (22:1).

The Lord made His name to dwell in Jerusalem. In the days of David, the worship of the Lord was at the tabernacle, which was at Gibeon (21:29). But David dreamed of the time when that worship would move out of the tent and into a house. He wanted God to be exalted in a building. He said, “the house that is to be built for the LORD must be exceedingly magnificent, of fame and glory throughout all lands” (22:4). Solomon’s Temple that David dreamed would become one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

Today the Temple of the Lord is no longer in Jerusalem; the Temple is the church (1 Corinthians 3:16).

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit (Ephesians 2:19-22).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, I am so thankful to be in Your family and to dwell in Your Temple as Your child and a citizen of Your kingdom. Help me to stay holy in all that I do. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I realize how blessed I am to be a child of God, a citizen of the Kingdom, and to be in the Temple of God? Do I show it by my speech and behavior?



May 4

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Chronicles 26:20-29:19

**Memory Verse: 1 Chronicles 28:9** “And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever.”

**Song:** [“I Know the Lord Will Find a Way”](#)

David is coming to the close of his reign as king and his life. The Lord would not allow him to build the Temple because he was a man of war and had shed blood (28:3). The Lord appointed Solomon of all his sons to succeed him on the throne.

David loved the Lord with all his heart and was the prototype of what a king should be in his devotion to the Lord. So, what does a king say to his son who will reign as king over the whole nation when he is gone? What thoughts and desires must have gone through his mind?

His advice: “know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind.” Every faithful parent desires this for his children.

Know God! This is the most important knowledge of all. It is the only knowledge that will lead to eternal life. “And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (John 17:3). The people will be destroyed if they do not know God (Hosea 4:6).

Serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind! A divided heart will prove faithless, and an unwilling mind will seek its own agenda. The kingdom of Israel needed a leader who was fully devoted to the Lord, ready and willing to serve Him.

“If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever.” Man’s choices determine his destiny. What are you seeking?

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, I seek You with a whole heart and a willing mind. Search me, O Lord, and remove any false way from me. Keep me in your heart forever and do not cast me off. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I serve the Lord with a whole heart and a willing mind? How well do I know the Lord? Would I invite the Lord to search my heart?



May 5

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Chronicles 29:20-30; 2 Chronicles 1:1-4:10

**Memory Verse: 2 Chronicles 3:1** Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to David his father, at the place that David had appointed, on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

**Song:** [“On Zion’s Glorious Summit”](#)

Mount Moriah, Zion, and Ornan’s threshing floor speak of the same place; and it is perhaps the most cherished and venerated spot on earth. Here Abraham was to sacrifice his son Isaac upon an altar (Genesis 22:1-14). Here thousands and thousands of sacrifices were offered to God from the days of Solomon until the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

This site has seen wars and battles through the ages. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Solomon’s Temple in 586 BC, and the Jews completed a second temple in 515 BC. During the days of the Greeks, Antiochus Epiphanes offered a sow at the Temple, which began the Maccabean revolt. From the beginning of Islam, Muslims, Jews and Christians have fought over this piece of real estate.

Today it is a place of Muslim worship; but Jews and Christians tour the Temple Mount most days. Jews still wail and the Western wall.

Christians love to visit Mount Moriah, but their hope is in the New Jerusalem coming down from the Father. They long for new heavens and a new earth (2 Peter 3:8-15).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for planning and providing a home reserved for me in heaven. I long for the day when I can be with You forever. May I never outlive my love for You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I long for heaven? Can I say “Come quickly, Lord Jesus”?



**May 6**

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Chronicles 4:11-7:22

**Memory Verse: 2 Chronicles 7:14** If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

**Song:** [“Glorious Is Their Name”](#)

“If” is a very important word in any language. Grammatically, it gives a condition to the main thought of the sentence. Practically, “if” means that one has a choice of directions to take, directions with different results. Here the Lord promises to bless the people “if” they “humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways.” The Lord will hear from heaven and will heal their land when they cry out to Him for deliverance.

“But if you turn aside and forsake my statutes and my commandments that I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will pluck you up from my land that I have given you, and this house that I have consecrated for my name, I will cast out of my sight, and I will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples” (7:19-20).

This assurance the Lord gave to Solomon was for Israel, His people; but one wonders if the Lord has not also in mind all nations in all times. The Lord plants nations and uproots them; He is Lord of all.

“If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it. And if at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, and if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will relent of the good that I had intended to do to it” (Jeremiah 18:7-10).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me to make my choices wisely and never shame or desert Your Name. Help me to choose Your grace rather than Your wrath. Help me, Lord, to remember You every day and in everything. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I think through my day to day choices? Do I seek the Lord? Have I humbled myself? Do I pray fervently daily?



May 7

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Chronicles 8:1-11:12

**Memory Verse: 2 Chronicles 9:5-6** And she said to the king, “The report was true that I heard in my own land of your words and of your wisdom, but I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes had seen it. And behold, half the greatness of your wisdom was not told me; you surpass the report that I heard.”

**Song:** [“Humble Yourselves”](#)

God had blessed Solomon to a simply amazing level. The Queen of Sheba had not heard half the truth about his greatness. It took her breath away (9:4). She saw the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, the food of his table, the seating of his officials, and the attendance of his servants, and their clothing, his cupbearers, and their clothing, and his burnt offerings that he offered at the house of the LORD. Wow! She was impressed.

What impresses you? What takes your breath away? How do you see the wisdom of God? Some people mock God, some sneer at God’s commandments, some debate with God; but the Queen of Sheba saw Solomon’s wisdom as a blessing to his nation.

“Happy are your wives! Happy are these your servants, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! Blessed be the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and set you on his throne as king for the LORD your God! Because your God loved Israel and would establish them forever, he has made you king over them, that you may execute justice and righteousness” (9:7-8).

God’s way always bring blessing. His laws are for our good (Deuteronomy 6:24; 10:13). We should be as excited as the Queen about God’s wisdom for us and how it blesses our lives.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for giving us wisdom in Christ. Help us to be workmen who study Your word and do not have to be ashamed. We glorify You, Oh Father, for all the good You have done for us through Your Word. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I get excited about Bible study? Do I realize the greatness of God’s wisdom? Do I sometimes think God should have taken my advice about some matter?





**May 8**

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Chronicles 11:13-15:19

**Memory Verse: 2 Chronicles 13:9-10** Have you not driven out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and made priests for yourselves like the peoples of other lands? Whoever comes for ordination with a young bull or seven rams becomes a priest of what are no gods. But as for us, the LORD is our God, and we have not forsaken him. We have priests ministering to the LORD who are sons of Aaron, and Levites for their service.

**Song:** [“My Jesus, As Thou Wilt”](#)



Jeroboam had split the kingdom and had placed altars with golden calves in Dan and in Bethel. He did this to keep Israel from going to worship at Jerusalem and to maintain their loyalty to Israel not Judah. The Lord was not pleased.

Jeroboam’s priests did not have the wisdom or training of the Levites; they were priests like the people of other lands. Pretending to be a priest, offering a bull or seven rams to be ordained as a priest, and worshipping a humanly devised god does no good. Self-made religion is futile. What works is obedience.

When people abandon the will of God to do things their own way, God abandons them. Jeroboam thought Israel could defeat Judah, because Abijah had come to the throne after the death of Rehoboam.

Judah cried out to God, and God defeated Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah (13:15). God is with those who are with him and against those who try to replace Him with things that are no gods.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep me faithful to you always. Help me never to think I can replace you with things or other gods. I know there is none like You; You alone are God; and You alone are my God. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I keep my heart close to God? Have I been tempted to replace the God of heaven with gods of my own making?

**Picture above:** This is the site at Dan, where Jeroboam built an altar and placed a golden calf.



**May 9**

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Chronicles 16:1-20:13

**Memory Verse: 2 Chronicles 16:9** “For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him. You have done foolishly in this, for from now on you will have wars.”

**Song:** [“Be With Me, Lord”](#)

Asa had stood strong with the Lord in his earlier years. Azariah, the son of Oded, encouraged him with these words: “The LORD is with you while you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you” (15:2). Asa put away the idols and foreign gods. Because the people sought for the Lord, they found him; and the Lord blessed Judah with no more war for thirty-five years.

But in the thirty-sixth year of his reign, Baasha, king of Israel, went up against Judah and built Ramah and made siege of the city of Jerusalem. Asa, instead of trusting God, went to the Syrian king Ben-hadad for help. When Baasha heard of Asa’s plan, he stopped building Ramah. Asa had earlier relied on God, and the Lord delivered Judah from the huge hoard of Ethiopians and Libyans, but Asa failed to call on God this time.

Then Asa was angry with the seer Hanani and put him in the stocks in prison, for he was in a rage with him because of this. Disobedience often leads to anger, when the disobedient is called to account. David got angry over Uzzah. Asa forsook the Lord to get help from Syria; he followed his own plan rather than depend upon the Lord.

The Lord wants to help those who will stay with him. In fact, he goes to and fro throughout the earth looking for those whose heart is completely his. If you seek him, you can find him.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, I confess my fears and my weaknesses. I know that You alone can help me; keep me close. May my love and devotion toward You grow more and more. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I find myself seeking earthly help before seeking God’s help? Do I forsake the Lord when I am pressed with a problem? Do I draw close to God when I know I can’t handle my problems?





May 10

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Chronicles 20:14-24:14

**Memory Verse:**

**2 Chronicles 20:15** And he [Jehaziel] said, “Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the LORD to you, „Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God’s.””

**Song:** [“I Know Who Holds Tomorrow”](#)

The Moabites and Ammonites, and with them some of the Meunites, came against Jehoshaphat for battle; they came in a great horde and encamped at Engedi.

Jehoshaphat recognized, “O LORD, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you” (20:6). He asked, O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you” (20:12).

Judah did not need to fight in this battle. They sent their singers out in front of their army; and they sang, “Praise the Lord, for his mercy endures forever” (Psalm 136:1).

And when they began to sing and praise, the LORD set an ambush against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, so that they were routed (20:22). They actually helped each other be devoted to destruction.

God is with his people and delivers those who cry out to Him. They did not know what to do on their own, but their eyes were on the Lord!

Where are your eyes when you do not know what to do?

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help us to keep our focus upon You. We confess we do not always know what to do, and we are thankful that You are close at hand to help us. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do you focus on the Lord when you are in doubt, when you are confused, or when you do not know how to handle a situation? Can you put yourself fully into his hands? Do you face your struggles with a song?



May 11

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Chronicles 24:15-28:27

**Memory Verse: 2 Chronicles 25:16** But as he was speaking, the king said to him, “Have we made you a royal counselor? Stop! Why should you be struck down?” So the prophet stopped, but said, “I know that God has determined to destroy you, because you have done this and have not listened to my counsel.”

**Song:** [“Without Him”](#)

It is a sad thing when people stop listening. Amaziah did not want to hear it!

God had given Amaziah a great victory over the sons of Seir. After the victory, he brought the gods of the men of Seir and set them up as his gods and worshiped them, making offerings to them. Therefore the LORD was angry with Amaziah and sent to him a prophet, who said to him, “Why have you sought the gods of a people who did not deliver their own people from your hand?” (25:14-15).

Many people don’t like to hear the truth. Amaziah’s heart was not fully set on serving the Lord (25:3). When this prophet spoke to him about his idolatrous disobedience, Amaziah quickly stopped and threatened him. Because he failed to listen, God used Israel to punish Amaziah.

Stopping the truth by closing your heart and ears is as impossible as keeping the sun from shining. God made them both.

I may not want to hear the truth from God’s lips, but that does not keep it from still being true and right! I can threaten the messenger, but I’m only hurting myself in doing so. Amaziah by his disobedience and hard heart brought shame upon himself.

Let us learn to listen to God, even when He says the things we do not wish to hear. We are nothing without Him.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep my heart tender to Your words. Deliver me from evil. Help me to remain humble and never think I can do as I please. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I harden my heart against God and others, when I hear them say things I know are right but do not want to acknowledge it? Is my heart right with God? Is my heart fully given to God?



May 12

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Chronicles 29-31

**Memory Verse: 2 Chronicles 31:21** And every work that he undertook in the service of the house of God and in accordance with the law and the commandments, seeking his God, he did with all his heart, and prospered.

**Song:** ["Love Lifted Me"](#)

Hezekiah brought a great restoration to Judah, establishing the worship of the temple and the Passover once again. Whatever he did, he did "with all his heart." Hezekiah was not a nominal Jew who worshiped on the Sabbath and forgot God the other six days. He sought God.

Devotion to God must never be a nominal thing, yet many Christians are social Christians, embracing God's will because their friends do. Others are Christians when it gives them an advantage to be one in business. Still others claim to be Christians because their parents were, but they have little knowledge of God.

True followers of God give their whole hearts to God. Whatever they do for the Lord, they do so vigorously, holding nothing back. They seek God and have zeal for the Lord. Their relationship with the Lord is not casual or convenient; they belong to Him.

"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, You are my God. My heart, my life, my hands, and my spirit belong to You. Oh Father, may I never hold back my service and my heart from You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I seek God? Do I have zeal for God? Do I truly belong to Him in every respect?



May 13

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Chronicles 32:1-35:19

**Memory Verses: 2 Chronicles 32:7-8** “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or dismayed before the king of Assyria and all the horde that is with him, for there are more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God, to help us and to fight our battles.” And the people took confidence from the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

**Song:** [“Standing On the Promises”](#)

Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah and besieged the fortified cities, and thought to break into them for himself. He intended to make war on Jerusalem.

Hezekiah cut off the water supply from the springs outside the city so that he would not help the enemy. He rebuilt all the wall, erected towers, built another outside wall, and strengthened Millo in the city of David. Hezekiah made weapons and shields in great number and organized the military. Hezekiah encouraged his people.

When God is on your side, you are still more than your enemies, no matter how great they may seem to be. God is not limited by an arm of flesh; He has many weapons to overcome those who oppose His children.

The child of God can have confidence that when God is present, he has security and peace in his future. Paul noted, “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things” (Romans 8:31-32)?

God will deliver His people from every evil thing, and nothing can separate them from His love.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, I love You for watching over me. I know that You are always with me and can help me in the toughest times. Keep me close to you and save me when danger comes my way, and help me to serve and love You always. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I turn to the Lord when I am frightened? Do I take refuge in God’s will and presence in my life? When I am threatened, do I act with confidence and intelligence to prepare for the danger?



May 14

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Chronicles 35:20-36:23; Ezra 1-3

**Memory Verse: Ezra 3:11** And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD, “For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever toward Israel.” And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

**Song:** [“I Love You Lord”](#)

When the builders in Judah laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they praised the Lord very loudly. “But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers’ houses, old men who had seen the first house, wept with a loud voice when they saw the foundation of this house being laid, though many shouted aloud for joy, so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the joyful shout from the sound of the people’s weeping, for the people shouted with a great shout, and the sound was heard far away” (3:12-13).

Have you ever been happy and sad at the same time? They rejoiced there was now another temple, but it was not nearly as grand as the first. One commentator said, “The disappointment of the older generation does not necessarily reflect an obsession with external appearances. It was true then, as it had been at the time of the exodus, that the expense and grandeur of the edifice and its furnishings were a legitimate way to give honor to the God who inhabited the sanctuary. The people felt sadness at their own inability to provide surroundings with splendor commensurate to God’s glory.” (*IVP Bible Background Commentary*)

No doubt they did the best they could, but how could they compare with the resources Solomon had? Even though Cyrus the king of Persia was helping them “to build Him a house in Jerusalem” (2 Chronicles 36:23), they could not match the splendor of the first temple.

Whether what we can do is little or much, one thing is sure: God is good, and His steadfast love endures forever!

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, we are so grateful for all that You have done for us, and we wish we could do more for You. We recognize every day Your goodness towards us. We know that Your sworn, covenant love towards us in Christ endures forever! In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I wish I could do more for the Lord? Am I counting my blessings and all the good He has done for me? Do I put my soul into His hands?



May 15

**Scripture Reading:** Ezra 4-7

**Memory Verse: Ezra 7:10** For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel.

**Song:** [“Great Is Thy Faithfulness”](#)

Ezra, the priest, was a direct descendant of Aaron (7:1-5). He was a scribe of the Law of the God of heaven (7:12). Ezra was skilled in the Law of Moses that the Lord, the God of Israel had given (7:6). He was learned in matters of the commandments of the Lord and his statutes for Israel (7:11). The hand of the Lord his God was on him (7:6), and the Lord put it into the heart of Artaxerxes king of Persia to beautify the house of the Lord in Jerusalem (7:27).

The Lord extended to Ezra his steadfast love before King Artaxerxes and his counselors and before all king’s mighty officers. Because of this, Ezra took courage, for the hand of the Lord his God was on him (7:28).

When one considers the heart of Ezra (7:10), it is easy to see why God’s hand was on him. Ezra set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, to do it, and to teach it. His heart belonged to the God of heaven, and the God of heaven remembered him (2 Chronicles 16:9). The Lord seeks people like Ezra to bless and to support strongly in doing His will.

This is a great example of what a teacher for God ought to be and to do.

What is your heart set on doing? Do you study God’s Word, practice it, and teach it to others.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, I pray Your hand of favor will be on me as it was on Ezra. Help me to set my heart to study, to do, and to teach Your will to all. Keep me from distractions and from fear. Stay close to me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I study God’s will daily? Is my heart on doing what is right? Have I taught others what God has said?



May

**Scripture Reading:** Ezra 8-10; Nehemiah 1

**Memory Verse: Ezra 9:3** As soon as I heard this, I tore my garment and my cloak and pulled hair from my head and beard and sat appalled.

**Song:** [“Humble Yourselves”](#)

Why was Ezra so appalled? Some Jewish officials approached Ezra and said, “The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands with their abominations, from the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. <sup>2</sup>For they have taken some of their daughters to be wives for themselves and for their sons, so that the holy race has mixed itself with the peoples of the lands. And in this faithlessness the hand of the officials and chief men has been foremost” (Ezra 9:1-2).

Why is it we are no longer appalled at sin? Has our hearts become so desensitized? Have we forgotten how offensive sin is to God? Have we forgotten the price the Lord Jesus paid for our sins?

At the evening sacrifice Ezra rose from his fasting with his garment and cloak torn, fell upon his knees, and spread out his hands to the Lord (7:5). He said to the Lord, “O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to you, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt had mounted up to the heavens” (7:6).

The ungodly do not understand such heartache and such language. To them sin is a trivial matter. Sin, however, is not trivial to God and cannot be to anyone who loves God. Are you in anguish over your sins?

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, give me such a heart so as to see sin the way You do. Help me never to think it does not matter. I am appalled at myself in how I have hurt You and others. Forgive me, Father, for my sins. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I see sin the way God does? Have I wept over my sins? Have I wept over the sins of others? Would I be willing to put away my sin even if it meant giving up my family for the sake of my God?



May 17

**Scripture Reading:** Nehemiah 2-5

**Memory Verse: Nehemiah 2:4-5** Then the king said to me, “What are you requesting?” So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers’ graves, that I may rebuild it.”

**Song:** [“Praise the Lord”](#)

When Nehemiah, the cupbearer of the king, heard that the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and the gates are destroyed by fire, he sat down and wept and mourned for days. “And I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven” (Nehemiah 1:3-4). Nehemiah believed in prayer.

When Nehemiah was serving the king his wine, his face was sad over the problems in Jerusalem. The king noticed that sadness of his heart and asked him why. “Then I was very much afraid” (2:2). Nehemiah explained to the king the sorry state of Jerusalem, the place of his fathers’ graves.

When the king asked, “What are you requesting?” Nehemiah did not immediately answer. He first prayed to the God of heaven. Nehemiah was very much afraid, but he answered his fears with prayers. If the most powerful king in the world asked you a question, would you take the time first to pray to the God of heaven.

Nehemiah knew where the real source of blessing and power lies. It lies in God. God through Artaxerxes granted Nehemiah’s desire and gave him permission to rebuild the walls of the city. In later years he would serve as governor.

Nehemiah was a great leader, and many who wish to know how to lead study his life and wisdom. Let it never be forgotten, the greatest secret of his success was continual prayer. He even prayed to God before he addressed the king.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, I know that You are a great God, greater than all kings, and every good and perfect gift comes from Your hand. Be with me in my times of fear, and grant me wisdom to know how to live so as to bring You glory and accomplish your purpose. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I put God above every one? Do I pray before I act? Have I been appalled at the sorry state of affairs in my own country?





May

**Scripture Reading:** Nehemiah 6:1-8:8

**Memory Verse: Nehemiah 6:3** And I sent messengers to them, saying, “I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?”

**Song:** [“Victory in Jesus”](#)

God opened the door for Nehemiah to pursue the burden on his heart. He sought to rebuild the walls and the city of Jerusalem, the city of his fathers’ graves. Artaxerxes gave him the legal and financial help he needed in order to get the job done.

But good will always have its critics and its enemies. Nehemiah explains: Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, “Come and let us meet together at Hakkephirim in the plain of Ono.” But they intended to do me harm (6:2). Nehemiah was no fool; he knew who his enemies were.

His response was a focus on the task at hand. “I am doing a great work and I cannot come down.” In our clock-eyed world with continuous pressures and deadlines, we all can identify with Nehemiah’s insistence that he stick to his task. Of course, Sanballat and Geshem did not want the wall built, because it posed a threat to them. They would do everything in their power to see Nehemiah fail, but God was with Nehemiah.

In spite of lies, intimidation, and confusion Nehemiah held fast to God, and God helped him to accomplish the task. Nehemiah knew they all wanted to frighten us, thinking, “Their hands will drop from the work, and it will not be done.” But now, O God, strengthen my hands (7:9). And God did. The people had a mind to work (4:6), and they finished the wall in fifty-two days (7:15).

There are seasons to work and accomplish great things. We must be faithful and not let ourselves be intimidated, to fall victim to lies, or to get sidetracked. Let us too have a mind to work and keep our priorities straight.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep my enemies from taking my eyes off of You and Your will for my life. Deliver me from evil. Renew my faith and courage. Strengthen my hands. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I let others interfere with my work for the Lord? Do I get intimidated by others who would like to keep me from doing what is right?



May 19

**Scripture Reading:** Nehemiah 8:9-11:21

**Memory Verse: Nehemiah 8:9** And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, “This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep.” For all the people wept as they heard the words of the Law.

**Song:** [“His Name is Wonderful”](#)

Ezra the scribe brought the Book of the Law of Moses that the LORD had commanded Israel. All the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month. And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law (8:1-3).

All the people stood during this reading (8:5). They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading (8:8). The word “clearly” suggests they read it paragraph by paragraph and gave its interpretation.

The Law, since it is the Word of God, has great power and is sharper than a two-edged sword. It enlightens, blesses, reveals, warns, and grabs the soul. By reading the Law, Ezra was not intending to make the people weep. He wanted them to be informed of God’s holiness. The Law, after all is a blessing for their good (Deuteronomy 6:24; 10:13). The joy of the Lord is their strength (8:10).

God’s Word, however, is like a mirror to our souls (James 1:22-25). When we listen to God, we see inside ourselves. We see the good and the evil. We see the blessing of God and our own inadequacies. The reading of the Law was to take place every seven years, and it had been many decades since the people had heard it read by a priest. Many people take a vacation from a serious study of the Word of God. They do so to their own hurt and to the hurt of their children (Hosea 4:6). Had the Word remained dominant in the lives of their ancestors, they would not have had to rebuild the city or the temple.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, I thank You for my Bible, which gives me great treasures of life. Let me keep Your Word close to my heart always, so that I may live a life worthy of Your name. Oh, Lord, forgive me of my sins, and let me rejoice in Your salvation. Father, Your joy is my strength. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I study the Word regularly? Do I meditate on it, memorize it, love it, and apply it to my life? When I see myself as I study the Word, do I like what I see? What am I doing about it?



May 20

**Scripture Reading:** Nehemiah 11:22-13:22

**Memory Verse: Nehemiah 13:14** Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God and for his service.

**Song:** [“God Is the Fountain Whence”](#)

Nehemiah had worked tirelessly with Ezra to rebuild Jerusalem, not just as a city, but as the city where God’s name dwelled.

The Law Ezra read made it clear that “no Ammonite or Moabite should ever enter the assembly of God” (13:1). As soon as the people heard the law, they separated from Israel all those of foreign descent (13:3).

Eliashib the priest, who was appointed over the chambers of the house of our God, and who was related to Tobiah, however, prepared for Tobiah a large chamber in house of God. When Nehemiah returned from visiting Artaxerxes and discovered the evil that Eliashib had done for Tobiah, he became angry. “I threw all the household furniture of Tobiah out of the chamber. Then I gave orders, and they cleansed the chambers, and I brought back there the vessels of the house of God, with the grain offering and the frankincense” (13:8-9).

One may not understand Nehemiah’s actions today and wonder why Tobiah was treated this way, but Tobiah was an enemy and an Ammonite (2:10, 19). He had no place in God’s house. Nehemiah was right to cast him out.

Many people think because God loves everyone, that everyone stands in His favor; but that is not true. God remembers iniquity and punishes those who sin against Him.

Nehemiah wanted to be remembered for the good he did. We all do. Thankfully, God is not unjust so as to forget our good deeds for His name (Hebrews 6:10).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep me from taking Your grace for granted for myself or for others. Give me the courage to do the right thing always. Remember me, O God. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I take a stand for right? Am I willing to cleanse from my life the things that offend God? Have I done anything in my life that I want God to remember?



May 21

**Scripture Reading:** Nehemiah 13:23-31; Esther 1-4

**Memory Verse: Esther 3:6** But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone. So, as they had made known to him the people of Mordecai, Haman sought to destroy all the Jews, the people of Mordecai, throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus.

**Song:** ["Nearer My God to Thee"](#)

Offended pride breeds hatred, and hatred breeds violence. Haman was a man full of undue pride. All the king's servants who were at the king's gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman, for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage (Esther 3:2).

Haman was not content to punish Mordecai alone; he wanted to destroy all the Jews. James said, "But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice" (James 3:14-16).

Mordecai mourned and fasted when he found out Haman's plot. He sent word to Esther. "Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (4:13-14).

Esther and her young women fasted for three days and three nights, not eating anything. The Jews fasted, and Esther risked her life by appearing before the king without being summoned. God, of course, was with his people and saved them through Esther's faith.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, help me to show my faith in times of trial. Help me to speak up and speak out even in times of risk. Help me to love the truth more than my life. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I speak up when my faith is challenged? Have I ever fasted, because a situation was so crucial to my life?



May 22

**Scripture Reading:** Esther 5-10

**Memory Verse: Esther 9:22** as the days on which the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month that had been turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, days for sending gifts of food to one another and gifts to the poor.

**Song:** [“Praise the Lord”](#)

Because of Esther’s faith and her courage to reveal the wicked plot of Haman, King Ahasuerus sent out an edict to protect the Jews. He also, remembering Mordecai’s good deed, exalted Mordecai to the second place in the kingdom. Ahasuerus gave Mordecai the signet ring that Haman had formerly worn. Haman was hung on the fifty-cubit-high gallows he had built at his own house. The king gave to Esther the house of Haman.

Because of this deliverance Mordecai proclaimed to all the Jews in every province they should hold a feast (the Feast of Purim) on the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar. The name *Purim*, “lots,” was given to this festival because of the casting of lots by Haman to decide when he should carry into effect the decree issued by the king for the extermination of the Jews (Esther 9:24). The name was probably given to the festival in irony.

Each year on the 13<sup>th</sup> of Adar, the Jews fast, remembering Esther’s fast; but they rejoice and celebrate on the next two days. They gather on the fourteenth at the synagogue and read the book of Esther.

It is good to remember what God has done for us and how He delivers us from evil. Have you thanked God today for your blessings and victories in Jesus Christ?

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank you for all Your blessings and for delivering us from evil. We thank You for being such a great God who provides for our every need, large or small. Give us courage to do what is right and to remember You always. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I count my blessings? Have I remembered all the good God has done for me? Am I willing to be God’s man or woman in a crisis?



May 23

**Scripture Reading:** Job 1:1-5:16

**Memory Verses: Job 1:20-22** Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. And he said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.

**Song:** [“Burdens Are Lifted at Calvary”](#)

The story of Job is one of the oldest, yet it remains a favorite for those who study the problem of pain. Job is a theodicy, *i.e.*, a defense for the righteousness of God. The perennial question, “how could a good and all-powerful God allow his people to suffer,” will remain as one of the most crucial questions of life. The story of Job does not directly answer that question, but it does give us a glimpse into the heart of God.

Job is a righteous man devoted to God. He is a moral and praying man. He is concerned with the spiritual lives of his entire household. In fact, God said he had no one else like Job. Satan accused God of building a hedge around Job and blessing him, giving that as the reason for Job’s devotion. “But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face” (1:11).

God gave Satan permission to touch all that Job possessed, even taking away the lives of his seven sons and three daughters. Job, however, responded out of love and loyalty to God. “In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.”

Satan next gave Job a painful and loathsome disease. Job’s wife urged him to curse God and die (2:9). Job held to his integrity; he did not sin with his lips.

We have the blessing of reading the whole story and knowing the end, but Job lived the story one day at a time. This was surely the hardest part of his life, but Job kept faith and loyalty toward God. God is worthy of our devotion even in the hardest days of our lives.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep me faithful in good times and in bad. Help me to see Your greatness and love for me, even when times are roughest. Lord forgive me for doubting Your love for me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I speak words in haste when things don’t go right? Have I taken the name of the Lord in vain? Do I count my blessings?



May 24

**Scripture Reading:** Job 5:17-8:22

**Memory Verse: Job 7:4** When I lie down I say, „When shall I arise?’ But the night is long, and I am full of tossing till the dawn.

**Song:** [“There Is a Habitation”](#)

The heart of Job is so troubled by his losses and his disease that he cannot rest. In chapter three he curses the day of his birth (3:1), wonders why he did not die at birth (3:11), wishes he were a miscarriage (3:16) and wishes he had never seen the light. He wishes he were in the grave rather than suffering so much (7:15). Of death he says:

There the wicked cease from troubling,  
and there the weary are at rest (3:17).

Perhaps you have had some heart-ache so stressful that you wish you could flee from it to a safe place free from any trouble. Job wanted death “rather than my pains” (7:15).

Thankfully, in Christ we have a place to which we can go without the stresses and hurts of this life. Revelation 14:13 says,

And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!”

There is enough struggle and temptation in this life. How thankful we should be that our God in heaven understands our need for rest in the coming life. Being with the Lord is “very much better” (Philippians 1:23).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, I thank You for thinking of my future and preparing a place for me in Your house. Let me rest my soul in Your hands. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I look forward to the day when I can be with the Lord? Am I willing to follow the Lord in times that are tough, knowing that He will give me my reward at another time?



May 25

**Scripture Reading:** Job 9:1-12:12

**Memory Verses: Job 11:7-8** “Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty? It is higher than heaven—what can you do? Deeper than Sheol—what can you know?”

**Song:** [“I Know Who Holds Tomorrow”](#)

The secret things belong to the Lord (Deuteronomy 29:29); only what is revealed belongs to us. Some things we’ll never know, and one of those things is the answer to why.

Many years ago a co-worker died suddenly on his 27<sup>th</sup> birthday. He had an inoperable brain tumor that overwhelmed him. He never knew he had the tumor; it was discovered when it was too late. I admired him greatly and treasure his memory still. His tragic loss affected the whole church, and the question why was on everyone’s mind. I personally questioned why he died and I lived. I’ve often thought it should have been me. He had such talent and promise.

We’ll never know the why one is taken and another left, why one house is destroyed by a tornado and the next house stands, or why one gets a disease and another is healthy. There are no answers to such matters.

All we can hold on to is the faith we have in a good God who will bless us beyond this life. We can put our souls into His hands, knowing that he will care for us (Luke 23:46). We belong to God, and whether in life or in death, we are His (Romans 14:7-9).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for sending Your Son Jesus to purchase and redeem me from sin. Though I do not know all the plans You have for me in this life, I know that I belong to You here and in the hereafter. Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I trust God to care for me even in uncertain times? Have I committed myself into His hands body, soul, and spirit?





May 26

**Scripture Reading:** Job 12:13-16:10

**Memory Verse:** **Job 14:1** “Man who is born of a woman is few of days and full of trouble.”

**Song:** [“The Glory Land Way”](#)

Job recognized two things about life: life doesn't last and is full of turmoil. Job observed in Job 14:5, “Since his days are determined, the number of his months is with Thee, and his limits Thou hast set so that he cannot pass.” People do not live forever on this earth.

Job continues, “For there is hope for a tree, when it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and its shoots will not fail” (14:7). Job then says with a sigh, “But a man dies and lies prostrate. Man expires, and where is he?” (14:10).

“If a man dies, will he live again” (14:14)?

Thankfully, in Christ we have an answer to that question. “For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living” (Romans 14:7-9).

We further have the promise of a resurrection (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). If we remain faithful, we will one day go and be with the Lord and share in his inheritance (2 Timothy 4:6-8). The glories to be revealed to us in that day are not worthy to be compared with the frustrations and struggles we face today (Romans 8:18).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for giving me hope beyond the grave. Thank You for giving me eternal life to live with You forever in heaven. Thank You for revealing Your will for those who believe in Your Word. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** When I attend a funeral, do I have any hope there is life beyond the grave? Do I have hope of living with the Lord forever?



May 27

**Scripture Reading:** Job 16:11-20:11

**Memory Verse: Job 19:25** For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.

**Song:** ["I Know That My Redeemer Lives"](#)

A redeemer was "a person who defended or avenged the cause of another, or who provided protection or legal aid for a close relative who could not do so for himself." Though Job wanted to ask God to give a reason for his suffering, he also believed God would vindicate him from all the accusations his friends were bringing against him.

Job knew that in the end God would stand upon the earth and, like a witness for the defendant at a court trial, would testify that Job was innocent. In that way all would not only read of his uprightness (Job 19:23-24) but also all would hear of it from God Himself!

Our redemption (unlike what Job is proclaiming) comes through the blood of Jesus; and it is more precious than silver or gold (1 Peter 1:18-19). "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:13-14).

Through that blood we are washed, we are sanctified (made holy), and we are justified (proclaimed righteous) in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6:11).

Because of the blood of Christ, we can rejoice in our redemption.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for redeeming me in Christ and being willing to sacrifice Him so that I might live with You. Thank You for cleansing me, sanctifying me, and justifying me in His name. I love You, Father. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I consider the high price God paid for my redemption in the death of Jesus my Lord? Do I live like a person who understands he has been redeemed at such a high price? Am I grateful?



May 28

**Scripture Reading:** Job 20:12-24:12

**Memory Verses: Job 23:3-4** Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat! I would lay my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments.

**Song:** [“My God and I”](#)

Job’s friends had relentlessly accused him of sin and of bringing his calamities upon himself. They were sure that God was avenging Job for his sin and wickedness. Interestingly, Satan accused God of building a hedge around Job for his righteousness, while Job’s friends argued that God was punishing Job for his sins. Neither was true.

False accusations sting, and Job’s friends had not spoken “what is right” either of God or of Job (42:7). They were sure God was punishing Job for his sins, and Job felt condemned and looked for an opportunity to bring his case before God. His friends would not listen to his claim of righteousness, but God would hear. “No, surely He would pay attention to me. There the upright would reason with Him; and I would be delivered forever from my Judge” (23:7).

Job wanted vindication. He had done nothing worthy of the extreme tragedy he had faced in the loss of all ten children and his possessions. He wanted to ask God why, since he knew in his heart he had done nothing to deserve such punishment.

While Job wants vindication, he also knows that God does what His soul desires (23:13). Job realized he would be dismayed in the presence of God; “when I consider, I am terrified of Him” (23:15).

We are blessed in Christ, a high priest who understands our weaknesses. We can approach His throne with confidence to find mercy and help in time of need (Hebrews 4:14-16).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, I thank You for sympathizing with my weaknesses. I come, Father, to Your throne weak and sinful and cry for mercy and help. Hear me, Oh Father! In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I approach God with confidence or fear? Is Jesus as my high priest a comfort to me? How I recognized all the times the Lord has helped me in my time of need?



May 29

**Scripture Reading:** Job 24:13-29:13

**Memory Verse: Job 28:28** And he said to man, “Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.”

**Song:** [“Come We That Love the Lord”](#)

Job 28 is a literary masterpiece. Man dares to find the riches of the earth, though they are hidden. There is a mine for silver, and a place where they refine gold (28:1). He gets food from the earth and precious stones in places the falcon’s eye cannot see. Man can find the hidden treasures.

“But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding” (28:12)? “The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, nor can it be valued in pure gold. From where, then, does wisdom come? And where is the place of understanding?” (28:19-20).

Job answers, “God understands the way to it, and he knows its place. For he looks to the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens” (28:23-24).

We are blessed the Lord shares His wisdom with us in His word (Romans 11:33-36). We can know the truth about spiritual matters in His Word, and the truth can make us free (John 8:31-32). Job lived early in history and never knew the Bible, never understood the cross, never knew of the promise of heaven as we do. He longed for the wisdom that we now possess (1 Peter 1:10-12).

What are we doing with the wisdom we possess? We do not have to search for it; it is before our very eyes in the Bible.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, open my eyes and my heart to Your Word. Help me to know it, to believe it, to love it, to live it, and to share it with others. Thank You, Father, for imparting Your wisdom that leads to my blessing and my eternal salvation. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I study the Word of God daily? Do I meditate on its instructions, promises, and warnings? Do I fear the Lord?



May 30

**Scripture Reading:** Job 29:14-32:10

**Memory Verses: Job 31:1-2** “I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin? What would be my portion from God above and my heritage from the Almighty on high?”

**Song:** [“I Am Resolved”](#)

Job 31 provides an ethical masterpiece; it is second only to the Sermon on the Mount. This ethic is built upon a relationship with God, the noblest reason to refrain from any sin. Job’s covenant with his eyes arises from his respect for God. He knew that if he allowed sin into his life, he would lose his relationship (portion) with God. He could not look with lust on a virgin and receive a heritage from the Almighty. Job feared (respected) God.

The Lord Jesus taught, “everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5:28). Peter spoke of those “having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls” (2 Peter 2:14).

Job realized that God sees his ways and numbers all his steps (Job 31:4). So he kept himself from falsehood, from being enticed by a woman, and from hardening his heart against the claim of his slaves. Job helped the poor, the widows, and the orphans. Job did not put his confidence in gold or gloat over his wealth. Job refrained from sun worship or moon worship. He would not deny God above (31:28). Job did not wish curses on his enemies and was hospitable to aliens. Job had not covered his transgressions like Adam. Job stood by his integrity.

Our moral lives grow out of our love and respect for God. Only a relationship with the Lord can give us a sufficient ground to control our hearts and our appetites.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep me from sin. I love You and want to live forever with You. Help me to control myself in times of temptation and keep me from the evil one. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I have a sense of right and wrong like Job, built upon my relationship with the Father in heaven? Do I control my eyes? Do I help those who need help? Am I truthful and honest?



May 31

**Scripture Reading:** Job 32:11-35:16

**Memory Verse: Job 34:10** “Therefore, hear me, you men of understanding: far be it from God that he should do wickedness, and from the Almighty that he should do wrong.”

**Song:** [“Holy Is the Lord”](#)

It did not occur to Job that by maintaining a high view of himself, he was charging God with wickedness. Elihu reveals what Job has done in Job 34:5-9:

For Job has said, „I am in the right, and God has taken away my right; in spite of my right I am counted a liar; my wound is incurable, though I am without transgression.’

What man is like Job, who drinks up scoffing like water, who travels in company with evildoers and walks with wicked men? For he has said, „It profits a man nothing that he should take delight in God.’

God is certainly good to his people, as Elihu is pointing out. Elihu chastised Job for thinking “My righteousness is more than God’s” (35:2). Elihu noted that whether one is righteous or wicked, he adds nothing to God. Job multiplied words without knowledge.

People often speak about God without really knowing Him. Job wanted to call God on the carpet for his suffering and questioned whether following God made a difference.

God does not answer all of Job’s questions, and He does not enter into Job’s court. He is God, who has made all men and provided all. He does not have to give account of Himself to us.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, You have created me and blessed me down to this day. Help me in my weakness and ignorance to serve You in every circumstance. Forgive my false assumptions, and help me to live with confidence. Oh Father, help me not to forget Your greatness. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I call God on the carpet when I don’t get my way? Do I forget all the good God has done for me? Am I busy justifying myself before God rather than seeing God for who He is?



**June 1**

**Scripture Reading:** Job 36:1-39:12

**Memory Verses: Job 38:2-4** “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me. “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding.”

**Song:** [“To God Be the Glory”](#)

Perhaps man’s greatest temptation is to consider God as an equal; he easily forgets who the Creator is and who the creature is. In his anguish Job forgot. He was ready to call God into account for the suffering he endured.

Job has challenged God to a debate over his innocence. Now God takes the offensive asking Job a series of rhetorical questions exposing Job’s lack of understanding of creation and the laws governing the universe. How much less able is he to understand God’s moral law. The Lord confirms Elihu’s belief that man should submit to God as a teacher rather than arguing with him as judge. Man’s submission to God beyond the limits of his understanding and the disciplinary benefit of suffering are the two main lessons to be learned.

It is an error to think that suffering has no value. Suffering can teach us many things pleasure and prosperity do not understand. The house of mourning is still better than the house of mirth (Ecclesiastes 7:2-5).

If man is to understand the causal order of things, he must have seen their beginning. How can Job, who did not witness how the earth was structured, claim to understand its workings. God does not answer Job’s charges; He merely questions Job about matters which Job does not understand.

God’s ways are past finding out. Our task is to trust in Him, even when we suffer, to fulfill His will in our lives. We can be confident that whatever happens will be for the good (Romans 8:28).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, I know I do not understand all the reasons why things happen the way they do, but I know that You love me. Help me to trust in You rather than in what I experience. Stand by me as You stood by your Son. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I trust the Lord in times of trouble? Am I willing to wait upon Him to act? Have I taken a long look at the cross?



**June 2**

**Scripture Reading:** Job 39:13-42:9

**Memory Verses: Job 42:5-6** “I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

**Song:** [“How Great Thou Art”](#)

When God appears to Job in the whirlwind and interrogates him with numerous questions Job could not answer, it occurs to Job he does not understand enough to call God to account for his suffering. Job said, “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted” (42:2).

Job remembered God’s words, “Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?” Job confesses, “Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know” (38:3). God’s wisdom is wonderful; it is so far beyond Job’s limited understanding that Job can only be amazed.

Job remembered God’s words, “Hear now, and I will speak; I will ask you, and you instruct Me” (38:3; 42:4). It is here that Job admits that he had only heard about God. Now he perceives how wise God really is. “Therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (42:5-6).

If we all could but sense and perceive the greatness, majesty, wisdom, and holiness of God, we too would take back our words charging Him foolishly.

Job learned to trust God’s wisdom, even when he didn’t understand what was happening. Job learned to trust God’s wisdom, even when he was in great pain. God saw him through the pain and “restored the fortunes of Job” (42:10).

God too will bless us beyond our understanding, if not here on earth then one day in heaven (Ephesians 2:5-7).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep my tongue from foolish speaking. Help me never to think of You as low or common. Open my eyes, Father, to Your greatness and majesty. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I question the wisdom of God in my life? Do I remember that God sees what I cannot see and knows what I cannot know?





**June 3**

**Scripture Reading:** Job 42:10-17; Psa 1:1-5:7

**Memory Verse: Psalms 1:3** He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

**Song:** ["Walking in Sunlight"](#)

How we live matters. The wicked and the righteous are not alike. They come to different destinies. "For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish" (1:6).

When a man does not live in the counsel of the ungodly, does not take his stand in the path of sinners, or sit in the seat of scoffers, he is blessed in God's eyes. He enjoys God's blessing with happiness because he does not fall into the pitfalls of these errors.

The ungodly are people who no place for God in their lives, and so they live after they own desires. The sinner disregards God's law and does as he pleases. The scoffer not only disregards God and His laws, he also speaks scornfully of God and His Word. To him God is not wise, often hypocritical, and cruel. His tongue opposes God and promotes the flesh.

How different is the man who loves God and meditates day and night on His Word. He doesn't fall victim to the struggles and pitfalls of the godless. God's ways are wise (Galatians 6:7-8); they are for our good (Deuteronomy 6:24; 10:13).

The man who holds God and His Word close "is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers."

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for Your Word that enlightens, strengthens, comforts, and protects me from evil. Thank You for watching over me with true counsel that lifts me up and keeps me steady. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I read and meditate on God's word continually? Have I allowed my lips to scorn the Lord, to scoff at the truth, or to put down His people?



**June 4**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 5:8-8:9

**Memory Verse: Psalms 8:1** O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!  
You have set your glory above the heavens.

**Song:** ["O Lord, Our Lord"](#)

God is God, the only true God, the majestic Creator, and the final Judge of all the earth. He is glorious beyond our understanding.

My favorite chapter of the book of Revelation is chapter 4, because it reveals the majesty of God on his throne. The people in the seven churches of Asia had been threatened by the wealth and power of the Emperor of Rome, "Lord Caesar." Chapter 4 provides a glimpse at the Emperor of all, the Beginning and the End, "Lord God." Our choices in life will always be between the "Lord God" and whatever else we allow to rule our lives.

David said, "When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?" (Psalm 8:3-4). It is remarkable that in this great universe, God takes notice of mankind more than all else. They are his children, made in His image. They are special to God. Amazing!

The Lord, for His greatness, is worthy of our worship, our adoration, and our devotion. He is great and awesome. His love for us only magnifies how thankful and how devoted we should be toward Him.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, I praise and thank You for creating me and blessing me every day of my life. When I consider Your wisdom and power to make this great universe, I am humbled to think that You place value on me. I am Yours, O my Father. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I count my blessings, knowing they all come from the Lord? Have I seen His glory in the heavens? Have I remembered my Lord is my Father?



**June 5**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 9-10

**Memory Verse: Psalms 10:1** Why, O LORD, do you stand afar off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?

**Song:** [“Learning to Lean”](#)

From time to time the world seems upside down. The wicked seem to prosper, while the righteous struggle. David wonders why. This is not abnormal. We wonder how arrogant, wicked people seem to triumph and get away with travesties, while we barely make ends meet.

Crying out to God, we expect immediate results from God. We wish every wrong to be righted and every pain to be relieved—now! We wonder where God is.

There are many things about God we do not understand, but one thing we often miss is God’s patience with the wicked. God will act when they have filled the cup of His wrath but not before (Revelation 6:9-11). It is wrong, however, to think that God doesn’t notice. He does. Our task is to wait for Him to act. He will.

Why does the wicked renounce God and say in his heart, “You will not call to account”?

But you do see, for you note mischief and vexation, that you may take it into your hands; to you the helpless commits himself; you have been the helper of the fatherless (Psalm 10:13-14).

O LORD, you hear the desire of the afflicted; you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more (10:17-18).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, grant me patience to wait for You in times of trouble. Help me not to jump ahead and act foolishly on my own. Help me to trust that You see and know all. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I think “it all depends on me”? Have I thought mean of God for doing nothing about the sin around me? Do I trust God?



**June 6**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 11:1-17:5

**Memory Verse: Psalms 14:1** The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good.

**Song:** [“God of Our Fathers”](#)

In the Old Testament there are many types of fools, but all of them have one thread of truth in common. They do not take God seriously; the fool does not fear or even consider God in his life.

Psalm 14:1 does not so much speak to the theoretical atheist as it does the practical one. The practical atheist may in his deepest heart acknowledge some God, but he does not let God’s existence matter to him.

What matters to the fool is himself. He tears down his barns and builds for himself bigger ones (Luke 12:15ff.). He doesn’t think about God or his poor neighbors. He only thinks about himself.

The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God (14:2). The fool has forgotten God. He is full of himself, his desires, and his dreams.

In frustration, David cries out, “Have they no knowledge?” Can’t they see where this selfishness is going to lead them? They cannot step on others and achieve a lasting goal. God is the avenger of the poor and the downtrodden.

We must be careful not to live as practical atheists, for we must all one day give an account of ourselves before the throne of Christ (Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, stay in my heart. Help me to love You and to fear You always. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I forget God? Do I allow my desires and dreams to blind me to my responsibilities? Have I forgotten that I must give an account to my God?



**June 7**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 17:6-18:36

**Memory Verse: Psalms 18:1-2** I love you, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

**Song:** ["I Love You, Lord"](#)

It is good to express our love to those we genuinely love. David does so to the Lord. The Lord was his strength, his rock, his fortress, his deliverer, his refuge, his shield, the horn of his salvation, and his stronghold. Each of these things is a blessing to the warrior, but God was all of these things for David.

As a shepherd and as a warrior David had known many dangers, some from enemies, some from the elements of nature, and some from King Saul. David addressed Psalm 18 to the choirmaster on the day when God delivered him from the hand of Saul.

People either trust in themselves, trust in things, or trust in God. David was a man after God's own heart, because he trusted in God. He called out to Him, so that God became His protection and deliverer in times of trouble.

It is an important day in our lives when we learn to rely on God's strength and not our own. God can do what we cannot. He does not grow weary. He can protect us when we cannot defend ourselves. God is mighty, and we must learn to put ourselves into His hands.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, I love You. You are my strength, my rock, my deliverer. You are my hope and joy. I take my refuge in You, for I know that no power is greater than Yours. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I put my life, my hope, my soul, and my future in God's hands? Have I depended upon Him in the most anxious moments of my life? Have I seen the power of God working in me?



**June 8**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 18:37-21:13

**Memory Verses: Psalms 19:7-9** The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul;  
the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;  
the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;  
the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;  
the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;  
the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether.

**Song:** [“Give Me the Bible”](#)

How blessed we are to have the Word of God. David saw it as a treasure in his own day, when it only contained a fraction of what we have. He had the books of the law and a few of the historical books after the exodus (Joshua, Judges, Ruth). He may have known some of 1 Samuel.

David never knew about Jesus, about the cross, about the resurrection, or about the church; yet, he knew God’s word had the characteristics of God himself. Every verse inspired of God had value and impact!

The word of the law “is” perfect, not “was” perfect. David knew the words of God were living and endured. Jesus, a thousand years after David, could quote Deuteronomy with the words, “It is written” (Matthew 4:4, 6, 10). The word of God stands when all else fails (1 Peter 1:22-25).

The word of God revives the weak, makes wise the simple, and enlightens the eyes. The word is perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, true, and altogether righteous. What else is so?

Would you have a change in life? Go to the Word; it will refresh your spirit, renew your faith, build you up, and give you an inheritance. The words of Jesus Christ are spirit and are life (John 6:63). There is nothing in life that must permeate our spirits more than the Word of God. It is by the Word we come to know and love the Lord.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for my Bible. Keep my heart tender toward You and Your Word always, so that I may live the abundant life You desire for me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I read and study my Bible daily? Do I meditate upon its precepts? Have I seen the value of the Word of God living in my heart and life?



**June 9**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 22:1-24:6

**Memory Verse: Psalms 23:4** Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

**Song:** ["The Lord's My Shepherd"](#)

So much of Christianity grows out of the relationship we have with the Lord. We are His people and sheep of his pasture. We belong to Him, and He meets our every need (Philippians 4:19).

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." I won't lack anything, because He takes care of me. When times are low, He is there to comfort, encourage, and strengthen. When times are good, He is there to bring joy and hope.

When we have a close, peaceful relationship with the Lord, we have confidence in His care and provision for our lives. We are not afraid of the future, even of the potential threats to our lives, because He is there to protect us.

Better than insurance, better than locks, and better than watchmen is my Lord. He is my rock and my security in good times and in bad. I can count on Him.

Consequently, I keep my eyes on the Lord (Hebrews 12:1-2). I keep my heart tuned to His grace and truth, because I want to live with Him forever.

And because He is my shepherd, He provides for me a home in His house forever. I will live with Him. Nothing could be more meaningful, more hopeful, more joyful, or more filled with love.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You, thank You, thank You! You have watched over me, provided for me, and prepared for me. I could want no Other than You. I could find no hope but Yours. Thank You, Father, for being my God. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I really want for anything? Have I learned to trust in God's care? Have I deepened my relationship with my Lord? Am I at peace with Him?



**June 10**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 24:7-27:6

**Memory Verse: Psalms 25:7** Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!

**Song:** ["I Need Thee Every Hour"](#)

This psalm of David is a cry for help from God. David sings, "To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul" (25:1). David beseeches the Lord to keep him from being shamed by his enemies. He realizes, "Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame" (25:3).

David wanted to understand and trust in God. He wanted to be reassured in a time when his enemies were threatening him and Israel.

Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long. (25:4-5)

We may not always know how God works His will in our lives, but we trust Him to keep His promises and to help us when we most need it.

David does not want his past sins in his youth to keep him from enjoying God's blessing and protection. He calls upon God to remember him. God's steadfast love is sworn love and the outgrowth of His goodness. David calls for God to remember His promise.

All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies. For your name's sake, O LORD, pardon my guilt, for it is great (25:10-11).

We all at times face ourselves and hope our sins do not build a barrier between our Father and us. We want to stay close to Him and enjoy His steadfast love. David knew he didn't deserve forgiveness on his own merit. He called for it, because God is so good.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions. Pardon my great guilt, for Your name's sake. Keep me always in Your love. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I confess my sins when I am guilty? Have I transgressed the Lord's will and ignored my guilt? Have I understood how good God is to pardon me?





**June 11**

**Scripture Reading:** Psa 27:7-31:5

**Memory Verse: Psalms 30:5** For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

**Song:** ["Blessed Assurance"](#)

Every Christian must learn to deal with discouragement and troubles. It is a great day when each learns to depend upon and cry out to God for help.

David wrote this psalm "at the dedication of the temple." Of course, the Lord would not allow David to build the temple himself, because his hands were stained with blood; but he allowed David to gather the materials so that Solomon could build it.

In this psalm David is thankful his enemies had not exulted over him and for the healing God had given to him (30:1-2). David had made many mistakes, and God more than once had grown angry at him. But David recognized that his anger was momentary and his favor (grace and support) were for a lifetime.

David knew a time when his heart was lifted up and he thought he would never be moved, but God hid his face from him. This dismayed David. He asked what possible good would death do for God's praise and glory. When he cried out to God, the Lord turned his mourning into dancing, loosed his sackcloth, and girded him with gladness.

For this, David said, "O Lord my God, I will give thanks to Thee forever" (30:12).  
Has God blessed you, and will you also thank Him?

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for hearing my prayers and delivering me from the pit. Use my life and my hands as an instrument for Your glory and praise. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I use my heart, my lips, and my life as a way to praise and glorify the Lord? Do I give thanks continually for all that God has done for me?



**June 12**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 31:6-33:5

**Memory Verse: Psalms 32:1-2** Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

**Song:** ["Amazing Grace"](#)

Forgiveness, what a treasure! What a blessing to know I am at peace with the Lord and He counts no iniquity against me! Thank God, I do not have to pretend any more.

David as a bored king committed adultery with Bathsheba, when he should have gone out to battle. When she was found to be child, David went to great lengths to try to cover up his sin by bringing Uriah the Hittite home. Uriah was an honorable soldier and would not abandon his men. When David's strategy failed, he had Uriah killed in battle, so that he could marry Bathsheba. All this he hid, or so he thought. Hiding sin is no blessing.

"For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer" (32:3-4).

It was not until David came face to face with his own terrible transgressions that he could find any peace.

I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin (32:5).

David understands, "Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found" (32:6). There may come a time when God is so distant He will no longer hear prayers. Today is the day to confess sin and repent. Never put it off.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, I today confess to you all my sins. I acknowledge all the ugly and sinful things I have done and should have avoided. Please forgive me, Father, and wash me clean. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I sneak around with my sin? Have I been honest with myself about the sins I hide from others? Have I assumed God did not see my sin? Have I confessed and repented of my sins?



**June 13**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 33:6-35:21

**Memory Verse: Psalms 34:8** Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!

**Song:** ["You Are the Song That I Sing"](#)

David "sought the Lord, and He answered me and delivered me from all my fears" (34:4). "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him and rescues them" (34:7).

David realized that for those who fear the Lord there is no want (34:9). "They who seek the Lord shall not be in want of any good thing" (34:10). Taste and see the Lord is good!

"When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all" (34:17-19).

One can easily see why David would hold the Lord to be good. The Lord delivered him from the lion, the bear, Goliath, and Saul. God was with him when he was alone and weak. With God as his helper, David could triumph.

So it is in our lives. By ourselves we are weak and needy. With the help of God, we can triumph. "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things" (Romans 8:31-32)? We have a good God who loves us. No wonder David sang:

I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad.

Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together! (Psalms 34:1-3).

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, I thank You for being so good to me, for blessing me in my times of trouble. Thank You, Father, for calming my fears. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I live such a life that God might consider me righteous? Can I look back in my life and see the goodness of God?



**June 14**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 35:22-37:26

**Memory Verses: Psalms 37:3-5** Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act.

**Song:** ["Standing On the Promises"](#)

The way to success in life is through trust in God. Delight in the Lord, and he will bless you. Commit to Him, and he will act!

David said, "Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers! For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb" (37:1-2).

It is easy to wonder why evil people seem to do so well while righteous people have it hard. We wonder if this isn't unfair, and some people stumble over what they think is an unfulfilled promise of help and support. David advises:

Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him;  
fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way,  
over the man who carries out evil devices!

Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath!  
Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.

For the evildoers shall be cut off,  
but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land.

In just a little while, the wicked will be no more;  
though you look carefully at his place, he will not be there.

But the meek shall inherit the land  
and delight themselves in abundant peace. (37:7-11)

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, help me to be patient and wait for You to act. I know You will act in Your time. Help me in times of fear and doubt to have strong faith in You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I fret over the evil in the world today without faith? Do I trust in God to act in His own time to accomplish His will?



**June 15**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 37:27-39:13

**Memory Verses: Psalms 38:3-4** There is no soundness in my flesh because of your indignation; there is no health in my bones because of my sin. For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.

**Song:** ["Burdens Are Lifted at Calvary"](#)

"I am utterly bowed down and prostrate; all the day I go about mourning. For my sides are filled with burning, and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and crushed; I groan because of the tumult of my heart" (38:6-8).

The aftermath of sin is always harder than people think. Sin devastates the person who loves the Lord, because he must live with what he has done. There is great tension between devotion to God and the lust of the flesh. Paul said,

For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me (Romans 7:14-17).

Guilt is indeed a heavy burden that weighs on the heart and soul. David knew what it was to feel the full weight of his sin with Bathsheba and Uriah. Guilt is one of the heaviest burdens, but to harden the heart against it is an even worse condition. Godly sorrow should move us to repentance (Romans 2:4-5; 2 Corinthians 7:10).

What do you do when you feel guilt? David confessed his iniquity (38:18), and no doubt he saw no good in repeating the sin. David was weak to sin and fell to its trap, but he confessed his sin and hoped in the Lord (34:15). We too, even in our sins, can confess and find hope.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, I confess to You all my iniquity and sin. I know that I have done wrong in Your eyes, and I despise myself for it. Oh Lord, forgive me and restore to me your loving kindness, that I may once again be right with You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I harden my heart when I am guilty? Am I sorry for all the things I have done against God? Do I clam up and shut myself off from others? Do I have the courage to confess sin and repent?



**June 16**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 40-42

**Memory Verses: Psalms 42:1-2** As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?

**Song:** [“As the Deer Pants for the Waters”](#)

It is a wonderful day in a person’s life when he or she learns how much he needs and wants God. Everyone needs God, and we are all dependent upon Him for everything. Every good and perfect gift, after all, comes from God (James 1:17).

Jesus spoke of hungering and thirsting for righteousness; God will satisfy such a person (Matthew 5:6). We get light hunger pains after some hours between meals, but this is not likely the hunger and thirst Jesus is commending. It is the kind of hungering and thirsting of the soul, where a disciple must have a right relationship with the Father, must maintain a close relationship with Him. Righteousness is not a snack; it is needed nourishment to the man who knows he is famished and will die without it.

When will I appear before God? We can pray or sing anytime, but these sons of Korah in this Maskil (a contemplative, didactic, or skillful psalm) were in despair and disturbed, because they felt forgotten by God (42:9). They felt oppressed by their enemies, who called to them, “Where is your God?” They longed to go up to the house of God, the temple.

But they held fast to Him. “Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance, and my God” (42:11).

Today may be difficult. Wait for the Lord; He will help. Long for Him. Hunger and thirst for Him, and He will satisfy you.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, my soul thirst for You. Help me in times of trouble not to forget You or be forgotten by You. You are my hope and my song. Keep me close, forgive my sin, and fulfill the hunger of my soul. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I hunger and thirst for righteousness? Am I empty when I cannot be close to God? Do I place my hope in Him?



**June 17**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 43:1-45:12

**Memory Verses: Psalms 44:20-21** If we had forgotten the name of our God or spread out our hands to a foreign god, would not God discover this? For he knows the secrets of the heart.

**Song:** [“Have Thine Own Way”](#)

The sons of Korah cry out for help in this Maskil (a contemplative, didactic, or skillful psalm). They ask God to command victories for Jacob, to push back our adversaries, to trample down those who rise up against us (44:4-5).

Korah’s sons claim not to have forgotten God or have dealt falsely with his covenant; their heart has not turned back (44:17-18). They wondered why God had let them be crushed and defeated by their enemies.

In the midst of their defense, they recognize God’s knowledge of their secrets. He knows the secrets of the heart. In Romans 2:16 the gospel proclaims that the secrets of people will be judged by Jesus Christ on the day He returns.

One cannot hide from God; the eyes of the Lord are in every place keeping watch on the evil and the good (Proverbs 15:3). Yet we deceive ourselves, thinking that if others cannot see us, neither can God. The sons of Korah did not fool themselves. In times of urgency, people get honest with God. In this case the sons of Korah had maintained their devotion to the God of Jacob and had not strayed.

This is certainly far better than those who “straighten up” for a time in order to win God’s favor and then fall back into their old ways once the struggle is past. God has never respected such eye-service.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep me authentic in my faith and zeal for Your cause. Help me in my times of trouble, and remind me of Your continual presence in my life. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I toe the line when I think I am being watched but do as I please when others aren’t around? Do I recall the presence of God in my life daily?





**June 18**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 45:13-48:14

**Memory Verse: Psalms 46:10** “Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”

**Song:** [“Be Still and Know”](#)

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling (Psalm 46:1-3).

When life tumbles in on you, where do you find your security? To what do you turn for help? The sons of Korah found God to be a “very present help” in trouble. No matter what happened, even the most cataclysmic event would not make God less a help. We do not fear because God is near.

God is in heaven, and He watches over His people. When the other nations make an uproar against His people, God raises His voice; and the earth melts (46:6). So powerful is God, the enemies back down. God is our stronghold.

The sons of Korah call people to behold and remember the works of the Lord. He brought desolations in the earth and made wars to cease. He breaks the bow and cuts spears in two; He burns the chariots with fire (46:8-9).

For these reasons, His people should cease striving, should be still. Instead of getting anxious, they should calmly remember the power of God.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, calm my anxious fears. Help me to see You for who You truly are. Remind me, dear Lord, of Your love and Your majesty. Forgive my doubts and fears. Strengthen me and give me courage. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I allow my fears to cause me to forget the greatness of God? Do I worry anxiously rather than turn to God when I am upset?





**June 19**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 49:1-51:9

**Memory Verses: Psalm 50:16-17** But to the wicked God says: “What right have you to recite my statutes or take my covenant on your lips? For you hate discipline, and you cast my words behind you.”

**Song:** [“O Master Let Me Walk with Thee”](#)

“If you see a thief, you are pleased with him, and you keep company with adulterers. You give your mouth free rein for evil, and your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother’s son. These things you have done, and I have been silent; you thought that I was one like yourself. But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you” (Psalm 50:18-21).

The life we live affects our relationship with God and how God views our worship. It is easy to compromise and allow sin to creep into our lives. Through it all we begin to think that God thinks and acts as we do. The more we allow sin in our lives, the more we think God will accept that sin. “You thought I was one like yourself.”

But God is supremely holy; He cannot look on sin and act as if nothing were happening (Habakkuk 1:13). On the other hand, wicked people hate discipline and cast His words behind their backs. They do not want to hear the truth or obey the commandments, because this would demand they cease their evildoing.

In your own relationship with the Lord, do you allow sin to creep into your life? Do you despise discipline on one hand, while reciting Scripture in your worship? Has this inconsistency made you think differently about God? Does the nature of God change in your thinking as you change what you are willing to accept in your life?

Let us see our God as holy and righteous, never bringing Him down to our own level.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, please open my eyes always to Your holiness and righteousness. Help me to live so as to glorify Your name always. Oh Lord, may I never take Your grace for granted. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I take God’s grace for granted or cheapen it to allow my compromises? Do I think of God like myself? Do I understand God’s unlimited holiness and righteousness?



**June 20**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 51:10-54:7

**Memory Verses: Psalms 51:10-12** Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

**Song:** ["Purer in Heart, O God"](#)

Anyone who loves God wants to maintain a right relationship with Him. David knew what it was to let sin infect his heart and life and ruin his close relationship with the Lord who had blessed him so much through the years.

When a person is out of favor with God because of sin, he loses much. Sin is always more costly than we first think. Many people consider the pleasure of sin for a season is worth the cost, but David deeply regretted what his sin cost him.

He lost a clean heart. He could not look himself in the eye and be proud of what he had done with Bathsheba and Uriah.

He lost his right or steadfast spirit. Before his sin, he could count on his relationship with God to help him through his struggles and fears. His sin separated him from having a right spirit to approach God. He was instead an abomination in God's eyes.

David prophesied, because God put words in his mouth through the Holy Spirit (2 Samuel 23:2). The closeness he shared with God as a singer of inspired psalms, of course, blesses us to this day. David did not want to lose that gift.

David desired the joy of his salvation. Forgiveness was no small thing to him; he wanted to dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

He wanted that willing spirit that leads a person to do what is right and avoid what is wrong and offensive to the Lord he loved. We wish all men had such a spirit.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I count the cost of sinning when I am tempted? Do I have the joy



**June 21**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 55:1-57:3

**Memory Verse: Psalm 55:22** Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.

**Song:** ["Nearer, Still Nearer"](#)

In this maskil of David, the psalmist finds himself burdened beyond his ability. Early in the psalm he wishes he could escape the pressure. Perhaps in your life you could say what David said.

And I say, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest; yes, I would wander far away; I would lodge in the wilderness; I would hurry to find a shelter from the raging wind and tempest" (Psalm 55:6-8).

As I write and speak from time to time, I do so with the understanding that those who hear and read are facing their own struggles and pressures, some overwhelming. David faced the agonizing betrayal and reproach of a close, familiar friend, with whom he had sweet fellowship (55:12-14).

No doubt each one reading has faced some heartbreaking event in life. David found his refuge in God. He cast his burden upon the Lord, because he knew the Lord would sustain him. "He will never allow the righteous to be shaken," that is, to totter. God sometimes delivers from a crisis and other times sustains through a crisis. Whether saved from or sustained through, God's people endure.

So, cast "all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7). The worries you face are worries he is willing to bear, because the things that bother you also bother Him. He cares about you, His child, and will never allow more on you than you can bear (1 Corinthians 10:13).

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, in faith I cast upon You my burdens and anxieties. I know that I alone cannot bear up under them. Sometimes, Father, I wish I could run away; but I know that You can sustain me through it all. I know You are bigger than my fears and struggles. Help me, Lord. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I cast my burdens on the Lord or try to bear them alone? Do I clam up in times of stress? Do I try to run away when I am pressured? Have I found my strength and refuge in God?



**June 22**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 57:4-60:12

**Memory Verses: Psalm 57:9-11** I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations. For your steadfast love is great to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth!

**Song:** ["O Praise the Lord"](#)

Psalm 57 is a prayer for rescue from persecutors. When David was facing an awful situation threatening his life, he took time to give thanks and praise God for His greatness and steadfast love.

The phrase "steadfast love" is found frequently in Scripture. This is God's sworn love or covenant love. Covenants are legal binding relationships. Among covenants they last for a lifetime, but with God they are forever. God willfully and lovingly bound Himself in a covenant with Israel and with David in particular. God takes His covenants seriously and remains steadfast in His love towards those who keep His covenant and statutes.

Once a covenant is ratified, no one changes or annuls it (Galatians 3:15). It is a driving directive of life. God will not change His promises towards those who are His children. We can have confidence in Him for this reason.

Through the many life-threatening events of David's life, he saw God continually keeping His promises. Even in the face of death, David could thank and praise God because of God's unshakeable and immovable promises. Nothing can defeat them, change them, erase them, or overcome them. They are guaranteed by God Himself.

We too need the confidence of David. We too ought to thank and praise God even in those times when our safety is threatened. There is no message of consolation more encouraging than that God keeps His promises.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, I praise You as the true and living God who created me and sustains me day to day. I know that You always keep Your promises. Help me, Father, to be as faithful to You as You have been to me. Forgive my weakness and doubt. Strengthen my spirit. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I trust God? Do I know God's promises? Do I live as one who counts on those promises? Am I thankful? Can I praise God?



**June 23**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 61-64

**Memory Verse: Psalms 63:1** O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

**Song:** [“Rock of Ages”](#)

As a shepherd David knew the value of water. The hills of Judea knew the early and latter rains, but during the heat of summer was often very dry and weary. Dehydration saps the strength and robs the vitality of both the flesh and plant life. A land that knows drought for months can easily wither and die in the heat of summer. The ground itself will crack. Water is not a pleasure; it is a necessity.

David said, “my flesh faints for you.” No doubt David had experienced hot days as a shepherd and as a warrior that drained all the strength from his body.

God is not merely a pleasure. He is more than merely a nice guy to have around when you need Him. We need God desperately for life. We must have Him, and only He can satisfy the soul.

In this psalm David recognizes that because God’s lovingkindness is better than life, he will praise and bless the Lord with his lips as long as he lives (63:3-4). In the shadow of God’s wings David sings for joy. “My soul clings to Thee; Thy right hand upholds me” (63:7-8).

David knew that God could provide the things his soul needed most. For this reason, David longed for God as a person does in a dry and weary land. When he saw all that God was doing in his life, meditating on Him in his bed at night, David rejoiced that God had been his help!

We too can see God’s work in our lives if we take the time to notice.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, fill my thirsty soul with Your love, Your will, and with Your goodness. Keep my heart and my life strong. Keep me from the weariness of an empty soul. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I see God as a necessity in my life? Do I connect the needs I have each day with God? Do I realize how much God can help me with my struggles?



**June 24**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 65:1-68:4

**Memory Verses: Psalm 66:17-19** I cried to him with my mouth, and high praise was on my tongue. If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. But truly God has listened; he has attended to the voice of my prayer.

**Song:** [“Father of Mercies”](#)

Psalm 66 is a psalm of praise for God’s mighty deeds and for His answer to prayer. The psalmist invites us to “come and see the works of God.” God has turned the sea into dry land so that the Israelites pass through on foot (66:5-6). The psalmist cries out:

Bless our God, O peoples; let the sound of his praise be heard,  
who has kept our soul among the living and has not let our feet slip.  
For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried.  
You brought us into the net; you laid a crushing burden on our backs;  
you let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water;  
yet you have brought us out to a place of abundance (66:8-12).

The psalmist wanted people to know that God blessed them and heard their prayers. He had cried to the Lord, and high praise was on his tongue.

But he notes that if he had cherished iniquity in his heart, “the Lord would not have listened.” Our lives affect our prayers (James 1:26; 1 Peter 3:7). One cannot cherish in his heart the things that offend and oppose God while he cries out to God for help and blessing.

We are all imperfect beings who sometimes fail out of weakness. There is a difference between the weak man and the man who makes sin the treasure of his heart. When we sin, we often stop praying or only pray when we have to. Sin is a barrier; but if we cast our sins away from us, we can approach God without fear and dread.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep me from temptation and sin. Keep away from me especially the love of sin. Help me to love only the things that please You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I have a pet sin I so cherish that I will not give it up? Do I praise and thank God for all that He has done?



**June 25**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 68:5-69:4

**Memory Verses: Psalms 68:19-20** Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears us up; God is our salvation. Our God is a God of salvation, and to GOD, the Lord, belong deliverances from death.

**Song:** ["Bless the Lord, O My Soul"](#)

This psalm is about the God of Sinai and of the sanctuary. It emphasizes God's great providence for His people in a parched land. God is described in verses five and six:

Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.  
God settles the solitary in a home; he leads out the prisoners to prosperity,  
but the rebellious dwell in a parched land.

Those who are weakest in society can depend upon God to help them and to give them what they most need at the time when they most need it.

The Lord's power is shown in his ability to provide rain to Sinai, a dry and parched land, when the people of Israel needed it (68:8). In consequence David ends this psalm:

O kingdoms of the earth, sing to God; sing praises to the Lord, *Selah*  
to him who rides in the heavens, the ancient heavens;  
behold, he sends out his voice, his mighty voice.

Ascribe power to God, whose majesty is over Israel, and whose power is in the skies.

Awesome is God from his sanctuary; the God of Israel—he is the one who gives power and strength to his people.

Blessed be God!

There are times in all our lives when we need to step back and ponder all the great things God has done in our lives and how good He is to us. Bless the Lord!

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for helping me during the difficult days of my life. Thank You for providing my needs each day. Grow within me, O Lord, a grateful and humble spirit. Keep me in Your hand, Father. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I count my blessings each day? Do I give my heart and life to the Lord?





**June 26**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 69:5-71:16

**Memory Verses: Psalm 69:30-31** I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving. This will please the LORD more than an ox or a bull with horns and hoofs.

**Song:** [“Sing On”](#)

David wrote Psalm 69 as a cry of distress and as an imprecation on his adversaries who had been exceptionally cruel to him. David speaks of the great number of opponents he faced. “More in number than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without cause; mighty are those who would destroy me, those who attack me with lies” (69:4).

David knew that his fasting and sackcloth had made him in the minds of others a reproach and a “byword” for mockery. “I am the talk of those who sit in the gate, and the drunkards make songs about me” (69:12). As you read this psalm you can feel the great sadness and feeling of being misunderstood David endure. In great sorrow David says: “Reproaches have broken my heart, so that I am in despair. I looked for pity, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none” (69:20).

The psalms present to us at one place or another a wide range of emotions, and God understands and feels them all (69:5). David as shepherd and as king had many highs and lows in life, just as many of us do.

Through it all he continued to call upon God to help him. Even in his affliction and pain, David realized that the salvation of God could set him securely on high (69:29). So “let heaven and earth praise Him, the seas and everything that moves in them” (69:34).

God wants us to continue to hold to Him even in the harshest of times.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, be close to me when I am at my lowest. Keep me close when people talk ugly about me or slander me. I pray, Father, my weakness will not be a reproach to You. Keep me in Your hand and renew my strength. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I hold to the Lord when people turn away and make fun of me?





**June 27**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 71:17-73:20

**Memory Verse: Psalms 73:1-3** Truly God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled, my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

**Song:** [“Learning to Lean”](#)

This psalm of Asaph describes a common problem of those who are faithful to God. They wonder why the wicked seem to prosper, while the righteous have it hard.

Asaph explains: “Behold, these are the wicked; always at ease, they increase in riches. All in vain have I kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence. For all the day long I have been stricken and rebuked every morning” (73:12-14).

The wicked in Asaph’s eyes have no pains in their death and are not in trouble. They live in pride and violence; their imaginations run riot. They mock and speak arrogantly (69:5-9). About their wickedness they say, “How does God know?” They believe they can get away with all their iniquity and rebellion.

Asaph toys with the error that he has kept his heart innocent in vain, but as he ponders the question which was troublesome in his sight, he realized something. It was troublesome, “until I came into the sanctuary of God; then I perceived their end” (73:17).

“Truly you set them in slippery places; you make them fall to ruin. How they are destroyed in a moment, swept away utterly by terrors! Like a dream when one awakes, O Lord, when you rouse yourself, you despise them as phantoms” (73:18-20).

Asaph admits he was senseless and ignorant, realizing that his good is nearness to God and that he desired nothing else (73:25-28).

Asaph’s folly, however, is all too common. It is easy to see with the eye rather than with the spirit, to think like the worldly rather than the spiritual.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, remind me of my latter end in heaven with You. Build my faith in Your promises and forgive my foolish thinking. Help me always to trust in You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I toy with “why” questions that forget God? Have I listened to God’s teaching on the matter?



**June 28**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 73:21-76:7

**Memory Verse: Psalm 75:4-7** “I say to the boastful, „Do not boast,“ and to the wicked, „Do not lift up your horn; do not lift up your horn on high, or speak with haughty neck.”” For not from the east or from the west and not from the wilderness comes lifting up, but it is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another.

**Song:** [“How Firm a Foundation”](#)

In this psalm of Asaph, he reveals how God abases the proud and exalts the humble. God is the decision-maker about who is great and who is not. Jesus said,

“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:25-28).

God judges with fairness, even as Asaph recognizes (Psalm 75:2). Paul acknowledged the same truth in Romans 2:6-11:

He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality.

We can be confident in God’s willingness to bless those who humble themselves in His sight and serve Him faithfully every day. Those who rebel against Him and refuse to serve Him, however, will face His wrath.

“But I will declare it forever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob. All the horns of the wicked I will cut off, but the horns of the righteous shall be lifted up” (75:10).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep me humble. Let me recall every day that I am accountable to You and you alone. Forgive my foolish arrogance and let me set my heart on being Your servant. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I think more highly of myself than I ought? Do I count God as a fair judge? Am I willing to be a good servant?



**June 29**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 76:8-78:24

**Memory Verses: Psalms 77:1-3** I cry aloud to God, aloud to God, and he will hear me. In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord; in the night my hand is stretched out without wearying; my soul refuses to be comforted. When I remember God, I moan; when I meditate, my spirit faints.

**Song:** ["I Need Thee Every Hour"](#)

Nearly everyone has faced a problem so troubling that he or she could not think of anything and could not sleep. There would be no peace until there is some answer from God.

"You hold my eyelids open; I am so troubled that I cannot speak" (77:4).

What helped Asaph through this troubling time is remembering God's mighty deeds. Just thinking about all God has done to bless Israel helped him to grow in his faith. "I will meditate on all Thy work, and muse on Thy deeds" (77:12). Asaph concludes, "Your way, O God, is holy. What god is great like our God? You are the God who works wonders; you have made known your might among the peoples. You with your arm redeemed your people, the children of Jacob and Joseph" (77:13-15).

What god is great like our God? The gods of the other nations were fantasies and myths. There is no other God. God led his people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron. He provided for their needs. He fed them and gave them water. He gave them victories over their enemies.

When Asaph changed his thinking, he also changed his attitude. If we only see the negative, we fail to see anything else. If we look at God's blessings, we see His mighty hand and steadfast love.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for all that You have done in my life. You have provided for me, saved me, and walked with me through every trial and struggle. Father, hold me in Your hand. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I sometimes let my troubles overwhelm me? Do I focus on all the negatives of life and forget the positives?



**June 30**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalm 78:25-72

**Memory Verse: Psalm 78:32** In spite of all this, they still sinned; despite his wonders, they did not believe.

**Song:** ["Have Thine Own Way"](#)

Man is a curious creature, often fickle and often the cause of marveling. Even when God is far more generous to man than he deserves, shows him marvelous miracles, and blesses him with the things he needs, man seems to forget God and do as he pleases.

"Despite his wonders, they did not believe." This psalm describes the great blessings and mighty wonders of God to the children of Israel as they left Egypt, crossed the Red Sea, and survived in the wilderness before entering the Promised Land.

They saw the plagues in Egypt, they saw the waters part and their deliverance at the Red Sea, they saw water come from the rock, they ate of the bread of angels daily, and they ate quail when they complained. "In spite of all this, they still sinned" and did not believe.

In this maskil Asaph said they flattered God with their mouths and lied to him with their tongues (78:36). Though God was angry with them, he still showed compassion and remembered they were but flesh (78:38-39).

As we marvel so at them, let us also marvel at our own fickle ways, our forgetfulness, and our unbelief. God is always better to us than we deserve. Thankfully, his grace and mercy are present with us when we ourselves forget and fall into unbelief.

God is good. He grants us opportunity to change and to do better. Let us be faithful and steadfast in our commitment to believe and serve Him.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, remind me of all You have done for me. Keep my heart fresh and alert to Your kindness and power. Forgive my unbelief and forgetfulness. Forgive my sin. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I forget God when temptations arise? Am I too busy looking at life to remember that God is still in charge?



**July 1**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 79-82

**Memory Verses: Psalm 81:11-12** “But my people did not listen to my voice; Israel would not submit to me. So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels.”

**Song:** [“Without Him”](#)

What do you do with people who will not listen? How do you treat those who are stubborn and will not give up the path they have chosen? How do you deal with those who will not submit to what is right? This is the problem God faced with Israel from time to time.

It must break the heart of God to bless and bless those whom He has chosen, only to find their stubborn will unyielding. God is patient with us until we turn our hearts against Him. Even God will not tolerate a persistently defiant spirit. Hebrews 10:26-31 says:

For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

God gives over stubborn people to follow after their own counsels. The end, of course, is bitter. It is so much better to listen to God and to follow Him all the days of our lives. We must be careful we do not think ourselves smarter than God.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep me back from a willful and presumptuous spirit. Do not let me harden my heart and become stubborn against You. Open my heart and my ears to hear what You have said. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I shut my heart off when God says something I do not like? Am I stubborn in wanting to have my own way?



**July 2**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 83-86

**Memory Verse: Psalm 84:10** For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

**Song:** [“Near to the Heart of God”](#)

In the psalm of the sons of Korah, the singers long to be in the Temple, God’s dwelling place. The hearts and souls longed for the courts of the Lord; they sang for joy to the living God (84:2).

They found blessing by dwelling in God’s house and were ever praising God. They found the blessing of strength in the Lord. At a low point in his life, while in prison, Paul said, “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I will say rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4).

While there is no temple today, the Lord’s people assemble for worship each Lord’s day to celebrate the joy of salvation, the hope of eternal life, the forgiveness of sin, and the promises of God. There is something wonderful and special about God’s family gathering to remember all the good God has done.

“For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly” (Psalm 84:11). How blessed we are to have a God so great as Jehovah. There is none other, and we have the privilege of being in His presence, worshiping Him and serving Him.

I’d rather be a doorkeeper in the church of my Lord than to live in the mansions of the wicked.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me to appreciate the opportunity to live close to You and to worship You each time Your people assemble. I thank You and praise You for all the good You have done for my loved ones and for me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I long for the opportunity to worship with the people of God? Do I yearn for the time I can spend with God?



**July 3**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 87:1-89:37

**Memory Verses: Psalm 89:1-2** I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever; with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations. For I said, “Steadfast love will be built up forever; in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness.”

**Song:** [“How Firm a Foundation”](#)

In this maskil of Ethan the Ezrahite, the psalmist declares the steadfastness of God's promises and loving kindness. God is faithful to His Word to David especially.

“I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: „I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations“” (Psalm 87:3-4). God has promised:

My steadfast love I will keep for him forever,  
and my covenant will stand firm for him.

I will establish his offspring forever  
and his throne as the days of the heavens.

God's promise to David proved true in the kingdom of God's beloved Son, Jesus, the son of David and the son of God. He truly became God's firstborn (Colossians 1:15) and the highest of the kings of the earth (Revelation 17:14). His kingdom endures forever (Luke 1:33). If you are in the Lord's church, you are in His wonderful kingdom (Matthew 16:18-19; Colossians 1:13-14).

“Once for all I have sworn by my holiness; I will not lie to David” (Psalm 89:35). God does not lie but keeps every covenant promise. For this reason we can believe God and have confidence in Him.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, let me each day be as faithful to You as You have been to me. Forgive my sin and keep me in the hollow of Your hand. I know You will never leave me or forsake me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I take seriously the covenant of God I enjoy because of the blood of Jesus Christ? Am I faithful to God's covenant with His people in Christ?





**July 4**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 89:38-91:13

**Memory Verse: Psalms 90:12** So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.

**Song:** ["Take Time to Be Holy"](#)

We live in a "clock-eyed" world day to day, but we often miss the bigger picture. "The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away" (90:10). We do not have the certainty of tomorrow; today may be the only day we possess. The Bible urges us to consider our lives and the brevity of time we have:

"Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"—yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin" (James 4:13-17).

The apostle Paul by inspiration said, "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:15-17).

A day once past is gone forever, and we must think about how we have used the day. Have we given ourselves to the service of God? Have we touched the lives of someone who needed our counsel and example? Is anyone closer to God because of our love and kindness? Does anyone know more about God because we spoke or acted?

When today is gone, I will have replaced it with my words, actions, and influence. I pray that I will have left a record of what is good and right.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, use my life each day to glorify You. Though I am weak, Lord strengthen me and use what little I do to make a difference in the lives of others. Work through me, Father, to bring joy and salvation to others. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I think about how I use my time? Does the day I spent today for the Lord build up the kingdom? Do I realize how transient I am on this earth? Do I live my life with urgency to further the cause of Christ?





**July 5**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 91:14-94:16

**Memory Verse: Psalm 94:12-13** Blessed is the man whom you discipline, O LORD, and whom you teach out of your law, to give him rest from days of trouble, until a pit is dug for the wicked.

**Song:** [“Each Step I Take”](#)

God disciplines His children because He loves them. Some parents are afraid to be hard on their children, because they are afraid of public opinion, government retribution, or of hurting the child. Certainly we have no desire to argue for child abuse.

In spite of it all, we must understand that chastening is for the blessing of a child of God. He does it for our good. The teaching of God provides safety and rest to those who are willing to learn. God’s chastening today can pay great dividends tomorrow.

“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives” (Proverbs 3:11-12; Hebrews 12:5-6).

The worst thing a young person can enjoy is success in sin. The kid who never gets caught, who never faces discipline, and who never pays the price for his misdeeds early in life will find life most difficult later. How much better it is for a child to fail in youth, face the light consequences of his actions, and learn from the experience. How sad to see a child continue in rebellion and sin as an adult, only to find greater problems than he ever imagined!

“Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life” (Galatians 6:7-8).

I am thankful to have a God who loves me so much that He will stop me from doing the things that may cost me my soul.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for disciplining me. I am so sorry, Father, that I hurt You by my sins; but I am thankful that You cared enough for me to stop me by Your chastening. Help me to be wise enough to learn from my pain to do what is right. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I learn from my mistakes? Do I find myself successful in sin? Do I realize when the Lord is chastening me that it is for my own good?



**July 6**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 94:17-98:3

**Memory Verse: Psalm 97:1** The LORD reigns, let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!

**Song:** ["We Praise Thee, O God"](#)

The Lord reigns as the only real King of all the earth. He is never out of power. No one can depose Him; no one can censure Him; and no one can vote Him out.

The Lord reigns, and He is a good King worthy of honor and praise. We have a King who will never lie to us, never quit loving us, and never forget His promises to us.

We have a righteous King, whose laws are righteous altogether (Psalms 19:9; 97:2). His laws are for "our good" (Deuteronomy 6:24; 10:13). Each one will bless us and not hurt us.

We have a King who will send fire to burn up the adversaries round about. The heavens and the earth declare His righteousness, and all the peoples have seen his glory (97:6).

Those who have given themselves to other gods ought to be ashamed. They are full of deception and lead people into wickedness. "For you, O LORD, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods" (97:9).

Because our God is good and hates evil, so should we. "Hate evil, you who love the Lord, who preserves the souls of His godly ones, He delivers them from the hand of the wicked" (97:10).

"Be glad in the Lord, you righteous ones; and give thanks to His holy name" (97:12).

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, rule in my life today, just as You rule over all the peoples of the earth. Be my King and grant me the privilege of serving You. You are a great and good God! Help me to be a good servant in Your kingdom. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I rejoice that Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior? Do I recall daily the privilege of being a citizen of God's kingdom? Do I live a life that praises God?



**July 7**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 98:4-102:7

**Memory Verse: Psalm 100:3** Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

**Song:** ["My God and I"](#)

Psalm 100 is entitled, "A Psalm for Giving Thanks." Though it has a mere five verses, Psalm 100 explores beautifully the relationship we have with God.

It is a good day in a person's life when he realizes he belongs not to himself but to God and God alone. Paul noted, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

My heart is not mine, my soul is not mine, my hands are not mine, my mouth is not mine, my body is not mine. I belong to God and must give myself full to Him.

But this loss of "me" is for my blessing. "For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself" (Luke 9:34-35)?

To belong to God in this life will assure that I belong to God in the next life. "For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living" (Romans 14:7-9).

How wonderful indeed it is to be the sheep of his pasture!

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for owning me and taking such good care of me. I want no other Master or Shepherd. Take my life, Father, and use me as You will in Your service. I am Yours. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I recall each day that I am not mine own but I belong to God? If I belong to God, do I remember to please Him in times of temptation? If I belong to God, do I have hope in Him for the future?



**July 8**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 102:8-104:4

**Memory Verse: Psalm 103:11-12** For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

**Song:** ["A Wonderful Savior"](#)

This psalm of David is my favorite, for it reminds me of all the blessings God has given, especially how God has removed my sins far from me. God's love is so great, and His attention to my needs so beyond measure I must proclaim with David:

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits,  
who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases,  
who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,  
who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's (103:1-5).

In all of this, God still remembers my weakness and my humanity.

As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him.

For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.

As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field;  
for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more.

But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments. (103:13-17).

How blessed we are to have such a great God and Father! Bless the LORD, O my soul!

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for not casting me aside but for forgiving my sins. Thank You for all the benefits I have because of Your steadfast love. May the Lord bless my children's children. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I fear him and keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments?



**July 9**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 104:5-105:24

**Memory Verse: Psalm 104:5** He set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be moved.

**Song:** ["No One Ever Cared for Me like Jesus"](#)

Psalm 104 tells of the Lord's marvelous care over all His works. It begins by saying, "O Lord my God, Thou art very great." He makes the clouds His chariots and walks upon the wind. The winds are His messengers and flaming fire His ministers (104:3-4).

The mountains and the waters are in the place where the Lord established for them; God set a boundary that they may not pass over. They will not return to cover the earth (104:8-9).

The springs give water to bless the animals (10-13); God causes the grass to grow for the cattle. The trees drink their fill. He made the moon for the seasons; the sun knows the place of its setting (104:19).

O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures (104:24).

After praising the Lord for all his care and providence for man, the psalmist turns inward. I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;

I will sing praise to my God while I have being.

May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD (104:33-34)

Bless the Lord, O my soul. Praise the Lord!

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, for all the simple blessings of life You give to me each day, I am indeed thankful. Your wisdom in caring for my needs is greater than I can imagine, so I praise You and sing to Your glory. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I take thought of all the Lord has done for me? Do I remember the little things He provides for my comfort?



**July 10**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 105:25-106:33

**Memory Verse: Psalm 106:48** Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! And let all the people say, "Amen!" Praise the LORD!

**Song:** ["Praise the Lord"](#)

Psalm 106 describes Israel's rebelliousness and the Lord's deliverance. It reviews the sad history of God's people, whom He blessed and who at times forsook Him. While they were privileged to see God's miracles and deliverance out of Egypt, they soon forgot His miracles and stopped believing in Him.

Some Christians think if a Christian ever quits believing in the Lord, that person never really believed in the first place. This, however, is not true. Even believers can allow sin and temptations in the flesh to harden their hearts and to kill their faith.

Psalm 106:12 says they believed His words and sang His praise, but verse 13 says Israel quickly forgot His works and did not wait for His counsel. Some became envious of Moses and Aaron and rebelled; at another time they made and worshiped a molten calf. They forgot God their Savior and all His miracles in Egypt (106:21).

Believing the ten spies, they despised the pleasant, promised land. They "did not believe in His word" (106:24) but grumbled in their tents and would not listen. For this, they died in the wilderness.

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. <sup>13</sup>But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. <sup>14</sup>For we share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. As it is said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion" (Hebrews 3:12-15).

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, keep me from presumptuous sins; help me to trust always in You. Remind me, dear Lord, that You alone are the true and living God who has blessed me and helped me through every trial. Oh Lord, deliver me from evil, so that I may not forget You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I allow my cravings to cause me to forget God's will? When times are tough, am I willing to believe? What am I doing to build my faith each day?



**July 11**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 106:34-107:38

**Memory Verse: Psalm 107:1** Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!

**Song:** [“You Are the Song That I Sing”](#)

Psalm 107 marks the beginning of Book Five of the psalms; it describes how the Lord delivers man from his many troubles. Verse 2 says, “Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.”

May I suggest you do something that will change not only how you think but also how others will think about you. When someone asks you how you are doing, say something about how God has blessed you or been good to you. I like to say something like, “I am well. The Lord has been good to me.”

Reminding yourself and others of the love and grace of God is a great boost to faith. It can make a difference in your attitude about life and in the challenges you face each day. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.

God’s love is indeed steadfast. God has walked beside you every day of your life. He has seen all your struggles and troubles. No doubt God has done more to help you through them than you know. He delivers us in ways beyond our understanding. He answers prayer!

We don’t have to know how God works His will in life; we do need to believe His promise to help us through our struggles. He walks with us through the valleys aware that death lingers near. He takes us to the other side.

Don’t let an opportunity pass to thank and praise God. It is not only a sweet savor to God; it is also a blessing in your own life.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for redeeming me from sin and this world. You have enriched my life in so many ways. You are good. Your steadfast love endures forever. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I pause each day to count my blessings? Do I recall the goodness of God in my life? When I am faced with a struggle, do I recall how God has delivered others?





**July 12**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 107:39-109:31

**Memory Verse: Psalm 109:30-31** With my mouth I will give great thanks to the LORD; I will praise him in the midst of the throng. For he stands at the right hand of the needy, to save him from those who condemn his soul to death.

**Song:** ["Holy Father, Grant Us Peace"](#)

In this imprecatory psalm, David cries out for help from God. He is unjustly suffering at the hands and mouths of wicked people.

For wicked and deceitful mouths are opened against me,  
speaking against me with lying tongues.

They encircle me with words of hate, and attack me without cause.

In return for my love they accuse me, but I give myself to prayer.

So they reward me evil for good, and hatred for my love (109:2-5).

Perhaps you have felt betrayed by those you love. You show kindness, and the ones you bless turn upon you with vindictiveness. It can wound the heart, and David felt this pain keenly.

When David was attacked by his accusers, he gave himself to prayer. He called upon God to settle the matter. He left vengeance with God. He spoke to God his heart but did not act against his accuser on his own.

But you, O GOD my Lord, deal on my behalf for your name's sake; because your steadfast love is good, deliver me! (109:21).

Help me, O LORD my God! Save me according to your steadfast love!

Let them know that this is your hand; you, O LORD, have done it! (109:26-27).

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, grant me your love and deliverance from those who are evil and speak out against me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I take vengeance on my own or do I rely on God to deal with the matter?





**July 13**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 110-113

**Memory Verse: Psalm 112:6-7** For the righteous will never be moved; he will be remembered forever. He is not afraid of bad news; his heart is firm, trusting in the LORD.

**Song:** ["I Believe in Jesus"](#)

There is a great difference between a righteous man and a wicked one. Their mindsets and their destinies are far apart. The way they reason and what they value keeps them at arm's length in almost everything.

A righteous man has some wonderful treasures, which no one can steal or destroy. He has the hope and love of the Lord; he can hold to God's promise without fear. God strongly supports him, because his heart completely belongs to Him (2 Chron. 16:9).

Righteous people hear bad news just like wicked people, but bad news in life does not change the promises and truths of eternity. The sun still shines above the clouds. The loss of fortune or health does not affect the soul. A change in kings does not remove God from heaven.

The righteous man has a firm, trusting heart; he knows the Lord will remember him. David wrote, "His heart is steady; he will not be afraid, until he looks in triumph on his adversaries. He has distributed freely; he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever; his horn is exalted in honor" (112:8-9).

Our faith matters in times of trouble. That is when it is tested, and where its value has the greatest opportunity to be seen (1 Peter. 1:6-9). The steady man who keeps his heart fastened to God, while all about him are people falling apart, shows his assured faith. God will certainly reward him.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, keep me strong in trials, patient in pain, and hopeful in tragedy. Forgive my doubts, and strengthen my heart. Remember me, O Lord. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I keep my heart steady in struggles or do I forget the promises of God? Do I see the clouds only and forget the sun?



**July 14**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 114:1-118:9

**Memory Verse: Psalm 118:23-24** This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

**Song:** ["He Leadeth Me"](#)

It is an important day in our lives, when we come to the realization that we need God. We do more than need Him: we are utterly dependent upon God. We cannot do it on our own. The Lord has accomplished this great work.

The apostle Paul wrote, "Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Corinthians 3:5-6). I keep this passage in front of me, posted to remind me of God's good provision for my life.

Whatever I am, God has made me. Whatever I can do, it is by the strength which God supplies. Whatever I know, I have learned from God. "Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever" (118:1)!

The Lord is indeed our refuge and our helper. He protects us from problems. He sees what we cannot see and knows what we cannot know. He helps even in our ignorance, when we do not know we are in danger. He delivers us even from ourselves. "The LORD is God, and he has made his light to shine upon us" (118:27).

Rejoice in the Lord! Praise Him with your heart and lips. He is the giver of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17). Without Him we can do nothing (John 15:4-5).

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for blessing me and shaping my life. Thank You for every ability and for the teachers who helped me to understand. Your steadfast love, O Lord, has sustained me and equipped me for service. Help me, O Lord, to fulfill my ministry. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I get proud of myself and my accomplishments? Have I remembered all God has done to equip me for service? Have I accepted the grace of God in vain or am I using my gifts for His service?



**July 15**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 118:10-119:40

**Memory Verses: Psalm 119:9-11** How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

**Song:** [“Give Me the Bible”](#)

Psalm 119 is an acrostic of 176 verses; each of the twenty-two sections has eight verses; and each verse within the section begins with the same letter. Most Bibles give the letter of each section: Aleph, Beth, Gimel, and the rest.

God ordained His precepts that we should keep them diligently (119:4). How blessed is the person who keeps those testimonies and walks in God’s ways. When a person seeks God with all his heart and does no unrighteousness, He walks in God’s ways (119:1-3). The psalmist pleads: “Oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes! Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments” (119:5-6).

How can a young man make it with all the temptations facing him? He finds his strength, his teaching, and his hope in the Word of God! When a young man with all his heart seeks God by studying and meditating on the Word, he will avoid the pitfalls of sin. When a young man prays to God to keep him and not let him wander from the commandments, he can avoid the schemes of the devil (119:10).

Store up the Word in your heart if you wish to overcome sin. Search it out, study it, meditate on it, memorize it, love it, live it, and share it with others. Make the Word the basis of your thinking. Let it permeate your soul and fill your life. Each day let the Word excite you and challenge you. Like the psalmist, say:

*Open my eyes, that I may behold  
wondrous things out of your law(119:18).*

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, do not let me wander from Your commandments. Keep my heart strong and committed to Your way that I may never stray from the Word. Thank You, Father, for the gospel of Jesus, that I may know all the good You have done for me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I read, study, and meditate on God’s Word every day? Do I memorize its principles and apply them to my life? Do I share God’s Word with others?



**July 16**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalm 119:41-96

**Memory Verses: Psalm 119:71-72** It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes. The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

**Song:** [“Father of Mercies”](#)

The problem of pain suggests that all pain is evil. Obviously pain hurts, and in that sense it is no advantage. An affliction is a condition of great physical or mental distress; it usually comes uncontrollably.

No affliction seems pleasant at the time, but all the evidence is not in yet! The disadvantage of one day may prove to provide the strength of another. The athlete who seeks to win afflicts himself with great self-discipline, but the outcome is worth it.

The psalmist learned something most valuable from his affliction; one circumstance opened the door to another. If the affliction had not been there, he would not have grown through coming to know the statute.

When sin is successful, it grows unhindered; but when sin is disciplined, it ceases. The punishment of being found out is sometimes the best thing that can happen, since it may bring the only hope for repentance.

God’s laws are better than thousands of gold and silver pieces because they protect one from the enemy of the soul. Money won’t buy righteousness, but obedience to the will of God can open the door to the blessings of eternity.

Affliction teaches one to look to God. “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word. You are good and do good; teach me your statutes” (119:67-68).

Is every affliction evil? No. It can open our hearts to listen to God.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me in my affliction to understand Your will better. Teach me Your statutes that I may live and prosper. Turn my heart if I should go astray. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I rebel when God disciplines or do I listen and learn? Can I see the hand of God working in my life through the blessings and the afflictions?



**July 17**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalm 119:97-160

**Memory Verse:** Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

**Song:** [“He Leadeth Me”](#)

Every spiritual problem of life, every moral question, and every need for guidance finds its answer in the light of Scripture. It lights our path so that we know which way we ought to go. The problem is often not with the Bible having the answer as much as it is our unwillingness to search out the answer or our unwillingness to accept the answer we find.

A light unused is not much help. The noble Bereans searched the Scriptures to see whether Paul’s message was so (Acts 17:11). When they learned the truth, they believed (17:12). There comes a time in all our lives when we must trust what we have learned from God more than what we reason on our own. It takes faith to set aside our own opinions and embrace the will of God.

We don’t always know the “whys” or the “how” of God’s work in this life. We don’t have to. We do have to believe that He is working His will in our lives (Philippians 2:12-13). God is at work in us.

Trusting in God’s wisdom, we too will be able to say, “I have more insight than all my teachers, For Thy testimonies are my meditation” (119:99). Trust God to lead you in the right path. That path may be strait and narrow; it may lead place you would not think; but it is God’s path! If it is God’s path, it is the right one.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep me in your precepts that my feet may not slip. Show me how You wish for me to live. Help me, Father, to trust when I do not understand. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I listen to God? Do I love God’s law and meditate upon it (119:97)? Do I restrain my feet from evil?



**July 18**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 119:161-124:8

**Memory Verse: Psalm 121:8** The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

**Song:** ["O Master Let Me Walk With Thee"](#)

Psalms 120-134 are "songs of ascent." The Israelites would sing these songs as they traveled up to Jerusalem to worship. They are songs of hope and of dependence upon God to help and keep them from all harm.

The psalmist said, "I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber" (121:1-3).

Traveling was always a frightening thing in ancient Israel. The treacherous and difficult road between Jericho and Jerusalem was filled with opportunities for robbers. Those going to Jerusalem to worship often took extra precautions and traveled in groups. There were always people hostile to the Lord and His people.

These songs encouraged their hearts as they traveled. It reminded them of God's watchful care and protection in times of vulnerability. It also prepared their hearts for genuine worship once they reached the temple.

"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go up to the house of the Lord'" (122:1). They longed and prayed for Jerusalem, God's city of peace. They longed to be close to the place where God's name dwelled. They could bless the Lord for their deliverance (Psalm 124).

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for giving me safe passage as I come to worship You from Lord's day to Lord's day. Your "traveling mercies" bless me with an opportunity to draw close to You. I praise You, Father, and thank You for keeping my soul. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I prepare for worship? Do I get my heart right before and as I go to worship at church?



**July 19**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 125-131

**Memory Verse: Psalm 127:1** Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.

**Song:** [“Holy Father, Grant Us Peace”](#)

God must be in the center of our lives. Building houses and guarding cities is useless if God is not doing it. The Lord works in our lives each day helping us, protecting us, and guiding us in the right way.

Jesus said, “apart from me, you can do nothing” (John 14:5). Without God, life is hopeless and empty (Ecclesiastes 12:13; Ephesians 2:11-12). The Lord said, “For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life” (Matthew 16:25-26)?

How sad that a person would get up early, work hard to make a living, and go to bed late but have no relationship with God! What does his life accomplish?

When people shut God out of their lives, they lose in many ways. They may feel success in this life, but they have no future in the next life. They also forfeit the joy of having a relationship with God that is filled with abundance (John 10:10). They also forfeit the peace that passes understanding in knowing God’s promised inheritance is assured.

God is not just another nice option; we must have Him in our lives.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, work every day in my heart and in my life so that I may want to do and perform Your will. Grow in me a grateful spirit. Renew my joy in Your salvation. Forgive my weaknesses. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I let God work in my life or do I ignore Him? Is God first in all that I do?



**July 20**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 132:1-135:14

**Memory Verse: Psalm 133:1** Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!

**Song:** [“Love Divine”](#)

The love God gives unites and unifies. It unites us as His family and unifies us in following His will. Unity is a blessing, and division is the work of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21).

It is amazing to think what the cross has done to bring people together. There are members of the body of Christ in nearly every nation and culture. Jesus said, “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (John 12:32).

The Lord Jesus makes strangers into friends, enemies into brothers. The persecutor Saul who ravaged the church (Acts 8:4) became the beloved brother Paul in the Lord (2 Peter 3:15).

In this psalm of ascent, the Israelites saw the unifying of the twelve tribes in their assembling at the Temple in Jerusalem. Their God unified them in heart and soul.

The psalmist attributed a sweet thing to the unity God gives:

It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard,  
on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes!

It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion!

For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.

It is easy at times to get angry at your brother for some small slight or offense and forget how the blood of Jesus unites us. “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.<sup>2</sup> Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you” (Ephesians 4:31-32).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me to remember the great unity that brings Christians together. Help me to forgive others, just as You have forgiven me. Oh Lord, grow in my heart a love for all my brothers and sisters. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I hold grudges? Do I stay angry? Do I value unity?





**July 21**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 135:15-138:3

**Memory Verse: Psalm 136:1** Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

**Song:** ["We Praise Thee, O God"](#)

In Jewish tradition this psalm is referred to as "The Great Hallel," distinguished from the "Lesser Hallel," found in Psalms 113-118. The Lord's mercy (*hesed*, Heb.), referring to God's "covenant love and faithfulness" is mentioned in all 26 verses.

God should be praised for His works in creation and the deliverance of His people. These themes are developed in the first line of each verse. The second line provides the refrain which may well have been the congregational response to the first.

The refrain to every verse that emphasizes steadfast mercy is also found Psalm 106:1 and 118:4. It was perhaps a kind of *Amen* by the people in worship (compare 1 Chronicles 16:36 and Psalm 105:45).

His steadfast love does endure forever; we must never doubt that. Though at times we wonder why God allows unhappy or challenging events to happen, we must never doubt He is working His plan. God is always able to make all things work together for good (Romans 8:28) to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

Give thanks to the God of heaven,  
for his steadfast love endures forever.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, we thank You for helping us through every circumstance, for forgiving our sins, for giving us hope, and for preparing for us a home in heaven. Indeed, Your steadfast love endures forever. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I give up on God when things seem to go against me? Can I trust God's bigger plan in my life?



**July 22**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 138:4-140:13

**Memory Verses: Psalm 139:13-14** For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.

**Song:** ["Wonderful Grace of Jesus"](#)

This psalm of David remains among many people's favorites, because it states so many wonderful truths.

First, it reminds us that God knows us intimately.

O LORD, you have searched me and known me!

You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.

You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.

Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether.

You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it (139:1-6).

Second, it reminds that we can never go where God is not present.

Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?

If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!

If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,  
even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,"  
even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day,

for darkness is as light with you (139:7-12)

Third, David extols how God had intricately woven him together in his mother's womb and had given him life. "How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you (13-14).

In the end, David pleads, "Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!" (23-24).

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, search me and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts! See if there is any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting! In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I open my heart and soul to God? Or am I closed? Do I realize God is with me all the time? Am I thankful for His abiding presence and comfort?



**July 23**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 141:1-145:7

**Memory Verses: Psalm 145:17-18** The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works. The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

**Song:** [“Praise the Lord”](#)

In this song of praise, David extols the greatness and goodness of God. He speaks clearly and lavishly of all the good things God is and does for His people. He is greatly to be praised; indeed His greatness is unsearchable! (145:3).

Each generation is to tell the coming generation of all the goodness and kindness of the Lord. They are to pass it down so that other generations will know!

They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness.

They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness  
and shall sing aloud of your righteousness (145:6-7).

David wanted to remind everyone that the Lord is good, and His loving kindness endures forever. He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and overflowing with steadfast love (145:8).

David recognized that the works of God tell of the greatness of His power. His works and His people give thanks for all the good He has done.

The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season.

You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing (15-16)

My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD,  
and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever (145:21).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, I see all the beauty and good You have done for me. I know your works are righteous and kind. I thank You and praise You and bless Your holy name forever and ever. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I count my blessings each day? Can I see how all that God does and teaches is righteous and good?



**July 24**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 145:8-148:6

**Memory Verses: Psalm 146:5-6** Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever; who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry.

**Song:** ["My Hope is Built on Nothing Less"](#)

When you are hurting, uncertain, and needing relief, it is easy to reach out for whatever you think may give relief. The psalmist gives warning about whom to trust. "Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation. When his breath departs he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish" (146:3-4).

Man is ever limited by resources and time; God is not. Even a powerful prince cannot live forever. His money, though it be great, is not inexhaustible. But God has no such limits in time or bounty. He is the source of every good thing. His power, wisdom, and unfailing love provide for His people what no man can.

How thankful we should all be that we have such a great and good God. Imagine the lot of those who bought into idolatry. How vain their hope! How lost their cause!

The LORD sets the prisoners free;  
the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.  
The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;  
the LORD loves the righteous.  
The LORD watches over the sojourners;  
he upholds the widow and the fatherless,  
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.  
The LORD will reign forever,  
your God, O Zion, to all generations.  
Praise the LORD! (146:7-10).

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, I know that You are the only God and only hope we have. Please keep me close and remind me each day of your goodness. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I trust in people before I trust in God? Do I listen to people before I listen to God? When I decide what to do, have I considered God?



**July 25**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalms 148:7-150:6; Proverbs 1:1-2:9

**Memory Verse: Proverbs 1:7** The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

**Song:** ["I Am Resolved"](#)

Solomon speaks in the Proverbs as a father does to his son. Fathers love their sons and want them to live righteous lives and serve God. Solomon is interested in his son's avoiding the pitfalls of life. Two words arise throughout the book, "wise" and "foolish." Solomon obviously wants his son to be wise and to avoid the foolish.

In the writings of Solomon, a fool is a person who lacks the fear of the Lord. He wants to act on his own without the guidance of God. The proverbs are given for these reasons:

To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight,  
to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity;  
to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth—  
Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance,  
to understand a proverb and a saying, the words of the wise and their riddles (1:2-6).

Solomon worried that his son might fall into the wrong crowd, listening to the enticement of sinners. He wondered how long the simple would scoff at wisdom. Wisdom cries out, and the people refuse to listen.

Solomon predicts the day when the foolish scoffers in great affliction will cry out to God, but God will not hear them. "Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD, would have none of my counsel and despised all my reproof, therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way, and have their fill of their own devices" (1:29-31).

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, keep me from thinking I know all the answers. Open my heart and keep me humble to Your wisdom and guidance. Help me, Father, to do Your will every day. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I listen with my heart to God's wisdom? Do I sometimes think I know more than God? Am I gullible to the call of sinners?



**July 26**

**Scripture Reading:** Proverbs 2:10-5:14

**Memory Verse: Proverbs 3:5-6** Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

**Song:** ["Hide Me, O My Savior"](#)

The Lord knows so many things I cannot know and sees so many things I cannot see, that I can hardly doubt His wisdom and judgment in the matters of life. The Lord will always lead me in the best way, even when I cannot understand at the time all the reasons for where we going.

Trusting the Lord is the best advice. Solomon wants his son to prosper in life and not make the mistakes others make:

My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments,  
for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you.

Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck;  
write them on the tablet of your heart.

So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man (3:1-4).

When you trust the Lord and not lean on your own wisdom, and when you acknowledge the Lord in all your ways, God will make your paths straight. You won't have all the bumps in life that many people encounter through their own foolishness.

It is a sad reality: many people make their own problems in life. No one likes to hear he has chosen foolishly, but many do it every day. Life for them is far more difficult because they fail to listen to the teaching of God. They do what they should not and leave undone the things they should do. Then they reap what they have sown.

One who sows his thoughts and behavior with God in mind will find a straight path that avoids a destiny of destruction. Let us keep our hearts and minds solidly on God.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, keep my ears and heart open to Your will. Let me not be deceived by my own understanding. Keep me searching for more and more of Your wisdom. Open the pages of Your word and may the truths there permeate my heart and soul. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I search the Scriptures for wisdom? Do I obey what I learn? Am I arrogant to think I know the answers already?



**July 27**

**Scripture Reading:** Proverbs 5:15-8:11

**Memory Verse: Proverbs 6:27-28** Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned? Or can one walk on hot coals and his feet not be scorched?

**Song:** ["Yield Not to Temptation"](#)

You can't play with sin and come out unharmed by its evil affects. Chapters five through seven reveal a father warning his son not to get involved with adulterous women. He saw his teaching as a lamp, "and reproofs for discipline are the way of life" (6:23).

Whoever touches his neighbor's wife will not go unpunished. Men don't despise a thief who steals because he is hungry, but there are serious consequences when he is found. But the one who commits adultery with a woman destroys himself. Nothing will take away his reproach with the offended husband (6:30-35).

The adulterous man is characterized like an ox that goes to the slaughter. He doesn't understand his foolish behavior will cost him his life (7:22-23).

A man who had stopped drinking once boasted to my father, "Why I could go into a bar right now and never touch a drop of liquor!" My father replied, "You can't walk through the mud and not get muddy." You can't play with sin, and it not affect you.

Men need to watch their hearts and their eyes. A husband who is constantly looking at women other than their wives should repent of his lust. A woman who is enticing another man than her husband should repent of her wickedness.

Keeping a pure heart is important for any man who loves the Lord. A man who allows his heart to wander from home will often allow his heart to wander from the Lord. Yield not to temptation.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, help me keep my heart pure and take every thought captive to Your will. Lead me not into temptation but deliver me from evil. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I look with lust at women? (If I were a woman, do I act in such a way as to attract men to lust?) Do I allow myself to get in compromising situations?





**July 28**

**Scripture Reading:** Proverbs 8:12-11:11

**Memory Verses: Proverbs 9:9-10** Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

**Song:** [“My Eyes Are Dry”](#)

Attitude makes all the difference in the world. A hard-headed man will find life more difficult than others, not because he has a worse lot than others but because of his stubborn attitude. Rebellious people don't like to be “told.” About one man I heard it said, “You can tell him, but you can't tell him much.” He doesn't listen to anyone.

But to the humble, wise, and teachable man, life becomes easier. He has his bumps in the road, but he learns from the bumps. “Teach a righteous man, and he will increase learning.” He knows the discipline of learning will bring blessing down the road.

The wise man is unafraid to listen and learn from God; he fears God. Fearing God is not some phobia or punishment. It is rather a healthy respect and appreciation. The wise man recognizes God as God; he takes him eternally serious. He pays attention to the small things as well as the large. God is God in every circumstance of his life.

There is no greater blessing or honor than to know God and be known by God (Jeremiah 9:23-24). God smiles when people pay attention and come to know Him.

Reprove a scoffer, and he will hate you. Reprove a wise man, and he will love you (Proverbs 9:8). Attitude is everything! “If you are wise, you are wise for yourself; if you scoff, you alone will bear it” (9:12). People either forge the chains of rebellion or the path to peace in life by their attitudes.

Keep your heart with all vigilance,  
for from it flow the springs of life (4:23).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me keep my heart and my attitude humble and teachable. Let me find my wisdom and my strength in You and Your Word. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I fight with God? Do I harden my heart against the truth?





**July 29**

**Scripture Reading:** Proverbs 11:12-13:25

**Memory Verse: Proverbs 12:15** The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.

**Song:** [“The Sands of Time”](#)

If you only know part of the facts, you will reason from half-truths. From such a limited premise it is easy to convince yourself of all the lies you want to believe. “The fool is right in his own eyes,” but he is not right in God’s eyes.

“ I know, O LORD, that the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps” (Jeremiah 10:23). The simple-minded person believes everything, but the prudent person considers his steps (14:15).

“There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death” (14:12; 16:25). “All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, but the Lord weighs the motives” (16:2). “There is a generation who is pure in its own eyes, yet it is not washed from its filthiness” (30:12).

The heart is so deceptive, and how easy it is to believe what we wish to believe rather than listen to God. Solomon spends a great deal of his time in this book trying to convince his son to listen. Again and again, he points the need to listen to advice rather than act on one’s own accord. The fool won’t listen to advice, acts on bad or incomplete information, and suffers for it. Don’t be a fool.

“The light of the righteous rejoices, but the lamp of the wicked goes out” (13:9).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep me from acting until I have listened to You. Help me to see the whole truth and not make decisions until I read Your truth. Help me to remain humble and never be arrogant or presumptuous. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I jump before thinking? Do I act rashly based on incomplete information? Am I willing to ask questions rather than act rashly?



**July 30**

**Scripture Reading:** Proverbs 14-16

**Memory Verse: Proverbs 14:34** Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

**Song:** ["Purer in Heart, O God"](#)

Being right with God is first and foremost an individual thing, but how one acts affects everyone around him. If one person allows sin to dominate his life, others will be more bold to allow sin in their lives as well. Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals" (1 Corinthians 15:33).

I recall a few decades ago that only one in five babies born in America were born out of wedlock. We were shocked at the news and saddened at so much fornication. But some didn't think it was so bad. Currently two in five babies born in America are born out of wedlock. When sin is excused and accommodated, it spreads. Amazingly, most Americans no longer believe that fornication outside of marriage is morally wrong. The Scriptures, however, still condemn it (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21).

God calls it wrong, because He sees the great harm it does. Imagine living in Crete in the first century and hearing the prophecy of Epimenides, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons" (Titus 1:12). Imagine living in Corinth and knowing "Corinthianize" means to corrupt morally.

What happens in Las Vegas should never happen anywhere; they keep it a secret because it is shameful. Everyone who does evil hates the light (John 3:19-21).

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, help me to be a light in a dark world, to do what is right whether anyone else is doing right or not. O Father, I pray that I may never stain Your name or Your church with my sinful behavior. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I value righteousness? Do I say no to sin? Do I live as a light in an otherwise dark world?



**July 31**

**Scripture Reading:** Proverbs 17-20

**Memory Verse: Proverbs 17:27** Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.

**Song:** “Angry Words”

Christians must be so careful how they use their tongues. One hasty in speech often finds himself living in regret and having few friends. Harsh words can easily offend. “A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a castle” (Proverbs 18:19).

Covering a transgression shows seeks love, but repeating a matter can separate even the most intimate friends (17:9). He who mocks the poor reproaches God, his Maker; and he who rejoices at calamity will not go unpunished (17:5).

An evildoer listens to wicked lips, because he wants to know the gossip; and a liar pays attention to a destructive tongue (17:4).

A fool’s lips walk into a fight, and his mouth invites a beating.

A fool’s mouth is his ruin, and his lips are a snare to his soul.

The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels;  
they go down into the inner parts of the body (18:6-8).

The advice of Paul is certainly valuable here: “Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person” (Col. 4:6).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep my tongue from evil, and may my thoughts and words always be pleasing in Your sight. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I speak before I think? Do I consider other people’s feelings when I offer my opinions? Do I repeat a matter? Do I long to hear bad about others? When I speak, is what I say true, needed, and kind?



**August 1**

**Scripture Reading:** Proverbs 21-23

**Memory Verse: Proverbs 23:23** Buy truth, and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding.

**Song:** ["Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah"](#)

God has given us the truth, but we must buy it nonetheless. Gifts may be free, yet they are not cheap. The truth is a precious, God-given privilege; and it must be maintained at all costs. It does cost to believe and maintain the truth, because the world would rather believe a lie.

This sinful world hates the truth; it doesn't want to hear it. The truth exposes its error and its evil deeds, so the truth poses as a threat to its lusts and desires. So if I hold to the truth, I can expect to be harassed and persecuted by the ungodly (2 Timothy 3:12).

Paul's instructed Timothy:

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths (2 Timothy 4:1-4).

The faithful child of God does not sell out when the winds of popularity turn against him. He holds fast to his faith and God-given inheritance. The truth is worth every sacrifice.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for guiding me into the Truth. May its precepts always guide me in the right path! I know that You know all things; keep me humbly listening. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I know how valuable the truth is and what a great gift I have? Am I willing to sell out my faith for popular thinking? Do I stand for the Truth?



**August 2**

**Scripture Reading:** Proverbs 24:1-27:10

**Memory Verse: Proverbs 25:11-12** A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver. Like a gold ring or an ornament of gold is a wise reprover to a listening ear.

**Song:** [“God of Grace and God of Glory”](#)

How marvelous to hear a kind and encouraging word! We all need that. Wise spouses speak love and encouragement. Foolish spouses speak like shrews. “It is better to live in a corner of the roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman” (25:24; cf. 27:15).

Reproving is a way of loving, but the reprove needs to think about how he does it. A reproof is a rebuke expecting correction. The person who says it sees something wrong in the direction you’re going and seeks to correct that direction to what pleases God.

To be reproved shows love, but many get defensive and fight against any reproof. Pride gets in the way of spiritual growth.

The attitude of the reprove is as important and the attitude of the one being reproved. An arrogant man can kill a relationship and end communication by reproving without care. A little love with the reproof can work effectively, but barking orders leads to eye-service.

Attitude matters on all parts. You will be loved or loathed in life as much by how you speak as by what you say. Speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15; see also 2 Timothy 2:24-26).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me when I have hard things to say to say them in love. Help me to keep my attitude positive and caring. Help me to show my love. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I listen to myself when I say something difficult to hear? Would I want to be treated the way I treat others?



**August 3**

**Scripture Reading:** Proverbs 27:11-30:33

**Memory Verses: Proverbs 28:25-26** A greedy man stirs up strife, but the one who trusts in the LORD will be enriched. Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered.

**Song:** ["I Need Thee Every Hour"](#)

Proverbs deals with so many different matters. Each proverb stands on its own, but many proverbs woven together can teach some exceptionally valuable lessons. Proverbs 28 has several proverbs that talk about money. Again attitude is vitally important.

“He who increases his wealth by interest and usury, gathers it for him who is gracious to the poor” (28:8). When one wickedly charges unfairly, he merely gathers for someone else to enjoy.

“The rich man is wise in his own eyes, but the poor who has understanding sees through him” (28:11). Wealth often makes a person arrogant; it leads him to think he is wiser than others and knows more than he knows. He doesn't realize others who truly have understanding can see in him what he cannot see in himself. He thinks he is wise, but others see him for what he really is.

“He who gives to the poor will never want, but he who shuts his eyes will have many curses” (28:27). Kindness and generosity toward those in need has rewards of its own from God. God sees and remembers the kindness of His people; He also remembers selfishness.

God's gifts and blessings bless our lives so that we may bless others. Let our lives not be filled with self in our blessings but be filled with what good we can do for others.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for blessing me each day with all that I enjoy. Help me to look beyond myself and see the needs of others all around me. Keep my heart open. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I allow my blessings to make me think I am better than others? Do I associate money with wisdom or God with wisdom? Am I generous to those in need?



**August 4**

**Scripture Reading:** Proverbs 31; Ecclesiastes 1:1-3:8

**Memory Verses: Ecclesiastes 1:12-14** I the Preacher have been king over Israel in Jerusalem. And I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven. It is an unhappy business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind.

**Song:** ["My Hope is Built on Nothing Less"](#)

Ecclesiastes presents to us the experiences of Solomon, who received wisdom from God. People rightly regarded him as the wisest man in the world in his time. Solomon regarded this wisdom as a blessing in the sense that it equipped him to rule Israel, but he also regarded the use of his wisdom as an unhappy business. Reading the first few chapters of Ecclesiastes, one might think Solomon to be a bored pessimist.

To understand the book, one must think in the context of the phrase "under the sun." Solomon is looking at life often in the context of how an earthly man thinks whose focus is the here and now and often without God in the mix. He lives "under the sun" in more of a physical than a spiritual realm.

In this context Solomon tried everything and found "all things are wearisome" (1:8), vain, and a striving after the wind. Without God in the mix, life is futile and meaningless indeed.

Solomon sought and experienced wisdom, folly, madness, pleasure, wine, houses, vineyards, gardens, parks, ponds, slaves, flocks, herds, silver, gold, treasure, singers, and concubines. He was bigger and better than anyone in the whole world. In it all, without God, it was all vain, a striving after wind. "So I hated life" and "completely despaired" (2:17, 20).

Life without the fellowship and love of God is a waste, meaningless, and vain. Solomon needed more, and so do we all. There is an empty place in the soul only God can fill.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for creating me and filling my life with Your love and kindness. Fill in all my empty places and restore my soul to joy. Grant me your abiding love. Keep me working to do Your will always. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I let God into my life? Does my life matter apart from God? Am I chasing after the wind or making an eternal difference? Is Christ my Lord?



**August 5**

**Scripture Reading:** Ecclesiastes 3:9-8:17

**Memory Verses: Ecclesiastes 4:9-12** Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

**Song:** [“The Greatest Commands”](#)

When my sweet Jackie and I married many years ago, we decided to put some of the words of Ecclesiastes 4:9 inside our wedding rings: “Two are better than one.” We believed it then, and we know it now. We have seen this passage proven in our lives.

Like many families we have had our struggles through the years. The Lord blessed us with four children in less than four years, and our income was very low. Illness plagued us through those early years, but God was with us. We worked together through every struggle and survived some incredible challenges.

To have a friend who will travel with you through life is as great a blessing as anyone could want. When two join their hearts in sworn love and live that love out in life, nothing could be finer. Marriage in faithfulness and love is God’s will; it is a great blessing to mankind.

Many people want to find the right person in marriage. It is more important to be the right person. Rather than judge my spouse, I must look at myself and ask if I am the support my spouse needs.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me to love as You have loved me. May I fill my loved ones needs the way, Father, You have filled mine. Thank You for the people who have given me strength and support in my life. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I truly love my Lord and my friends? Can they depend upon me? Am I the kind of spouse I would want? Am I faithful and dependable?





**August 6**

**Scripture Reading:** Ecclesiastes 9-12; Song of Solomon 1-2

**Memory Verse: Ecclesiastes 12:13-14** The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

**Song:** ["In Heavenly Love Abiding"](#)

Life is filled with much good and evil, and we each make our choices day to day. If we live our life without God in the midst, we are striving after the wind and find life meaningless.

The Preacher had spoken to the youth, "Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment" (Ecclesiastes 11:9).

There is always a payday for our choices. "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life" (Galatians 6:7-8). Some folks think they can live sinful or selfish lives with impunity, but they are only lying to themselves.

Let young people enjoy their lives and live life to the fullest, but let them avoid sin and neglect of duty. The choices they make today will come back upon them when they grow older and when they face God. Choose well; there is always a payday. Don't let that payday be one of regret and bitterness.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, keep me from the sin that destroys me. Help me to sow love and goodness that I may live with You forever. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I presume too much about the grace of God? Do I see how my actions affect my future?



**August 7**

**Scripture Reading:** Song of Solomon 3-8; Isaiah 1:1-9

**Memory Verse: Isaiah 1:3** “An ox knows its owner, And a donkey its master’s manger, *But* Israel does not know, My people do not understand.”

**Song:** [“Fairest Lord Jesus”](#)

“The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz concerning Judah and Jerusalem, which he saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz *and* Hezekiah, kings of Judah” (1:1). Isaiah calls both heaven and earth to listen, “for the Lord speaks.” Are you listening?

Isaiah prophecies cover a period of sixty-one years during the times of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Jewish tradition (not Scripture) says Isaiah died in the days Manasseh was king by being sawn in two. Hebrews 11:37 may be speaking of Isaiah.

The prophet, was by office not only a declarer of events still future, but the general preacher of the day. He frequently foresaw the approach of disastrous times because of the wickedness of the people. He employed his time in counseling sinners to turn from the error of their ways, and in making strong prayer and supplication to God to avert the threatened judgments.

To be a prophet was not an easy life. Speaking for the Lord often made people angry and led to a lonely and despised existence. No one likes to hear about his failures, and prophets as messengers of God’s wrath on sin often found themselves harassed and persecuted (2 Timothy 3:12). They held fast to God, however, and to His Word. For this God blessed and stayed close to them.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep me from compromise when the mindset of the world is against the truths I too must speak. Help me, Father, to remain close to You and to what You have taught me. Help me to take up my cross daily and follow You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I listen to God whenever He speaks? Do I only think of the grace of God and never consider His wrath?



**August 8**

**Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 1:10-5:17

**Memory Verses: Isaiah 2:2-3 ( NASB )** Now it will come about that In the last days The mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths.” For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

**Song:** [“On Zion’s Glorious Summit”](#)

This marvelous prophecy of the establishment of the church finds its fulfillment in Acts 2. Peter describes the events of Acts 2 happening in the “last days” (Acts 2:16-18). Zion, of course, is a reference to the city of David, Jerusalem, where the Temple grounds were (2 Samuel 5:7). Acts 2 describes how Jews from “every nation under heaven” living in Jerusalem had gathered to worship at Zion on Pentecost (Acts 2:5).

Peter’s first gospel sermon went forth from Zion, teaching people to walk in His paths. It was a message of hope and of the new King of Israel, calling the people to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, the one God had raised from the dead, sat at His right hand, and made both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:22-38).

“And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war” (Isaiah 2:4).

Jesus is indeed the Prince of Peace. He brings peace to each of us by forgiving us of our sins and leading us into righteousness. He gives us peace of heart by providing us hope and an inheritance. How thankful we should be to know the gospel!

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, who has given us peace and truth and grace. May we be found to be faithful citizens in His kingdom, loving what is good and right. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I value the church Jesus purchased with His blood? Do I see how Jesus has blessed all people through His sacrifice?



**August 9**

**Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 5:18-9:12

**Memory Verse: Isaiah 7:14** Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

**Song:** [“You Are the Song That I Sing”](#)

This marvelous prophecy God gave to Isaiah to encourage Ahaz to believe God finds its fulfillment in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:23). Isaiah was first making it clear to Ahaz not to worry about Rezin of Syria and Pekah of Israel (or Ephraim), who went up against Judah to make war. The Lord would forsake these two kings by the time the little boy is old enough to know good from evil (Isaiah 7:15-16).

However, every Christian has come to love this prophetic promise of the Virgin Birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He was to be “Immanuel,” that is “God with us.” Jesus is God Himself who has come to be with us (John 1:14-18), He explains God (John 1:18 NASB).

Isaiah 9:6-7 says of the Lord:

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

What praise and honor and glory we should give to His name, Jesus the Son of God!

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me to appreciate the role the Lord Jesus Christ has played in my life. Grow in me a heart of love and wisdom. Help me see what a great God You are, Father. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I see Jesus Christ as glorious? Do I see how wonderful a gift He is to all mankind and to me personally?



**August 10**

**Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 9:13-13:16

**Memory Verse: Isaiah 11:1-2** There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

**Song:** [“Jesus, Rose of Sharon”](#)

The wrath of God was to come upon Israel and eventually upon Judah and Jerusalem. God would take vengeance on his rebellious children. In spite of this, God promises a remnant will return to Him (Isaiah 10:20-23). But the promise of God through Isaiah in chapter 11 looks forward to the coming of the Messiah and continues the promises found in 7:14 and 9:6-7.

Jesus Christ, the Son of David will come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse. Jesus indeed is in the lineage of David for the throne (Matthew 1:6-16). God’s Spirit certainly rested on Jesus in an unlimited way unlike any other descendant of Jesse (John 3:34).

Who is like Jesus in wisdom or understanding? Who has His counsel or His might? Who has His Spirit of knowledge? And who has taught us the fear of the Lord like Jesus?

Jesus judged others with righteous judgment (John 7:24) not according to appearances (Isaiah 11:3). As the prince of peace, the wolf can dwell with the lamb, the leopard can lie with the kid (11:6).

“They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (11:9). Unlike many religions, Christianity brings peace to the world so that enemies can become friends.

The cross of Christ brings healing to the nations and unites instead of divides or enslaves. Christianity is the greatest blessing of mankind (John 10:10).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for giving us Jesus Christ, so that we may know how to love and to live in peace. Help us, Father, to devote ourselves to You and Your way. Help us to live in peace and to forgive as You have forgiven us. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I forgive others? Do I do my best to live in peace with all people? Can I pray for my enemies?



**August 11**

**Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 13:17-19:10

**Memory Verse: Isaiah 13:19** And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the splendor and pomp of the Chaldeans, will be like Sodom and Gomorrah when God overthrew them.

**Song:** [“Learning to Lean”](#)

Considering the overwhelming power Babylon is yet to show to Israel in the capturing and destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BC, Isaiah 13:17-22 is an amazing prophecy. God is using this 8<sup>th</sup> Century BC prophet to speak of what will be hundreds of years later.

It will never be inhabited or lived in for all generations; no Arab will pitch his tent there; no shepherds will make their flocks lie down there. But wild animals will lie down there, and their houses will be full of howling creatures; there ostriches will dwell, and there wild goats will dance. Hyenas will cry in its towers, and jackals in the pleasant palaces; its time is close at hand and its days will not be prolonged” (Isaiah 13:20-22).

Today, the great city of Babylon, one of the seven wonders of the world lies empty and deserted. It is only a home for wild animals. No one has lived there for many centuries.

God keeps his promises, for blessing or for cursing. When God curses a city, it remains cursed for “all generations.” Let us have confidence in everything God says. He will make it true in His time and in His way. We can believe every word of every sentence of every verse of every chapter or every book is inspired of God and utterly, utterly, utterly trustworthy.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, I believe. Help me in my unbelief. I know You can do all things and will keep all Your promises. Thank You for showing me evidence in Babylon. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I believe everything God says?



**August 12**

**Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 19:11-24:6

**Memory Verse: Isaiah 20:3-4** And the LORD said, “Even as My servant Isaiah has gone naked and barefoot three years as a sign and token against Egypt and Cush, so the king of Assyria will lead away the captives of Egypt and the exiles of Cush, young and old, naked and barefoot with buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.”

**Song:** [“Each Step I Take”](#)

God’s prophets were often visual and living messages not merely voices for the Lord. In this strange commandment God asks Isaiah to “Go and loosen the sackcloth from your hips and take your shoes off your feet.” And he did so, going naked and barefoot (20:3). Now, why would God ask Isaiah to go naked and barefoot?

He did this stark and usual behavior as a sign and token against Egypt and Cush. Assyria had taken the Philistine city of Ashdod and would capture them and shame them by making them walk about uncovered. Those who boasted in Cush and Egypt would regret their decision to rely on men rather than God (31:3).

Nakedness is shameful. It was for Adam and Eve when they sinned, and it still is today. Though some cultures and wicked people have glorified the naked body, God uses this sign and token with Isaiah to proclaim the shame of being uncovered.

What is amazing is that some are so nearly naked in public today and are not ashamed. They do not see that beaches and hot days do not make their baring their bodies any less shameful. The flesh has overtaken their sense.

Our holy God expects us to respect the body, which He has made a temple for the Holy Spirit to dwell (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep me pure in heart and pure in the use of my body. Keep me from shaming myself in carelessness to appease the lusts of this world. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I dress appropriately in public so as not to shame myself or the Name of Jesus Christ? Do I trust in men before I trust in God?





**August 13**

**Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 24:7-28:22

**Memory Verse: Isaiah 28:16-17** Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, A costly cornerstone *for* the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes *in it* will not be disturbed. I will make justice the measuring line And righteousness the level; Then hail will sweep away the refuge of lies And the waters will overflow the secret place.” (NASB)

**Song:** [“Rock of Ages”](#)

This precious promise from God is repeated in the New Testament as a reference to Christ Jesus in 1 Peter 2:6. There Peter notes this precious value is for believers not for disbelievers (2:7).

When many think of cornerstones, they think of the stone which tells of the owner or builder found in the sides of a building at the corner. But the cornerstone here is much more than that. The cornerstone was the stone at the corner of two walls that unites them; specifically, the stone built into one corner of the foundation of an edifice as the actual or nominal starting point of a building. Every angle and part of the building began from this foundation stone.

So it is in our lives that Jesus as a cornerstone governs the angles and aspects of our lives. When we measure everything in our lives by Jesus, we have a true life and become a true temple of God. When we get away from the righteousness of Jesus Christ, we have troubles.

He who believes in Jesus will not be disappointed or disturbed. His life will go as God intended, rather than be destroyed by the world. God will one day test our lives to see if we are in line with the Lord. Let us be workman who do not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the Word of Truth (2 Timothy 2:15).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep me in line with Your way and Your will in every aspect of my life. Keep me from crooked places and warped notions. May all that I am be founded upon Your grace and goodness. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I measure up with the will of God? Do I use the plumb line of the Word to test my thoughts, my words, and my behavior?





**August 14**

**Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 28:23-32:20

**Memory Verse: Isaiah 30:9-11** For they are a rebellious people, lying children, children unwilling to hear the instruction of the Lord; who say to the seers, “Do not see,” and to the prophets, “Do not prophesy to us what is right; speak to us smooth things, prophesy illusions, leave the way, turn aside from the path, let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel.”

**Song:** [“Do You Know My Jesus?”](#)

The rebellious children of Israel executed their own plan by proceeding down to Egypt rather than consulting with God (30:1-2). God instructed Isaiah to write about their rebellion and His reaction to it “that it may serve in the time to come as a witness forever” (30:8). One does not rebel against God with impunity.

Israel put their trust in Egypt and in their swift horses, but the pursuers also will ride swift horses. “A thousand shall flee at the threat of one; at the threat of five you shall flee, till you are left like a flagstaff on the top of a mountain, like a signal on a hill” (30:17).

Their rebellion, as all rebellion, is personal to God. They refused to listen to God. They didn’t want to hear about the Holy One of Israel from the prophets. They wanted smooth things and illusions. The prophets’ message should leave the way of God.

Attitude is so much of life. People who do not want to trust God will ignore the truth and ignore the future until it crashes upon them. It is then too late. “You were not willing” speaks clearly where the heart of the people lay.

People who put themselves first will harden their hearts and close their ears to the truth, if the truth goes against their desires. They did not understand God wanted to bless them.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep my heart tender to Your will and Your love. Keep my eyes open, my ears sharp, and my attitude loving. Help me to trust You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I listen to men before I listen to God? Am I resistant to God? Have I allowed my fears to weaken my faith?



**August 15**

**Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 33:1-37:29

**Memory Verse: Isaiah 37:5-7** So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah. Isaiah said to them, “Thus you shall say to your master, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. “Behold, I will put a spirit in him so that he will hear a rumor and return to his own land. And I will make him fall by the sword in his own land.”””

**Song:** [“Hide Me, O My Savior”](#)

The king of Assyria sent his messenger Rabshakeh to speak to Hezekiah and Judah. He said, ‘*Beware* that Hezekiah does not mislead you, saying, “The LORD will deliver us.” Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? And when have they delivered Samaria from my hand? Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their land from my hand, that the LORD would deliver Jerusalem from my hand?”’ (36:18-20).

The taunt of Assyria proved its undoing. One does not blaspheme God or take His name in vain. God hears and remembers.

Hezekiah took the message to the temple and prayed to God: “Now, O LORD our God, deliver us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You alone, LORD, are God” (37:20).

Then the angel of the LORD went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men arose early in the morning, behold, all of these were dead. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and returned *home* and lived at Nineveh. It came about as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons killed him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his son became king in his place (37:36-38). The Lord keeps His promises.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for reminding me of Your faithfulness in keeping Your promises. Help me to be a faithful servant. Help me to trust in You always. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I keep a check on my tongue? Do I doubt God’s ability to help me in my struggles?



**August 16**

**Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 37:30-40:31

**Memory Verses: Isaiah 40:28-31** Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary, And to *him who* lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up *with* wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.

**Song:** ["Father of Mercies"](#)

God is unique. Though in the days of Isaiah many thought there were many gods, the truth is that there is only one true and living God. One could never liken the God of Heaven with idols.

To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him? An idol! A craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and casts for it silver chains. He who is too impoverished for an offering chooses wood that will not rot; he seeks out a skillful craftsman to set up an idol that will not move (40:18-20).

Isaiah challenges us in 40:26 to lift up our eyes on high and see who has created these stars, to see the One who leads forth their host by number and calls them by name. "Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power no one of them is missing."

Each day we see in our own lives the greatness of God, how He helps us through the struggles of life. He gives us strength and wisdom. As we wait for Him, we gain renewed strength to go on in spite of all the opposition. God is so good.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, grant me Your wisdom and power. Renew in me a heart and spirit to keep on believing and trusting whatever may come. I know, Father, that You alone are God. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I turn to God for strength and wisdom? Have I trusted in my own idols? Do I thank God for His sustaining power and wisdom?



**August 17**

**Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 41-44

**Memory Verse: Isaiah 44:21** Remember these things, O Jacob, and Israel, for you are my servant; I formed you; you are my servant; O Israel, you will not be forgotten by me.

**Song:** ["We Praise Thee, O God"](#)

In these chapters God speaks bold through Isaiah to point out the absurdities of idolatry and their false prophets. Only the God of Heaven is God, He alone (44:8). Only he can forgive sin (43:25).

It is absurd to watch men worship an idol. Isaiah said, "Half of it he burns in the fire. Over the half he eats meat; he roasts it and is satisfied. Also he warms himself and says, "Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire!" And the rest of it he makes into a god, his idol, and falls down to it and worships it. He prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for you are my god!" (44:16-17).

Idols are deaf and blind and dumb. They cannot predict the future (44:7), nor can they deliver in times of trouble. They are a fantasy, dreamed up by the imagination of mankind. "Is there any God besides Me, or is there any other Rock? I know of none" (44:8).

Do not put your hope into things you make yourself. They will crumble. Trust in the God of Heaven, who loves you and cares for your every need. He alone can help you. He alone can redeem you from the sins of the world (Colossians 1:13-14).

Do not let your own idols separate you from the only one who can help you.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, keep me from the idols of my own making. Help me never to let anything come between You and me. I know that You alone are God, and there is no Savior but the Lord Jesus. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I have any idols that keep me from devotion to the God who made me and sent His Son to save me? Does my life show my commitment?



**August 18**

**Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 45-49

**Memory Verse: Isaiah 46:8-10** “Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.’”

**Song:** [“How Firm a Foundation”](#)

The Lord God again shows the utter foolishness of worshiping idols. “To whom would you like Me, and make Me equal and compare Me, that we should be alike?” God through Isaiah speaks of the goldsmith who makes the metal into a god. “They lift it to their shoulders, they carry it, they set it in its place, and it stands there; it cannot move from its place. If one cries to it, it does not answer or save him from his trouble” (46:5-7).

In contrast the God of Heaven is able to look into the past and into the future. He can declare the end from the beginning. His counsel does indeed stand, and no one can keep Him from accomplishing all his purpose. God predicts he will call “a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it” (46:11).

There can be no doubt this bird of prey is Cyrus and the “east” is Persia (Isaiah 41:2, 25). He will conquer the Babylonians and restore Israel to its land. They did indeed return in 537 BC, 70 years after Nebuchadnezzar came into Jerusalem in 607 BC. God keeps His promises.

When Jesus says He has forgiven us, when He says He will return, and when He says He has a home for us in His Father’s house, we can believe. God keeps His promises.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, give me faith in Your Word, to believe all that You have taught us. Keep me from being stubborn minded or stiff-necked. Keep my heart humble and loving. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I really believe God knows the end from the beginning? Do I trust His promises?



**August 19**

**Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 50-54

**Memory Verse: Isaiah 53:5-6** But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

**Song:** [“Jesus Paid It All”](#)

Isaiah in this amazing chapter tells of the suffering and death of Jesus more than seven hundred years before the time. So touching and so accurate, some people thought this chapter might have been written after the time of Jesus rather than before his day.

We did not have the Dead Sea Scrolls available until after 1947. Among the many finds was the Great Isaiah Scroll, which dates from 100 BC and is 1100 years older than the Codex Leningrad (ca. 1000 AD). The Great Isaiah scroll contained this chapter with its Divine prophecy recorded 130 years before the death of Jesus. This proof of prophecy has often refreshed my heart and helped me to have greater faith in God.

This tender chapter tells of the great sacrifice of Jesus our Lord for our transgressions and sins. He truly paid it all, that we might live with Him. We deserved the stripes. We deserved to die for our sins. Jesus took the pain, the humiliation, and the burden of our crimes. God saw the anguish of his soul and forgave us. “Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities” (53:11).

No one ever loved me so much as He. No one ever paid so great a price. No one ever sacrificed so much. Oh, I am so sorry for my sin and so thankful for His grace.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, with broken heart over my sin and gladness of soul for Your grace, I say to You Father, thank You for loving me. I thank You for giving Your Son for me. I pray my life will somehow show my love. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I remember the sacrifice of Jesus for my sins daily? How then shall I live? Can I continue in sin? Have I devoted my life in gratitude?



**August 20**

**Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 55:1-60:9

**Memory Verses: Isaiah 55:10-11** “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”

**Song:** [“Come We That Love the Lord”](#)

“Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near.” There are windows of opportunity in our lives, which we must not ignore. Time passes and hearts change. “Let the wicked forsake His way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55:6-7).

The Lord is compassionate to those whose hearts are humbled and penitent. God loves us and is willing to forgive. We must, however, make changes in our lives, our thinking, and in our priorities. We must first return to the Lord. As long as we remain in sin, our transgressions separate us from God so that He will not hear our prayers (Isaiah 59:1-2). God can save us, but He will not save us if we remain in impenitence.

The Lord’s thoughts are not our thoughts, nor the Lord’s ways our ways (Isaiah 55:8-9). God is not man, and His ways are as high as the heavens above our own ways. God is better, wiser, more holy, and more loving than we. Aren’t you glad? Would you want any less of God?

God’s Word will not return void. It will do what He sent it forth to do. It will touch hearts and lives; it will bring salvation to the lost; it will bring hope to the forlorn; and it will bring wisdom to the confused. We need God so badly; that is why we must seek Him while He may be found.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for providing for my every need, physical and spiritual. I realize how much I need You to help me through the struggles of life. Forgive me, Father, of my sins and my rebellious thoughts. Turn my heart to Your will always. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I permit myself to indulge sinful thoughts and practices? Do I take God’s grace for granted? Will I always love God the way I love Him today?





**August 21**

**Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 60:10-65:25

**Memory Verses: Isaiah 61:1-3** The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners; to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, To grant those who mourn *in* Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.

**Song:** [“At Calvary”](#)

After his baptism and temptation in the wilderness, Jesus came to Nazareth where He had been brought up. As was His custom, Jesus entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. They handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah to him, and He read Isaiah 61:1.

He closed the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. He sat down on the seat at the front of the synagogue where teachers sat, what was commonly called the chair of Moses (Matthew 23:2). Teachers and preachers in those days usually stood to read and sat to teach (Matthew 5:1-2).

Every eye in the synagogue was fixed upon Him. He said, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” Jesus was in effect claiming to be the anointed one, the Messiah. As they thought about it, they took offense and were filled with rage (Luke 4:16-28).

His hometown people rose up and threw Him out of the city, led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built in order to throw Him down the cliff (4:29). Jesus, however, passing through their midst went on his way.

Jesus was just Joseph the carpenter’s son to them. They could not see Him for who He really was. He was a prophet without honor in his own hometown. They were blinded by their own familiarity. They had the Son of God in their midst and would not accept it.

My friend, have you welcomed the Son of God into your home?

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me through Your word to understand You and Your Son for what You are. Keep my eyes open and my heart tender to Your promises and Your teaching. Forgive me for my doubts. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I recognize Jesus as the Son of God, the Messiah? Am I willing to hear Him without preconceived opinions?





**August 22**

**Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 66; Jeremiah 1:1-2:25

**Memory Verses: Jeremiah 1:6-8** Then I said, “Ah, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.” But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a youth’; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the Lord.”

**Song:** [“Be With Me Lord”](#)

Jeremiah lived at one of the most unfortunate times in the history of Israel, yet God used him and spoke through him to this rebellious people for many years (627-587 BC). God formed Jeremiah in the womb and appointed him a prophet to the nations (1:5). Jeremiah was not an afterthought, a mistake, an accident, or merely a product of conception. He was God's appointed spokesman. God put His words into Jeremiah's mouth (1:9).

“See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant” (1:10). Though Jeremiah suffered much and often became despondent, God used him. God said to him what we too need to hear:

“But you, dress yourself for work; arise, and say to them everything that I command you. Do not be dismayed by them, lest I dismay you before them. And I, behold, I make you this day a fortified city, an iron pillar, and bronze walls, against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests, and the people of the land. They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, declares the Lord, to deliver you” (1:17-19).

When God is on our side, we are more than a majority. We are God's army. When God is with us, we cannot lose.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me to trust in You always, never to leave You. Oh Father, use me to do Your will and to accomplish Your purpose. Help me when the world stands against me to do what pleases You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Have I given myself fully to the Lord? Do I trust Him to work through me to accomplish His purpose? Am I willing to serve God?



**August 23**

**Scripture Reading:** Jeremiah 2:26-5:19

**Memory Verse: Jeremiah 2:12-13** Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the Lord, for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

**Song:** [“There Is a Fountain”](#)

It is hard to imagine why people leave that which is good and valid for that which is evil and imaginary! Yet that is just what Judah did in the days of Jeremiah. They called a tree their “father” (2:27). They had forgotten the Lord “days without number” (2:32). Yet they still maintained they were innocent (2:35). It is amazing how much sin people can commit and yet not see it as wrong!

The people had forsaken God for other gods and were not ashamed (3:3). Faithless Israel proved herself more righteous than treacherous Judah (3:11). Judah needed to “circumcise” their heart to the Lord, recommitting their way to Him once again and living righteously (4:3-4).

The Lord promised to bring evil and great destruction from the north (4:7); Nebuchadnezzar would march his armies three times into Jerusalem in the lifetime of Jeremiah to take the city captive (607 BC) and ultimately destroy it (587 BC). The whole land shall be a desolation (4:27).

In spite of all the warning, the people made their faces harder than rock; they refused to repent (5:3). Because they had forsaken God and served foreign gods in their land, God would make them serve strangers in a land that it not theirs (5:19).

People cannot forsake God and serve other gods without suffering greatly. Let us keep our faith and our love for God strong!

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep me from the deceptions that might lead me away from You. May my love for You and Your will always be strong. Overcome in me my weaknesses and doubts. Help me to serve You fully and freely from a circumcised heart. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I allow wicked thoughts to come into my heart? Have I forsaken the good fountain to chase empty cisterns? Have I allowed the passing pleasures of sin to separate me from God?



**August 24**

**Scripture Reading:** Jeremiah 5:20-8:22

**Memory Verses: Jeremiah 5:30-31** An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule at their direction; my people love to have it so, but what will you do when the end comes?

**Song:** ["O Lord Our Lord"](#)

The great battle of all time is in the heart. People want they want rather than what God wants, so the struggle between right and wrong continues day after day. People think it is a small thing to do as they desire. They sin and justify themselves, but to God it is an appalling thing.

The prophets weren't listening to God; they prophesied falsely. The priests, who should have known the Law were ruling "on their own authority" (NASB). Since they said and ruled what the people wanted, everyone loved it! Everyone, that is, but God.

The word of God had become a reproach to them; they had no delight in it (6:10). They were greedy for gain, including the priests and prophets. They claimed "peace, peace," when there was no peace. They committed abomination before the Lord but were not ashamed; they "did not even know how to blush" (6:15).

They needed to stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; and then they would "find rest for your souls" (6:16). But they said, "We will not walk in it." God doesn't make people do His will. He persuades, promises, threatens, and cajoles; but the Lord doesn't force. How sad, then, when men refuse. "But what will you do when the end comes?"

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, forgive my foolish and selfish ways. Keep me from saying no to You. Help me to see myself as You see me, so that I may please You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I say no to God? Do I blush at sin? Do I think about how God sees me?



**August 25**

**Scripture Reading:** Jeremiah 9-12

**Memory Verse: Jeremiah 9:23-24** Thus says the LORD, “Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,” declares the LORD.

**Song:** [“Near to the Heart of God”](#)

More important than all the fleshly things of life is the ability to understand and know God. An education without God will benefit nothing in eternity. Strength of arm without strength of soul will not lead to eternal life. What will it profit a man to gain the whole world if he loses his own soul? What will a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matthew 16:26)

To know God is to love Him. The more we learn of Him the more we see He is indeed a God who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth! Indeed He delights in these things!

Many people do not know God well. The people to whom Jeremiah wrote had rejected God in order to be like the people of the nations around them. They refused to listen to the prophets of the Lord and preferred to hear pleasant things. In so doing, they were actually hurting themselves.

Jeremiah said, “I know, O LORD, that a man’s way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps” (Jeremiah 10:23). It is a great day in a person’s life when he realizes how much he needs God to help him through life.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, I need and want You in my life. I know that I cannot do or be what You desire on my own. Father, direct my steps and lead me in the paths of righteousness that I may please You in all things. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I know and understand God? Do I live so as to please Him?



**August 26**

**Scripture Reading:** Jeremiah 13:1-16:9

**Memory Verse: Jeremiah 14:14** Then the LORD said to me, “The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds.

**Song:** [“Humble Yourselves”](#)

People often think they speak for the Lord. Like these false prophets of old, they really speak from the deception of their own minds. They do not know how to distinguish their own fantasy prophecy from what God actually has spoken.

True prophets did not speak what the false prophets did. “Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the prophets who are prophesying in My name, although it was not I who sent them—yet they keep saying, „There will be no sword or famine in this land”—by sword and famine those prophets shall meet their end! The people also to whom they are prophesying will be thrown out into the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; and there will be no one to bury them—*neither* them, *nor* their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters—for I will pour out their *own* wickedness on them” (14:15-16).

The false prophets were giving false hope to the people, saying to them the Lord would not punish them for their sins. False hope is cruel. The people should have been called to repentance. As it was, they had gotten so hard of heart, the Lord told Jeremiah not to pray for the welfare of this people. (14:10-11).

When rebellious people continue to sin and harden their hearts, God comes to a point when He no longer hears their prayer (Isaiah 59:1-2). May we all so live that our hearts are not hardened against God and we cross that line.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep me from hardening my heart by the deceitfulness of sin. Help me to listen to You and Your Word, that I may live with You forever. Keep me in Your favor. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I harden my heart against God by holding on to my sins? Am I willing to see myself and repent of sin? Do I listen to voices that please me rather than tell me the truth? Do I cling to false hope?



**August 27**

**Scripture Reading:** Jeremiah 16:10-20:18

**Memory Verses: Jeremiah 17:9-10** The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? "I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds."

**Song:** ["Nothing But the Blood"](#)

Both frightening and reassuring is the thought God knows what is in my heart. If my heart is good, God knows it. If my heart is evil, God knows it. If I am thankful, God knows it, and if I am hurting, God knows it. God knows my inner being, my thoughts, my intentions, my desires, my joys, my fears, and my heartaches. I cannot escape His presence.

God not only knows me, He searches me. Man often thinks God does not see, but God inspects our hearts. He looks closer than we might like and knows the real us. Our acquaintances and friends know the side of our hearts that we are willing to reveal, but God searches through the parts we hide. He sees our fears and failures too.

We can deceive others by hiding the truth from them. We can deceive ourselves by ignoring or denying what we know about ourselves. God still sees and knows. "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account" (Hebrews 4:12-13).

God not only knows and searches me, He tests me to see if I am willing to be faithful to Him and His way. "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose trust is the Lord" (Jeremiah 17:7). This is where our hearts find love, grace, rest, and assurance.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, may my heart not deceive itself but put its trust in You. Search my soul, Oh Father, and see if there be any hurtful way in me. Forgive me and cleanse me, so that I may always serve You and glorify Your name. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I entertain wickedness in my heart and ignore its work in my life? Do I deceive others and deceive myself about how I really am? Am I ashamed of what God sees in me? What am I willing to do about my sins?



**August 28**

**Scripture Reading:** Jeremiah 21-24

**Memory Verses: Jeremiah 23:5-6** “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The Lord is our righteousness.’”

**Song:** [“Jesus, Name above All Names”](#)

Jesus is the righteous one (1 John 2:2) who fulfills this promise. He is the Son of David (Matthew 1:1; Acts 2:24-36). Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 17:14).

Jesus deals wisely with men, and the Sermon on the Mount stands as the greatest of all ethical for these two thousand years. Jesus did not merely make laws, He dealt with the heart of men. He knew that if he could set standards for their hearts, their behavior would follow. As a man is in his heart, so is he.

“For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” (Matthew 12:34-37).

The Lord Jesus set up a kingdom that would have no end (Luke 1:33). His laws and commandments bring peace and security to people. He punishes lawlessness (Matthew 7:23).

He is righteous, not only because He has never sinned (Hebrews 4:14; 1 Peter 2:22-23), but also because He bore our sins to make us righteous (1 Peter 2:24-25; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, I thank You for Jesus Christ, who suffered for my sins that I might be made clean in Your sight. I thank You for His commandments which bring me peace. Help me to live as He lived, love as He loved, and to forgive as You forgave me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I live in such a way to let my light shine and so glorify the Father in heaven? Do people around me know that Jesus is my Lord?





**August 29**

**Scripture Reading:** Jeremiah 25-27

**Memory Verses: Jeremiah 26:2-6** “Thus says the Lord: Stand in the court of the Lord’s house, and speak to all the cities of Judah that come to worship in the house of the Lord all the words that I command you to speak to them; do not hold back a word. It may be they will listen, and every one turn from his evil way, that I may relent of the disaster that I intend to do to them because of their evil deeds. You shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord: If you will not listen to me, to walk in my law that I have set before you, and to listen to the words of my servants the prophets whom I send to you urgently, though you have not listened, then I will make this house like Shiloh, and I will make this city a curse for all the nations of the earth. ’”

**Song:** [“Purer in Heart, O God”](#)

The surest sign of a broken relationship is when one feels shut out completely by another. God had been shut out from the people of Judah in Jeremiah’s day. God, however, even at their worst wanted them back. He continued to send Jeremiah to speak to the people.

In this passage Jeremiah is crying out to the people who have come to the Temple to worship God. Perhaps those who still come to the Holy Place might listen and turn from their evil way before it is too late. Though they had not listened, perhaps they will this time. God gives His people time to repent. Unfortunately, Judah refused to hear and did not want to repent.

God, who loves us when we do not deserve love, still holds out hope our hearts will turn from evil and do what is right. When we are faithless, He remains faithful (2 Timothy 2:13). He urgently sent His prophets to Judah, and He sends out His preachers today with urgency in their hearts to reach out to a lost and dying mankind.

Three times God sent the Babylonians into Jerusalem. In the last case, they destroyed the whole city (587 BC), including the Temple. There was no need for a Temple, when the remnant was to go to Babylon into captivity.

One cannot continue in rebellion and expect the blessing of God. Jerusalem was for many days as desolate as Shiloh, a curse for the nations. Rebellion always carries a high price.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep me from rebellion. Keep my ears and heart open to Your will and Your way. Keep me from evil and give me time to repent. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do allow evil to creep into my life without much thought? Have I closed my ears when I do not wish to hear God? Am I close to God in my heart?





**August 30**

**Scripture Reading:** Jeremiah 28:1-31:20

**Memory Verse: Jeremiah 29:11** For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for wholeness and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

**Song:** ["It is Well with My Soul"](#)

God had instructed to make for yourself bonds and yokes and put them on your neck (Jeremiah 27:2), and Jeremiah did so. The Lord said the yokes were meant to signify how God had given all the nations "into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant" (Jeremiah 27:6). Even the wild animals of the field would serve him. The children of Judah were to remain in captivity for seventy years (29:10).

But Hananiah the son of Azzur contradicted Jeremiah in the temple in front all the priests and people, suggesting the Lord would remove Nebuchadnezzar from power within two years and would restore the vessels of the Lord's house (28:2-3). Hananiah went so far as to take the yoke from Jeremiah's neck and to break it (28:10).

Jeremiah responded to Hananiah, "Thus says the Lord: You have broken wooden bars, but you have made in their place bars of iron" (28:13). The Lord had not sent Hananiah; Hananiah, however, had made the people "trust in a lie" (28:15). The Lord removed Hananiah from the earth. He died in the same year in the seventh month (28:17).

Hananiah offered the people false hope that life in Jerusalem would return to normal, and the people trusted in his lie. Only the truth can set us free, and sometimes the truth is difficult to hear and understand. Jeremiah gave the people God's true advice of how to live in their captivity in chapter 29:4-7. Then he gives them the mighty promise: "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for wholeness and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, help me to trust in Your promises to know that You have a plan for my life. Help me to live so as to glorify You in that plan. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I appreciate the plans God has for my life? Do I trust God to make it work for good?



**August 31**

**Scripture Reading:** Jeremiah 31:21-33:26

**Memory Verse: Jeremiah 31:34** And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, „Know the Lord,“ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

**Song:** [“Nothing But the Blood”](#)

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jeremiah 31:31-33).

God predicted through Jeremiah there would be a change in the covenants. The covenant made at Sinai would no longer be how God would relate to His people. The people of Israel and Judah had become faithless and had broken the covenant, but God had a plan through Jesus Christ. The Lord said he would replace the old covenant which included the Ten Commandments (Exodus 34:27-28; Deuteronomy 4:13; 9:11) with a new covenant that included forgiveness.

We are not born physically into God’s kingdom today as the Jews were born Jews. The Jews had to be taught what covenant they entered at birth, but the new covenant is different. Today we are first taught and next born again into God’s kingdom through faith and obedience (John 3:3-5). Our relationship with God is out of choice not out of physical descent.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for putting Your law in a book and on my heart. Help me to serve You faithfully all the days of my life. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I realize how precious is the privilege of being in a covenant relationship with the Father? (1 John 3:1) Do I live know God well? Am I grateful for forgiveness?



**September 1**

**Scripture Reading:** Jeremiah 34-36

**Memory Verse: Jeremiah 35:13** “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, „Go and say to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, “Will you not receive instruction by listening to My words?”

Song: “[My Jesus, As Thou Wilt](#)”

The Rechabites in the days of Jeremiah obeyed their father, Jonadab the son of Rechab, by not drinking wine, living in houses, planting vineyards or sowing seed. When the prophet Jeremiah set wine before them in the temple and said, “Drink the wine,” the Rechabites refused. They were loyal to their father’s instructions and would not disobey his commandments. The Rechabites must have seemed strange to their fellow Jews.

In the same way Jerusalem and Judah needed to hear the words of God and to receive instruction from them. They needed to open to hear God’s Word. People who follow God do so whether anyone else does or not. They do so simply because the One who commands is trustworthy and loving. They may not understand why God commands what He does. They may prefer a different way. They may find the way difficult, but out of love Christians receive the instruction and obey.

One of the hardest challenges of life is to listen to God and simply to do as He instructs us. No excuses, no editing, and no balking. Simple obedience is not legalism; it is loyalty. It is holding fast to what is right regardless of the cost. We need such dedication.

**Prayer:** Lord, help us to obey your every command, whether we understand or like it or not. Help us to do what is right, even if our loved ones reject us. We are thankful that You, Father, always lead us in the right path. This we pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.

**Thought Questions:** When God asks me to do something with which I disagree, do I question Him, think that God is out-of-touch, or act on my own initiative?



**September 2**

**Scripture Reading:** Jeremiah 37:1-41:10

**Memory Verse: Jeremiah 37:18** Moreover Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah, “In what way have I sinned against you, or against your servants, or against this people, that you have put me in prison?”

**Song:** [“Great Is Thy Faithfulness”](#)

You can be sure that life will not always be fair. King Zedekiah unfairly imprisoned the prophet Jeremiah rather than listen to the words of Lord spoken through him. Irijah, the son of Shelemiah the son of Hananiah, who kept the Gate of Benjamin charged Jeremiah with “going over to the Chaldeans,” which was a lie. You’ll remember Jeremiah withstood Hananiah for giving false hope to the people of Judah (28:15-17), and Hananiah died seven months later.

Consequently, Jeremiah was kept for some time in the court of the guardhouse, receiving only a loaf of bread each day for food. It is difficult to suffer for doing what is right and speaking the truth, but Jeremiah stood fast with God.

People who don’t like the way of God will always make false charges against Christians. Paul noted that the godly will always suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12). Peter said, “Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name” (1 Peter 4:15-16).

Christians too must determine to do what is right, even if they suffer for it. Let us put ourselves into the hands of our Righteous God (1 Peter 4:19).

**Prayer:** “Father, help us in times of persecution to put our trust in You. You are a great and compassionate God who always understands when the world turns against us. Help us to remain faithful even when we are treated unfairly. This we pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

**Thought Questions:** How do you react when people mistreat you for your faith? Do you blame God when people treat you unfairly? How should you react?



**September 3**

**Scripture Reading:** Jeremiah 41:11-45:5

**Memory Verses: Jeremiah 44:4-5** Yet I persistently sent to you all my servants the prophets, saying, 'Oh, do not do this abomination that I hate!' But they did not listen or incline their ear, to turn from their evil and make no offerings to other gods.

**Song:** "[How Shall the Young Secure Their Hearts?](#)"

Do you ever find yourself doing the very things that God hates? God hates all sin, and He desires that his people abhor that which evil (Rom. 12:9). Christians, however, find themselves lured into sin by their own desire (James 1:13-15).

Many people think that because God is the God of all grace, He will overlook the sins they commit. They do not realize how offensive all sin is to Him. They forget that God is holy and cannot look upon sin with favor (Habakkuk 1:13, NASB).

God does not want us to continue in sin but rather to turn from it and serve Him. The ancient Jews were troubled by idolatry. While this may not be our stumbling block today, we still must make choices between serving Him and serving our own desires. If we listen to the world, we will likely be led astray. We must listen to God's word.

**Prayer:** Lord, help us to remember as we look to the cross how abominable all sin is in your eyes. We know, Father, that You despise our sins even while You love us. Help us to keep ourselves pure in Your sight. This we pray in the name of Jesus our Lord, Amen.

**Thought Questions:** Have I considered how God feels when I have sinned? Have I grieved the Holy Spirit by my life (Eph. 4:30)? Do I abhor all evil, even my pet sins?



**September 4**

**Scripture Reading:** Jeremiah 46-48

**Memory Verse: Jeremiah 48:10** “Cursed is he who does the work of the Lord with slackness, and cursed is he who keeps back his sword from bloodshed.”

**Song:** [“Rise Up, O Men of God”](#)

In this oracle against Moab, God predicts the destruction of the country for its sin. “Moab is broken” (48:4). The Lord God said, “because of your trust in your own achievements and treasures, even you yourself will be captured” (48:7). Moab became arrogant toward the Lord; so Moab will wallow in his vomit and become a laughingstock (48:26).

“The destroyer shall come upon every city, and no city shall escape; the valley shall perish, and the plain shall be destroyed, as the Lord has spoken. Give wings to Moab, for she would fly away; her cities shall become a desolation, with no inhabitant in them” (48:8-9).

So determined is God to destroy Chemosh and Moab that He pronounces a curse on anyone who does the work of the Lord with deceit or slackness. God did not want the destroyer to do his assignment half-heartedly. This is no time to hold back the sword from bloodshed.

We might think at first this is overly harsh, but there are always consequences to our actions. When the Lord’s servants fail to do their assigned duties, people do not take the Lord’s Word seriously. Servants act in the name of their master, and our Master deserves our wholehearted obedience and respect.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, strengthen me and help me to do all that You have asked me to do. Keep my hand from slackness and my heart from deceit. Grow in my heart the desire to fulfill Your will fully. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I fulfill my assignments wholeheartedly? Do I hold back my hand from doing the will of the Lord?



**September 5**

**Scripture Reading:** Jeremiah 49:1-51:10

**Memory Verses: Jeremiah 50:4-5** “In those days and in that time, declares the Lord, the people of Israel and the people of Judah shall come together, weeping as they come, and they shall seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion, with faces turned toward it, saying, ‘Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant that will never be forgotten.’”

**Song:** [“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”](#)

The humbling of Israel by years of Babylonian captivity created within them a hunger for God. Weeping they wanted to go home, to seek the Lord their God. They wanted to enter into an everlasting covenant with Him once again, a covenant that would not be neglected or forgotten this time.

Jeremiah prophesied this change of heart in Israel at the point when Babylon falls. Earlier in his oracle to Babylon, God said through Jeremiah: “Declare among the nations and proclaim, set up a banner and proclaim, conceal it not, and say: ‘Babylon is taken, Bel is put to shame, Merodach is dismayed. Her images are put to shame, her idols are dismayed’” (50:2).

After seventy years Babylon would no longer be the dominating power of the world. The Medes and Persians would overwhelm it and smash its gods Bel and Merodach. Though it now lives in jubilation, skipping like a threshing heifer and neighing like a stallion, it will in the future be humiliated and deserted. God’s wrath and indignation will not be inhibited (50:11-13).

Sometimes the harshest lessons of life bring us to our knees seeking God. It is better to seek God out of need than to continue in rebellion and arrogance. It is better to look up to God than to look over Him. We need God in good times and bad, but sometimes it takes a failure to realize and appreciate what we have always known. We need God.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep me from arrogance and haughtiness. Remind, oh Father, how much I need You in my life. May my heart always belong to You. Thank You for the covenant I enjoy because of the blood of Jesus my Lord. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I know how much I need God for everything? Have I entered a covenant with God and will I stay in that covenant?



**September 6**

**Scripture Reading:** Jeremiah 51:11-52:34

**Memory Verse: Jeremiah 51:53** Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify her strong height, yet destroyers would come from me against her, declares the Lord.

**Song:** ["Jesus, Name above All Names"](#)

The Lord through Jeremiah predicted clearly, "Indeed Babylon is to fall for the slain of Israel, as also for Babylon the slain of the earth have fallen" (51:49). The Lord did indeed crush Babylon for her sins. He exacted "full vengeance" on them for Jerusalem. He dried up her sea and made her fountain dry (51:36).

Babylon was the most powerful city in the world, and Nebuchadnezzar was Daniel's head of gold! Babylon's hanging gardens were once one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Their splendor was magnificent. Today, however, Babylon is an object of horror, a parched land and a desert. It is a land in which no man lives (51:43). God will punish her idols, and the whole land will be put to shame (51:47).

God has a thousand ways to humble the arrogant, to bring down the haughty. God taught Nebuchadnezzar himself a great lesson, when he began to exalt himself. "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble" (Daniel 4).

We must all learn to look at the real power that is not seen rather than glory in the temporal powers of the day (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, help me to see the eternal powers You have and stop looking at the temporal powers of people. May Your power and glory and will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Keep me humble that I may not offend. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I exalt my country larger than God? Do I realize the Father in Heaven is the only real power? Do I forget God?





**September 7**

**Scripture Reading:** Lamentations 1:1-3:51

**Memory Verse: Lamentations 3:21-24** But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.”

**Song:** [“Great is Thy Faithfulness”](#)

With a broken heart Jeremiah lamented over fallen Jerusalem. He saw its bitterness and asked, “Should women eat their offspring?” “Should priest and prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord?” He noted that on the streets virgins and young men have fallen by the sword. No one escaped (2:20-22).

Jeremiah laments, “He has made my flesh and my skin waste away; he has broken my bones; he has besieged and enveloped me with bitterness and tribulation; he has made me dwell in darkness like the dead of long ago. He has walled me about so that I cannot escape; he has made my chains heavy; though I call and cry for help, he shuts out my prayer” (3:4-8).

At his lowest point, though, Jeremiah still finds his hope in God. So can you. Call to mind all the good God has done for you, how that every day He has blessed you and loved you. He has forgiven you of more than you can count. We have not been cheated to have the Lord as our portion. We can hope in Him, because He is Lord of heaven and earth.

In the midst of our sorrow, let’s never forget the last chapter has not been written.

“The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord” (3:25-26).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, I know You can help me even when life is fallen down around me. Help me to wait for Your salvation and to trust in Your continued love. Thanks for your continued mercies. You, Father, are so good to me. Help me to remain faithful to You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I thank God for all His blessings? Do I trust Him to deal with every problem in His own time?



**September 8**

**Scripture Reading:** Lamentations 3:52-5:22; Ezekiel 1-2

**Memory Verse: Ezekiel 2:5-7** And whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house) they will know that a prophet has been among them. And you, son of man, be not afraid of them, nor be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with you and you sit on scorpions. Be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house. And you shall speak my words to them, whether they hear or refuse to hear, for they are a rebellious house.

**Song:** [“Be Thou My Vision”](#)

God called Ezekiel to be His prophet and spokesman in the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin. Ezekiel was among the exiles by the Chebar canal in the land of Chaldeans. Ezekiel the son of Buzi was a priest, and the hand of the Lord was upon him there (Ezekiel 1:1-3).

God said to Ezekiel, “Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak with you.” And as he spoke to me, the Spirit entered into me and set me on my feet, and I heard him speaking to me (2:1-2). God spoke to his people through his prophets.

Rebellious people have never liked to hear the truth of their sins or failures. They do not like to face the consequences of their actions. They would rather hear smooth flattery and positive messages. Having itching ears, they heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts (2 Tim. 4:1-4).

Faithfulness to God calls for His messengers to preach the Word, whether the people hear or refuse to hear. Faithful preachers speak out in season and out of season, when people like it and when they don't. Faithfulness to God does not take into consideration what people like. It speaks out the message of God.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me to be faithful to my duty as a messenger of Truth. Help me to speak the Truth without compromise but in love and kindness. Thy will be done. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I compromise my message when people object? Am I willing to bear the thorns and briars and scorpions that come from preaching a faithful message?



**September 9**

**Scripture Reading:** Ezekiel 3-8

**Memory Verses: Ezekiel 3:17-18** “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked person shall die for his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand.

**Song:** [“Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus”](#)

We are our brother’s keeper, and we must let keep watch for his soul. “My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins” (James 5:19-20). If we fail to warn the wicked, we are responsible for their souls being lost; and God will require their blood at our hands.

“But if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he shall die for his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.

“Again, if a righteous person turns from his righteousness and commits injustice, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die. Because you have not warned him, he shall die for his sin, and his righteous deeds that he has done shall not be remembered, but his blood I will require at your hand.

“But if you warn the righteous person not to sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live, because he took warning, and you will have delivered your soul” (Ezekiel 3:19-22).

Our lives are unalterably linked to others. We cannot live as an island separate from our responsibility to those around us. We must tell them of Jesus and warn them to turn their lives to Him.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me to be faithful to reach out to those who are lost in sin. Help me speak the truth in love. Give me boldness to speak as I ought. Open doors to us for the word. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.” (Colossians 4:2-4)

**Thought Questions:** Do I love the souls of my friends and neighbors even to speak to them about Jesus? Will I go to heaven empty-handed?



**September 10**

**Scripture Reading:** Ezekiel 9-12

**Memory Verses: Ezekiel 11:19-20** And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

**Song:** [“How Long Has It Been?”](#)

Ezekiel saw the hearts of the people around him, and they grieved him to his soul. Their hearts were hardened against God. God said through Ezekiel, “The guilt of the house of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great. The land is full of blood, and the city full of injustice. For they say, ‘The Lord has forsaken the land, and the Lord does not see.’ As for me, my eye will not spare, nor will I have pity; I will bring their deeds upon their heads” (9:9-10).

God could see the generation of the present and the generation of the future. He could see the hardness of heart of the present generation, but how Israel would soften its heart in the days to come, when they would gather again in Israel. The Babylonian captivity did end, and Israel returned to the land, beginning in 536 BC. In those days they restored their faith and renewed their covenant with God.

Sin hardens the heart (Hebrews 3:12-13) and causes one to pull away from God and His will. When people who once followed God allow their hearts to harden against righteousness and against the love, they need a new heart and a new spirit. Repentance that arises from recognizing the love and grace of God brings about that needed change (2 Corinthians 7:10).

Do you need a new heart of flesh that devotes itself to the will of God?

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep me from hardening my heart against You and Your will for my life. Keep me from flirting with sin and immorality. Help me to keep my heart tender. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I flirt with sin and error? Do I think God does not see? Have I allowed sin to build a barrier between God and me?



**September 11**

**Scripture Reading:** Ezekiel 13:1-16:43

**Memory Verse: Ezekiel 13:2-3** “Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel, who are prophesying, and say to those who prophesy from their own hearts: „Hear the word of the Lord!“ Thus says the Lord God, Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!

**Song:** [“Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah”](#)

The entire thirteenth chapter of Ezekiel speaks against the false prophets and diviners who were claiming to speak for the Lord but were actually speaking out of their own imagination. They were not inspired of God; God did not send them. Rather they saw “falsehood and lying divination.” They Lord had not sent them; “yet they hope for the fulfillment of their word” (13:6). Therefore, the Lord was against them (13:8).

Precisely because they have misled my people, saying, ‘Peace,’ when there is no peace, and because, when the people build a wall, these prophets smear it with whitewash, say to those who smear it with whitewash that it shall fall! (13:10-11). False prophets tell people things are all right when they are not right at all! Israel will find continued punishment for her sins. She will not escape.

People can easily deceive themselves when they let their feelings and desires come before their commitment to the Word and will of God. They can want something to be true so badly they ignore the real truth from God. False prophets must often blind themselves to the truth, so they can deceive others.

Mankind, male and female, are often weak to self-deception. Our mental filters can block out what we don’t want to hear and allow the falsehoods we invent. But self-deception ends tragically; we must be open to what God really says in His Word.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep my heart open to Your Word. Help me to say no to the lies and deceptions of the world. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Keep me free of lying to myself. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I let myself believe what I know to be false? Do I wish something so badly that I misuse Scripture until I justify my belief?



**September 12**

**Scripture Reading:** Ezekiel 16:44-20:17

**Memory Verse: Ezekiel 18:4** Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die.

**Song:** [“My Eyes Are Dry”](#)

My teacher in college used to quote an old proverb: “Every tub sits on its own bottom.” By that, he meant every person is responsible for himself. If we believe that, we must reject the notion that guilt for sin is inherited from Adam. Man has freewill and can change if he desires.

God said the old Israelite proverb was wrong: “The fathers eat the sour grapes, but the children’s teeth are set on edge.” It’s not true! People can determine their relationship with God!

In the rest of the chapter Ezekiel describes scenarios where good people sometimes go bad and suffer for it and where bad people turn to what is right and are blessed for it. People can change. That is a message of hope for some and a message of sadness for others. It depends on what you decide to do with your life.

With impassioned plea, the Lord says through Ezekiel, “Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord God; so turn, and live” (18:30-32).

People choose their destinies. They can harden their hearts and find ruin, or they can repent and find life. What are you doing with your life?

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, give me a new heart and a new spirit that I may always turn away from the sin that destroys. Help me, Father, always to please You. I know You want me to be with You always. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I allow sin to grow in my heart? Have I determined today to turn my life around? Do I think of what is important each day?



**September 13**

**Scripture Reading:** Ezekiel 20:18-22:12

**Memory Verse:** **Ezekiel 22:30** And I sought for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the breach before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none.

**Song:** ["I Need Thee Every Hour"](#)

God is always looking. He is looking for the faithful person whose heart is completely His, so that He may strongly support that person (2 Chronicles 16:9). He is looking for the person who will worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24). Jesus came to earth to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10).

In Ezekiel's case, God is looking for a man who will do what is right. The Lord describes Judah this way:

Her priests have done violence to my law and have profaned my holy things. They have made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they taught the difference between the unclean and the clean, and they have disregarded my Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them. Her princes in her midst are like wolves tearing the prey, shedding blood, destroying lives to get dishonest gain. And her prophets have smeared whitewash for them, seeing false visions and divining lies for them, saying, 'Thus says the Lord God,' when the Lord has not spoken. The people of the land have practiced extortion and committed robbery. They have oppressed the poor and needy, and have extorted from the sojourner without justice (22:26-29).

God is still looking for people who will live righteously in a wicked world. Shamefully, those God most trusts have failed to fill the gap and do what is right. Will you fill the gap?

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, give me strength to fight in this war against Satan. Help me to stand strong with the truth and with Your teaching. Keep me from lies and excuses. Help me fill the gap. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I stand up for truth and against error when I am confronted with it? Am I willing to do what is right, even when I am alone?





**September 14**

**Scripture Reading:** Ezekiel 22:13-24:27

**Memory Verses: Ezekiel 24:16-18** “Son of man, behold, I am about to take the delight of your eyes away from you at a stroke; yet you shall not mourn or weep, nor shall your tears run down. Sigh, but not aloud; make no mourning for the dead. Bind on your turban, and put your shoes on your feet; do not cover your lips, nor eat the bread of men.” So I spoke to the people in the morning, and at evening my wife died. And on the next morning I did as I was commanded.

**Song:** [“Have Thine Own Way”](#)

What God does here seems incomprehensible. Ezekiel will suffer the blow of his wife’s death, but he is not to mourn. He could sigh but not weep. Why?

And the people said to me, “Will you not tell us what these things mean for us, that you are acting thus?” Then I said to them, “The word of the Lord came to me: ‘Say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, the pride of your power, the delight of your eyes, and the yearning of your soul, and your sons and your daughters whom you left behind shall fall by the sword.

And you shall do as I have done; you shall not cover your lips, nor eat the bread of men. Your turbans shall be on your heads and your shoes on your feet; you shall not mourn or weep, but you shall rot away in your iniquities and groan to one another. Thus shall Ezekiel be to you a sign; according to all that he has done you shall do. When this comes, then you will know that I am the Lord God’ (22:19-24).

There is always a day of reckoning. Judah had so sinned against God He could no longer allow it to happen. He sent this sign through Ezekiel, and Ezekiel “did as I was commanded.”

When your heart is broken and the delight of your eyes is taken from you, will you do as you were commanded?

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, have Thine own way in my life. Your will be done, whether all is well or I am heartbroken. Help me to be a faithful servant. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I live faithful to my calling in small things? Will I have the spiritual strength to do what is right even when my heart is crushed?





**September 15**

**Scripture Reading:** Ezekiel 25:1-28:10

**Memory Verse: Ezekiel 28:9-10** Will you still say, „I am a god,“ in the presence of those who kill you, though you are but a man, and no god, in the hands of those who slay you? You shall die the death of the uncircumcised by the hand of foreigners; for I have spoken, declares the Lord God.”

**Song:** [“Holy, Holy, Holy”](#)

The Lord prophesies against the leader of Tyre, because of his utter arrogance in thinking he is a god. “Because your heart is proud, and you have said, ‘I am a god, I sit in the seat of the gods, in the heart of the seas,’ yet you are but a man, and no god” (28:2).

Sometimes success can destroy. The king of Tyre was “wiser than Daniel,” who had acquired “gold and silver” for his treasuries. It was his success that caused his heart to be lifted up (28:5).

“Because you make your heart like the heart of a god, therefore, behold, I will bring foreigners upon you, the most ruthless of the nations; and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of your wisdom and defile your splendor” (28:6-7).

Only God is God. No matter how smart or wise we become, we are still merely human. No matter how rich or how powerful we think we are in the sight of others, we are still merely human. It can be difficult for the highly successful to recall their place in God’s eyes. They forget God gave them whatever gifts they have.

God exalts the humble but humbles the proud. The Lord has a thousand ways to help people recall they are accountable to Him and not exempt as creatures. How sad a wise and powerful man had forgotten his place.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, I know every good and perfect gift comes from You. I know that it is only by Your grace that I exist or have any good thing. I am so grateful to be Your child and to live for Your glory. Keep me close, oh Father. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I think too highly of myself? Have I counted my blessings? Have I let success go to my head? Do I think I am a special exception?



**September 16**

**Scripture Reading:** Ezekiel 28:11-31:18

**Memory Verse: Ezekiel 29:9-10** And the land of Egypt shall be a desolation and a waste. Then they will know that I am the Lord. "Because you said, 'The Nile is mine, and I made it,' therefore, behold, I am against you and against your streams, and I will make the land of Egypt an utter waste and desolation, from Migdol to Syene, as far as the border of Cush.

**Song:** ["While On The Sea"](#)

Ezekiel chapters 29-30 present God's oracle and lamentation for Pharaoh and the land of Egypt. God promised to punish Pharaoh and the land:

No foot of man shall pass through it, and no foot of beast shall pass through it; it shall be uninhabited forty years. And I will make the land of Egypt a desolation in the midst of desolated countries, and her cities shall be a desolation forty years among cities that are laid waste. I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them through the countries (28:11-12).

Egypt would never again be a major power (29:15), which is true to this day.

The Lord gave Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon who spoiled her wealth as wages for his army.

"On that day I will cause a horn to spring up for the house of Israel, and I will open your lips among them. Then they will know that I am the Lord" (29:21).

How sad it is some only come to understand the Lord God of Heaven and Earth is the only true and living God by enduring disaster. How much better if they could come to faith another way!

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, we exalt You as the only true and living God of all. Help us to refrain from opposing You or exalting ourselves above You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I recognize God for who He is? Do I serve Him and Him alone? Do I know He always keeps His word?



**September 17**

**Scripture Reading:** Ezekiel 32:1-34:24

**Memory Verse: Ezekiel 34:6** My sheep were scattered; they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. My sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them.

**Song:** ["No One Ever Cared for Me Like Jesus"](#)

Jesus is indeed the good shepherd who cares for and seeks after the lost sheep of Israel, but the shepherds of Ezekiel's day were not faithful to their calling.

"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to those shepherds, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat *sheep* without feeding the flock. Those who are sickly you have not strengthened, the diseased you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost; but with force and with severity you have dominated them. They were scattered for lack of a shepherd, and they became food for every beast of the field and were scattered'" (34:1-5).

So frustrated was God with the shepherds of the day, He said, "Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out" (33:11). The Lord will care for His sheep and deliver them from all the places to which they were scattered.

He also promises to set over them one shepherd, My servant David, "and he will feed them; he will feed them himself and be their shepherd" (34:23). Thankfully, Jesus is the fulfillment: He is the good shepherd (John 10:1).

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for sending Jesus to watch after my soul and to care for me. Help me to remain close to the Good Shepherd and serve Him faithfully. Thank You for searching me out and finding me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I stay close to the shepherd? Am I living the kind of life that pleases God? Do I watch out for my brother?



**September 18**

**Scripture Reading:** Ezekiel 34:25-38:9

**Memory Verses: Ezekiel 37:5-6** Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord.”

**Song:** [“Father of Mercies”](#)

Can these bones live? Can life ever be better than it is right now? Can God take a dead Jerusalem and bring it back to life? Can God take a spiritually dead person and bring him to life? Yes, yes, a thousand times yes!

The God who created us can cause an old man of sin to die and bring us to newness of life (Rom. 6:3-7) and cause us a true new birth (John 3:3-7). What was does not have to determine what can be. On our own, we are dead; but the power of God can do what men cannot do on their own.

“And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God” (Ezekiel 36:26-28).

Skeptics can believe. Sinners can repent. The weak can grow strong. The downcast can have hope. God is so good!

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, give me eyes to see and a heart to know Your power. Help me to see what can be through your grace and love. Thank You, Father for creating me and for causing me to be born again through Your Word. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I have hope? Do I realize how very powerful God is in my life?



**September 19**

**Scripture Reading:** Ezekiel 38:10-40:49

**Memory Verses: Ezekiel 39:21-22** “And I will set my glory among the nations, and all the nations shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid on them. The house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God, from that day forward.”

**Song:** [“His Name is Wonderful”](#)

Judah and Jerusalem had lived for many years in rebellion to the Lord God, and they assumed they could defy their holy God on and on. But God’s patience has an end. God sent Gog and Magog to punish Israel for their sins. But Gog and Magog in the midst of her victory over Israel went too far. They profaned the name of God.

“And my holy name I will make known in the midst of my people Israel, and I will not let my holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel. Behold, it is coming and it will be brought about, declares the Lord God. That is the day of which I have spoken” (39:7-8).

God will give their flesh to the beasts. Israel “will seize the spoil of those who despoiled them, and plunder those who plundered them, declares the Lord God” (39:4, 7). It will take seven months for Israel to bury the dead and cleanse the land (39:12).

Israel too needed to know they could not keep on in sin without suffering dire consequences. God is “jealous for My holy name” (39:25). Though God would punish Israel, He would also gather them back from their enemies. Then He will “have vindicated my holiness in the sight of many nations” (39:27).

Is God holy in our hearts and on our tongues?

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, we praise You as the Holy One. We know that You alone are holy and righteous altogether. Help us to glorify Your name by our lives. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I speak and act in such a way as to glorify God? Do I assume I can live however I please and still maintain the approval of God?



**September 20**

**Scripture Reading:** Ezekiel 41-43

**Memory Verses: Ezekiel 43:25-27** “For seven days you shall provide daily a male goat for a sin offering; also, a bull from the herd and a ram from the flock, without blemish, shall be provided. Seven days shall they make atonement for the altar and cleanse it, and so consecrate it. And when they have completed these days, then from the eighth day onward the priests shall offer on the altar your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, and I will accept you, declares the Lord God.”

**Song:** [“Holy Is the Lord”](#)

The Sanctuary of the Lord was very sacred. It had to be cleansed and consecrated. God would not accept just anything man offered. “Seven days shall they make atonement for the altar and cleanse it, and so consecrate it.” It was only after these days are completed that God would accept burnt and peace offerings on this altar.

This should make us think long and seriously about our worship toward God. “Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:28-29).

In a relaxed culture it is easy to profane what is holy with a nonchalant and casual attitude. Some folks are shocked and dismayed that God might not accept whatever they have to offer. “God ought to be glad He is getting anything from me at all.” They do not understand what holiness is and are not treating the Lord God as holy (cf. Isaiah 6:1-6).

The Lord God is God and not a man. He is above us and greater than we can imagine. He is our Creator, the Sustainer of our lives. It is by His will that we exist (Revelation 4:10). Let us treat God with the love, the honor, and the glory that He alone deserves.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for creating me in Your image. Help me, Father, to treat You as holy and deserving of my thanksgiving and adoration. May my worship to You always be pleasing and honoring of Your great Name. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I honor God? Do I show God by my demeanor, dress, attitude, and heart that I honor and adore Him? Am I grateful for all He has done for me?



**September 21**

**Scripture Reading:** Ezekiel 44-47

**Memory Verses: Ezekiel 44:6-8** And say to the rebellious house, to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: O house of Israel, enough of all your abominations, in admitting foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, to be in my sanctuary, profaning my temple, when you offer to me my food, the fat and the blood. You have broken my covenant, in addition to all your abominations. And you have not kept charge of my holy things, but you have set others to keep my charge for you in my sanctuary.

**Song:** [“Holy, Holy, Holy”](#)

It seems incomprehensible to some that God makes distinctions between people. Some have the audacity to think God ought to be glad I’m serving Him, rather than thinking of the honor and privilege to be a servant of God.

In Ezekiel’s day, as is the habit of many today, some took for granted what it means to be holy before God. They profaned the worship in the temple with their abominations. Foreigners who were uncircumcised in heart and flesh had no right to enter the temple area.

God called this an “abomination,” a word that has little meaning in a politically correct but profane society. An abomination is a practice that is opposed to the moral and ritual requirements of the Lord. These practices are utterly offensive and abhorrent to the Living God and are sure to bring about His wrath on those who commit them.

Though we in our own lives think little of “clean” and “unclean,” God is not so disposed. Whether we live righteously before Him matters greatly to Him.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep me from profane and offensive ways and practices. Help me to regard You and all that pertains to You, O Father, as holy. Forgive me of my sins. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I come before God with anger, lust, or ugliness in my heart? When God hears my prayers, do they come from a heart of reverence?





**September 22**

**Scripture Reading:** Ezekiel 48; Dan 1:1-2:30

**Memory Verse: Daniel 1:8** But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself.

**Song:** ["Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross"](#)

Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were taken to Babylon to serve Nebuchadnezzar. They were youths in whom was no defect, who were good looking, showing intelligence in every branch of wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and who had ability for serving in the king's court. They had to learn the language of the Chaldeans. They would be educated for three years and enter the king's personal service.

They were to receive a daily ration of the king's choice food and wine. The king thought he was blessing Daniel and his friends by providing this for them. But the Jews saw the food and wine as defiling. They would not eat or drink it. They recognized this Babylonian food and drink were polluted with idolatry, and one could not remain faithful to God and eat defiled food.

God granted Daniel favor in the eyes of the commander, and the four Hebrews were allowed a test. They would eat vegetables and drink water for ten days. At the end God was with them, and they appeared better and "fatter" than the others. Because God was with them, at the end of their training they were "ten times better" than all the magicians and conjurers who were in all his realm.

God strongly supports those whose hearts are completely His (2 Chronicles 16:9).

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, keep me from defiling myself with the worldly things that offend You. Help me in times of testing to stand beside You to do what is right and live as You have willed. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I stand with the Lord in times of testing? Will I do what is right regardless of the stress?



**September 23**

**Scripture Reading:** Daniel 2:31-4:27

**Memory Verses: Daniel 3:16-18** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”

**Song:** [“Stand Up, Stand Up For Jesus”](#)

The most powerful man in the world pressed his people to worship his man-made god. This god was a wonder to behold! It was 90 feet high and 9 feet wide and made of gold. There was nothing like it in all the earth. In spite of that, this man-made image could not claim to be the God of Heaven; and the three Hebrews would not worship it.

Nebuchadnezzar called for a furnace seven times hotter than ever. So hot was it that it slew the men who carried up the three bound men (3:22). But the Lord delivered them, and four men walked about the fire unbound and unharmed! Nebuchadnezzar saw and praised the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, because He delivered them from the king’s hand (3:28-30).

“No other god is able to deliver in this way.”

The three Hebrew children did what was right, even at the risk of their lives. They determined to do what was right even if it cost them their lives. Can you imagine the rage they suffered from the king by openly defying him? Yet they feared God more than the king.

When you are challenged, stand strong for your faith. Don’t give up, give out, or give way. The most powerful person on earth is not as strong or able as the God of heaven. And even if He does not immediately deliver, He is still the one and only God worthy of our love and dedication.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me not to fear but to believe. Grant me courage to do what is right, regardless of the cost. Keep me from fear. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I give in too quickly to the powers of earth? Have I committed myself to unqualified service? Do I recognize only the true God?



**September 24**

**Scripture Reading:** Daniel 4:28-7:12

**Memory Verse: Daniel 6:10** When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.

**Song:** ["We Praise Thee, O God"](#)

A praying saint is the devil's greatest fear. He trembles when he sees the weakest sinner on his knees. Prayer works because God hears. Daniel would not bend to the laws of men.

Daniel's enemies asked King Darius to establish "an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions" (6:7). Once the ordinance was signed, the king could revoke it.

Daniel knew the ordinance, but he would not cease from prayer. He kept doing as he had previously, praying toward Jerusalem three times a day. His enemies brought him before a distressed Darius, and Daniel was thrown into the lion's den. Darius sought to save him and could not find a way. His ordinance could not be revoked.

When morning came, and the king called for Daniel. Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm" (6:21-22).

The enemies of good and right will always find what they think are ways to punish the righteous, not realizing their evil will come back on them (6:24). Let us stand with Daniel for what is right and look to God for our deliverance.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, deliver me from the lions of my own time. Keep me from doubt and fear. May my heart trust in You to deliver. I know there is no God but You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I trust God, even when things seem impossible? How valuable is prayer in my life?



**September 25**

**Scripture Reading:** Daniel 7:13-11:13

**Memory Verses: Daniel 12:2-3** And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

**Song:** ["Christ Returneth"](#)

The last six chapters of Daniel are a marvel. So accurate are they that many scholars denied the inspiration of Daniel. Yet they tell plainly of the future.

As Nebuchadnezzar's empire (the head of gold) fell, the kingdom of silver (the Medes and Persians) took its place. The third kingdom (Greece) would raise a mighty king (Alexander the Great), who would come and take Persia. His kingdom, however, would be broken up into four points (11:4). At last, the fourth kingdom will arise (Rome), and during that time the Messiah will come.

The Messiah will establish his kingdom. "And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever" (2:44-45; 7:12-14; cf. Luke 1:33; Hebrews 12:28).

The church, God's eternal kingdom, was in God's plan from the beginning; and we Christians today are part of that eternal purpose (Ephesians 3:10-11). "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!" (Romans 11:33)

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for Your great wisdom given to Daniel. Thank You for thinking of the kingdom and allowing me to be in that great scheme from all eternity. Thank You, Father, for forgiving my sins and allowing me to serve You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I understand the great place God has given me to serve in His kingdom? Do I realize that I have a part to play in the ages?



**September 26**

**Scripture Reading:** Daniel 11:14-12:13; Hosea 1-3

**Memory Verses: Hosea 3:4-5** For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods. Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the Lord and to his goodness in the latter days.

**Song:** “[Jesus Paid It All](#)”

The Lord commanded Hosea to go and marry a woman of whoredom, and Hosea married Gomer. She bore to him three children: Jezreel, No Mercy (Lo-ruhama), and Not My People (Lo-ammi). It is not clear if all these children were actually fathered by Hosea.

Gomer returned to her whoredom, and God compared Gomer’s unfaithfulness to Hosea like Israel’s unfaithfulness to Himself. God, however, had Hosea go and buy Gomer back from her whoredom.

And the Lord said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the Lord loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins.” So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley (Hosea 3:1-2). A homer and a lethech equals nine bushels.

The good news is God’s amazing grace in His willingness to accept back the unfaithful. Hosea 2:19-23 says: And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the Lord. “And in that day I will answer, declares the Lord, I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth, and the earth shall answer the grain, the wine, and the oil, and they shall answer Jezreel, and I will sow her for myself in the land. And I will have mercy on No Mercy, and I will say to Not My People, ‘You are My People’; and he shall say, ‘You are my God.’”

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, You are my God, and I want no other. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I act unfaithfully toward my God? Have I been adulterous with idols or coveting? Am I one of God’s people with God’s mercy?



**September 27**

**Scripture Reading:** Hosea 4-9

**Memory Verses: Hosea 7:7-10** All of them are hot as an oven, and they devour their rulers. All their kings have fallen, and none of them calls upon me. Ephraim mixes himself with the peoples; Ephraim is a cake not turned. Strangers devour his strength, and he knows it not; gray hairs are sprinkled upon him, and he knows it not. The pride of Israel testifies to his face; yet they do not return to the Lord their God, nor seek him, for all this.

**Song:** ["I Must Needs Go Home"](#)

Ephraim was considered the leading tribe of Israel when it separated from Judah, and in this figure of speech (synecdoche) the part stands for the whole. Israel had mixed itself with the nations around it and had become idolatrous, adulterous toward the Lord God.

It is amazing how sin hardens the heart (Hebrews 3:12-14) and blinds the eyes (2 Corinthians 4:1-4). Ephraim could not see what was happening to him. He did not even know he was playing with fire. "Strangers devour his strength, and he knows it not." One cannot play with sin and not get hurt. All this sinful living led them to grow old too quickly, but he could not see what sin was doing to him.

Ephraim is a cake not turned, a pancake burning on one side but raw on the other—useless and inedible. There is an answer to their weariness and failure. God! They can return to the Lord!

Though the prophets, the pride of Israel, spoke to them, they would not return to the Lord and seek Him. They threw away the only hope they had.

God was willing to take them back, but they would have none of Him. So it is with foolish and blinded people, who do not think or consider their latter end.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, forgive me for flirting with sin. Oh Lord, help me keep my heart tender toward You. I know there is no other hope for life. Thank You, Lord, for cleansing me again and again. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I hold to my sin rather than forsake it? Am I a cake not turned? Have I mixed with the world around me?



**September 28**

**Scripture Reading:** Hosea 10-14; Joel 1:1-2:17

**Memory Verses: Hosea 12:7-8** A merchant, in whose hands are false balances, he loves to oppress. Ephraim has said, "Ah, but I am rich; I have found wealth for myself; in all my labors they cannot find in me iniquity or sin."

**Song:** ["It is Well with my Soul"](#)

Throughout the history of man, some have felt the need to abuse others. Cain, angry from his disapproved sacrifice, killed his innocent brother Abel. The brothers of Joseph sold him into slavery. The new king over Egypt enslaved Israel for eighty years.

In the days of Hosea (756-725 B.C.) the wealthy were abusing the poor. The belief was that since they were rich God approved of them. The wealth they enjoyed was in their minds an assurance that "they cannot find in me iniquity or sin." Wealth can make a man arrogant and feel free to do many things he would not have done otherwise.

Whatever we have, whatever we are, comes from God (James 1:17), the giver of every good gift. He is the one who makes us able to gain wealth. He gives us the strength of our hands and the wisdom of our minds, so that we may be able to prosper (Deuteronomy 8:11-18).

The Lord is a great God who keeps his eyes open to everything that happens; He knows the evil and the good (Proverbs 15:3). The idea that we can do as we please, because God has somehow blessed us, mocks God. Let us not presume such evil.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for all Your blessings and the joy of my salvation. Help me never to presume upon the grace You have given me and think I can ignore my sins. I confess to You, Father, my weaknesses. Forgive me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I take the grace of God for granted? Have I assumed my blessings or position permits me to abuse others?





**September 29**

**Scripture Reading:** Joel 2:18-3:21; Amos 1-4

**Memory Verses: Amos 4:11-13** “I overthrew some of you, as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were as a brand plucked out of the burning; yet you did not return to me,” declares the Lord. “Therefore thus I will do to you, O Israel; because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel!” For behold, he who forms the mountains and creates the wind, and declares to man what is his thought, who makes the morning darkness, and treads on the heights of the earth—the Lord, the God of hosts, is his name!”

**Song:** [“O Lord, Our Lord”](#)

Amos prophesied calamity to Israel in the eighth century (760-745 BC). Speaking out against the sins of Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, Judah, and Israel, Amos stood bold as a lion and spoke for God.

The people were greedy in Israel, selling the righteous into slavery and the needy for a pair of shoes (2:6). A man and his father resort to the same girl (2:7). They were an abomination and unjust to the poor, stretching out beside every altar on garments taken as pledges (Ex. 22:26).

God gave them prophets and Nazarites, but they made the Nazarites drink wine and the prophets hush (Amos 2:11-12). God promised they would not escape his wrath.

God gave them hunger, but they wouldn't return (4:6); He gave them drought, but they wouldn't return (4:7-8); He gave them crop failures, but they wouldn't return (4:9); He sent a plague, but they wouldn't return (4:10); and now all God says, “Prepare to meet your God, O Israel.” There comes a time when God's patience ends.

“The Lord roars from Zion, and from Jerusalem He utters His voice; And the shepherds pasture grounds mourn, and the summit of Carmel dries up” (1:2). May we not learn to listen and rend our hearts before God has to step in and destroy us?

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, we know that we have sinned and beg Your forgiveness. We come to You with broken hearts and seek Your favor. Bless us, Father, and keep us in Your loving grace. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I say no to God? Do I mistreat others? Do I shame the name of God with my sin?



**September 30**

**Scripture Reading:** Amos 5-9; Obadiah 1:1-9

**Memory Verses: Amos 8:11-12** “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord God, “when I will send a famine on the land—not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the Lord, but they shall not find it.”

**Song:** [“Give Me the Bible”](#)

Most people get hungry and eat, but a famine is another matter. There is no food in a famine. In famine the desperation is to survive not merely to fill an appetite. In the famine there is no food, no restaurant, and no pantry to sustain life.

In famine, there is death with hunger. You can't buy food. So desperate to live are people they would sacrifice their children to live another day.

But this famine is not one for food; it is a famine for the Words of the Lord. God has hushed. The people won't hear what they need to hear to nourish their souls. They are spiritually forsaken without the Words of the Lord.

What if all your Bibles disappeared? What if you in your time of need sought a word of Scripture to comfort you but could not find a Bible?

Jesus said, “The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life” (John 6:63). The gospel saves us (Romans 1:16), strengthens us (Romans 16:26-27), and nourishes us (1 Peter 2:2). You can live without a Bible, but you cannot live spiritually without the Bible.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for Your Word. Thank You for all that it has done to change my life and give me hope. Please, Father, give me access to Your Word all the days of my life. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I read and study the Word of God daily? Am I nourished in God's Holy Word? Have I hidden the Word in my heart?



**October 1**

**Scripture Reading:** Obadiah 1:10-21; Jonah; Micah 1-3

**Memory Verses: Jonah 3:4-5** Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.

**Song:** "[Wonderful Grace of Jesus](#)"

Jonah was the reluctant prophet, who did not want to preach to the wicked Ninevites. Though he tried to get away from his responsibility, the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah. Jonah spent three days and three nights in the stomach of that fish (Jonah 1:17).

Jonah saw his need for faithfulness to the Lord. God once again said, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you." So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" (3:2-4).

It surprised and even offended Jonah that the people repented at his brief warning of their doom. Apparently, the people took God more seriously than Jonah imagined; but God knew their hearts.

The story of Jonah speaks loudly about the love of God for all, even very wicked people. It also attests to the power of the message to bring about change. We must never sell short the power of God's word (Isaiah 55:6-9).

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, help me to speak clearly and lovingly the gospel to all. Keep me from judging how others will receive that message. I am thankful, Lord, for Your grace to cover all my sins and for the power of Your Word. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I trust in the power of the Word? Do I believe the grace of Christ will forgive even the worst of sinners?



**October 2**

**Scripture Reading:** Micah 4-7; Nahum 1-2

**Memory Verse: Micah 5:2** But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

**Song:** ["Come, Thou Almighty King"](#)

Bethlehem Ephrathah, the small town six miles south of Jerusalem, held a rich heritage as the place where Ruth and Boaz met, where David was born, and where Rachel is buried. This was the place the scholars said the Messiah was to be born.

When the Magi came from the east looking for the birth place of the great King of the Jews, they went to Herod seeking the location. Herod gathered the chief priests and scribes and inquired of them. They answered, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet" (Matthew 2:1-5). Then they quote Micah 5:2. From this information Herod acted wickedly to kill many innocent children. Rachel wept.

Micah notes that he comes from of old, from ancient days, which certainly fits with John's statement that Jesus was "in the beginning with God" (John 1:1) and Paul's statement that he existed in the form of God (Philippians 2:5-8).

Matthew says that he "will shepherd my people Israel" (Matthew 2:6). Jesus said "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11).

Only God could predict the place of the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of God. This amazing prophecy, so precise and correct surely shows the foreknowledge of our great God.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, keep my faith strong to believe everything You have spoken. Remove my doubts and fears. Thank You for sending my Savior. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I believe the prophets? Have I seen how God works His will in history?



**October 3**

**Scripture Reading:** Nahum 3; Habakkuk; Zephaniah 1:1-13

**Memory Verses: Habakkuk 3:17-19** Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. God, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places.

**Song:** [“How Sweet, How Heavenly”](#)

Habakkuk prophesied as a contemporary of Jeremiah and Ezekiel during the final days of the kingdom of Judah before its fall to Nebuchadnezzar. God had revealed the Chaldeans would devastate Judah and Jerusalem.

This third chapter of the book is a sublime song ascribed to the chief musician in the temple. No doubt it was to be used for worship of God. It is “unequaled in majesty and splendor of language and imagery.”

Habakkuk expresses at the close of the book his unwavering commitment to the God of his salvation. Whatever happens, Habakkuk will “rejoice in the Lord” and take joy in the God of his salvation. Through every challenge and tragic even of life, he finds the Lord to be his strength. No matter what, God is still with him.

Habakkuk by inspiration makes the marvelous statement, which is quotes three times in the New Testament. Habakkuk said, “The just (righteous) will live by faith” (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11-12; Hebrews 10:3).

We could only hope that in the time of our testing and in the time of calamity, we too could muster and proclaim the faith Habakkuk proclaimed.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, keep me in the hollow of Your hand. You are my strength and my joy. I am nothing apart from You. Thank You, Father, for saving me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I really believe? Do I give up on God if life goes against me?



**October 4**

**Scripture Reading:** Zephaniah 1:14-3:20; Haggai; Zechariah 1:1-11

**Memory Verses: Haggai 1:7-9** “Thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the Lord. You looked for much, and behold, it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? declares the Lord of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while each of you busies himself with his own house.

**Song:** [“I Love You Lord”](#)

The Lord has a thousand ways to humble a person or to put holes in his pockets. Without a relationship with the Lord, a person does little of any value. God wanted His temple built, but the people of Jerusalem were too busy with their own lives to think of Him.

The book of Haggai contains four prophecies but one central message: “rebuild the temple.” Their materialistic pride and greed should not cause them to procrastinate the priority of God’s task. God will withhold blessing from selfish people who will not serve and glorify Him (1:5-11).

When the people were unclean and tried to offer up to God an offering, they did not prosper. God will not bless the unclean who try to worship; He expects them to become clean first. So it is with us all. Let us not neglect that which the Lord has given us to do. We cannot find God’s pleasure apart from doing His will.

“Before stone was placed upon stone in the temple of the Lord, how did you fare?” (2:15-16). The people faced many hazards. “Since the day that the foundation of the Lord’s temple was laid, consider: Is the seed yet in the barn? Indeed, the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have yielded nothing. But from this day on I will bless you” (2:18-19).

When we trust and obey, the Lord blesses and blesses.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me to do Your will each day and keep me from greed and pride. I know that all I have and am comes from Your hand. Thank You, Father. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I live for the Lord or do I hold back from Him? Am I obedient to His will or have I procrastinated in my service?



**October 5**

**Scripture Reading:** Zechariah 1:12-7:14

**Memory Verses: Zechariah 6:12-13** And say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, “Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall branch out from his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord. It is he who shall build the temple of the Lord and shall bear royal honor, and shall sit and rule on his throne. And there shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”’

**Song:** [“Crown Him with Many Crowns”](#)

The Book of Zechariah contains eight night visions and two burdens. Many Jews had returned to Jerusalem. God had said, “Return to Me, that I may return to you” (1:3). Though the people had worn filthy garments, the Lord had “taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes” (3:4).

The Lord through Zechariah promised to bring in His Servant the Branch (3:8). He explains the Branch will build the temple of the Lord and shall bear royal honor and shall sit and rule on his throne. There can be no doubt Jesus is this Branch. He sits on the throne as the faithful High Priest over the church which is a temple (Hebrews 1:8; 4:14-16; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; Ephesians 2:19-22).

“In that day, declares the Lord of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbor to come under his vine and under his fig tree” (Zechariah 3:10). The Prince of Peace will bring peace to His people and set up a kingdom, which will last forever (Luke 1:33). His kingdom will unite Jew and Gentile and bring peace to all (Ephesians 2:12-16).

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for sending the Branch, our Lord, who brings us peace and forgiveness. Thank You for all the love He shares with us. Help us to walk worthy of the grace He has brought to us. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I see the connection between Zechariah’s Branch and the Lord Jesus Christ? Do I live in harmony with the Lord?





**October 6**

**Scripture Reading:** Zechariah 8-13

**Memory Verse: Zechariah 9:9** Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

**Song:** ["Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You"](#)

The Lord Jesus, creator of the universe, King of kings, and Lord of lords came riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. Great victors rode upon a white horse, but the Lord of all flesh (John 17:3) came riding upon a colt, the foal of a donkey.

He was not the King of military, though He is the Lord of Hosts. He would never sit upon a great throne on earth, yet He rules all. His throne is above the earth in heaven, where He sits at the right hand of God (Acts 2:34-36; Hebrews 1:3).

"They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road." Jesus triumphantly came down the Mount of Olives. And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?" And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee."

Jesus was indeed all He claimed to be, and on this day Jerusalem glorified Him as the coming One, the Messiah, who would save His people. Zechariah by inspiration could see the coming of the King!

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, help me to see Your greatness and Majesty in my life each day. Help me to bow before and find my salvation in You. I know, Father, there is no other king but Jesus. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I recognize the greatness of my King? Have I come to Him with "Hosanna in the Highest" in my heart?



**October 7**

**Scripture Reading:** Zechariah 14; Malachi

**Memory Verses: Malachi 1:6-8** “A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. But you say, ‘How have we despised your name?’ By offering polluted food upon my altar. But you say, ‘How have we polluted you?’ By saying that the Lord’s table may be despised. When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favor? says the Lord of hosts.

**Song:** [“We Praise Thee, O God”](#)

Have you considered the worship you render to God? In the days of Malachi, the priests were allowing “polluted food” upon the altar and by implication despising God. They polluted the altar by offering blind, lame, and sick animals. The Lord called this worship “evil.”

We seem to be oblivious today about what we offer God. People are late to worship, often dressed shabbily, bringing in food and beverages. Would they do that for the governor? Would they do that at a funeral? Would they do that in a courtroom? God makes it clear such irresponsible worship is not an honor to Him. “Where is my honor?” God asks.

Many today have little sense of what is holy and what is profane. Religion is a common event to them; it is no longer special. It is as if they did not know they were appearing before God when they gather with the saints for worship.

Feet up on the pews or song racks, Bibles on the floor, clipping nails, and texting on cell phones during a period of worship say clearly we do not regard our time in church as holy. We venture to say God will not accept such worship, and in some cases it is “evil.”

Let us renew our commitment to treat God as holy (Leviticus 10:3). If we dare to draw near Him, let us remember His majesty as our God.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, forgive me for rendering worship that profanes rather than holds You to be holy. Forgive my laziness, my lack of attention, and my half-heartedness in my adoration to Your Name. Remind me of Your greatness each day, and grant me Your love. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I sing and pray in spirit and in truth? Do I offer my best in worship? Do I take the holiness of God for granted?



**October 8**

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 1-4

**Memory Verses: Matthew 3:1-3** In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.'"

**Song:** "[Fairest Lord Jesus](#)"

John the Baptist came as the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction" (Malachi 4:5-6).

John's message was that of repentance, a change of heart that leads to a change of life. People had to quit being so self-absorbed and begin thinking of their fathers and their children, their religious heritage and their eternal future.

John was not only the Elijah coming back (Matthew 17:10-13); he was also the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy by crying in the wilderness for Israel to prepare for the coming of the Lord. John fulfilled his place of service, preaching a baptism of repentance (Mark 3:3; Luke 1:4).

John did not waste words: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit in keeping with repentance... Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (Matthew 3:7-10).

Jesus too preached the message of repentance, for the kingdom of heaven was at hand. The kingdom, which is the church, did indeed come; and we are all blessed by it.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for bringing the kingdom of heaven to us in the church. We are thankful Jesus purchased that kingdom with his own blood, and that we can be a part of it. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I value the church, God's kingdom? Do I participate in the kingdom? Do I support the kingdom?



**October 9**

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 5-7

**Memory Verses: Matthew 5:43-45** “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”

**Song:** “Love One Another”

Many Christians find it hard to forgive or to be kind to those who do not deserve it. It is hard for them because they focus on the wrong thing. They focus on the fact that the evil are evil and the unjust are unjust. There is no doubt this is true.

But loving our enemies, praying for persecutors, and being kind to those who do not deserve it has nothing to do with our enemies, our persecutors, or the undeserving. It has to do with who we are and whose we are. We are sons of our Father in heaven, and that’s the way our family behaves. We show mercy even when mercy is undeserved.

The Lord said, “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:14-15).

It is a great day when a child of God understands more fully not only what God has done to forgive them but also learns to imitate the Father by forgiving others. When God sees His child acting so selflessly, He smiles.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, forgive me my debts, as I have forgiven my debtors. Help me in my times of weakness to show others mercy, just as You have shown me mercy In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I hold grudges? Do I forgive others easily? Have I seen the need to be like my Heavenly Father in every respect?



**October 10**

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 8:1-10:15

**Memory Verses: Matthew 9:36-38** When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

**Song:** [“Love Divine”](#)

As one reads through chapters eight and nine of Matthew, one can keep from seeing the understanding and compassion of Jesus for everyone he met. The Lord could see into their hearts and souls. He knew how to give them just exactly what they needed when they needed it.

Jesus saw souls through the eyes of eternity. He was not only interested in their immediate needs but was consumed with helping them to go to heaven. He could see the distress and downcast souls who were not being helped by the legalistic and self-absorbed religious leaders of the day. He knew the people had no shepherd and needed one desperately.

The harvest is indeed plentiful; there are souls everywhere in need of the Savior and open to His promises and teaching. But the laborers are few. Jesus urged his disciples to pray earnestly for more workers to send into the harvest. Prayer is no small thing. When God’s people earnestly beseech the Father selflessly and for good, God the Father will not turn a deaf ear.

God will equip us if we are willing. He looks for our availability to give us ability. God will help us in the harvest to reach out to the lost and bring them to Him.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, we earnestly pray You will send out laborers into the harvest. Help us to entrust our souls and our hearts to do Your will always. O Lord, here am I; send me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I see my responsibility in this harvest? Have I prayed for workers? Have I volunteered to serve?



**October 11**

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 10:16-12:21

**Memory Verses: Matthew 11:28-30** Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

**Song:** [“Come We That Love the Lord”](#)

The Jewish world in which Jesus lived was dominated by religious leaders who loved to tie up heavy burdens on other men’s shoulders, though they would not move them with a finger. They did not practice what they preached (Matthew 23:1-4).

What they did was bound their oral Torah (human traditions) on the people, pretending to be righteous. In fact, they were not what they pretended to be. As hypocrites, they cleaned the outside of the cup and dish but left the inside filthy. And in all this, they left the people discouraged and burdened, feeling they could never live up to God’s expectations.

Jesus invited these defeated souls to come to him and find rest. His religion, His way was livable and doable. His yoke was not burdensome like the scribes and Pharisees’ yokes. His burden was not heavy like theirs. One could live the Christian life and please God, because the yoke was not man’s but that of Christ. Jesus made it and bore it with them. Jesus was not haughty or arrogant as were some Pharisees but meek and lowly in heart. He could help them.

You can go to heaven. You can live the Christian life. God can help you. God’s way is easy and light, not impossible and back-breaking. The grace of God and the strength He provides can help you go to heaven. Thank the Lord!

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for giving me a burden I can bear and a yoke that makes the burden easier. Help me to bear it with patience and persistence. I am so thankful I belong to You and Your Son Jesus. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I take up my yoke and cross daily to follow Him? Am I patient and persistent in my service to God?



**October 12**

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 12:22-14:12

**Memory Verses: Matthew 13:55-58** Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household." And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.

**Song:** "[Jesus, Wonderful Thou Art](#)"

Nazareth was well acquainted with Jesus; in their minds he was one of their own. He could not be different. They did not understand how Jesus could be more than they were—merely human.

Rather than believe in Him because of His miraculous powers and wisdom, which they admit He could do, they took offense at Him. They could not accept the fact He was the promised Messiah, the Son of God, and their Lord. They wished to keep Him common.

Humans have always sought to bring God down to their own level. They do not want a God, who has power over them. They prefer a god they can manipulate and make on their own. If there is a God who made them, they are accountable; but if they can manufacture their own god, they can tell the god what they want.

In our postmodern world, some have problems with understanding Jesus as more than a man. They take offense at Him and anyone who believes in Him. They prefer to keep Him common, so they will not have to recognize Him as Lord.

The identity of Jesus is not dependent upon us. He is Lord whether we regard Him so or not. He is the One who made us, and our taking offense at Him does not remove Him from judging us on the last day. He is Lord, and we are better off recognizing that in our lives, rather than making criteria He must meet before we acknowledge Him.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, help me to humble myself in Your presence always. I thank You, Father, for sending Your Son Jesus to save me from my sins. Keep my faith in Him strong. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I accept the Lord for who He is? Do I propose my own criteria on the Lord before I am willing to accept Him?





**October 13**

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 14:13-17:13

**Memory Verses: Matthew 16:21-23** From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

**Song:** ["The Old Rugged Cross"](#)

Imagine having the best friend you have in the world seriously predict His agonizing suffering and death. This is no ordinary friend; He is the Lord and whatever He says is true. His prediction, however, is ripping your heart out.

"Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you," you say. Now this Lord replies to you, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

We are all tempted to look at life through selfish eyes. "What's in it for me?" is often the key to our decisions and commitments. When we don't like what we hear, we say to God, "No, no, no. That's not what should happen. That's not how it should be."

But we are not God! And the pressing of our points may be just like Peter's evil mistake. We may be getting in God's way, minding our own interests but not His.

We have no right to edit God's plan, when we don't understand it. God may have something greater in store than we are able to see. The cross is a "must" for Jesus. He must suffer and die, so our sins could be forgiven. Peter didn't see that; he could only understand his good friend leaving him.

Trust God. Trust Him to do what is right even when it breaks your heart.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, help me to see beyond my own interests and to have confidence You have a greater plan than I can understand. Increase my faith, O Lord. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I trust God when it breaks my heart? Do I trust the Lord to be wise in matters I don't understand?



**October 14**

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 17:14-20:34

**Memory Verses: Matthew 20:25-28** But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

**Song:** [“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”](#)

Gentiles have bosses who call the shots. Everyone hops to the sound of their voice. The Lord doesn't act that way, and He won't let His disciples act that way either.

Who would choose to be a slave? We ask who wants to be a millionaire, but Jesus asks who wants to be a slave? The slave in God's eyes is the greatest of all. The servant is the great one, while the boss is the least in the scheme of things. Christ was a servant not a boss, though He has the right to be the great King of kings and Lord of lords. He has first place in all things (Colossians 1:17; Revelation 17:14).

Jesus came not to be served, but who could love Him and not want to serve Him. He deserves our service, but that was not how He treated people. He could wash feet; He could die on a cross; and He could lower Himself to become obedient.

Pride is the great stumblingblock of service. We are too good; we ought to be served rather than serve. A person knows he is a servant, when he is treated like one.

Until we humble ourselves as a child, we can never become great in the kingdom (Matthew 18:4). It takes effort to humble ourselves; any spoiled brat can think he is the boss.

We need humility of heart and soul. Let us lay aside our pride and dress ourselves with the humility of Christ.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me to be a servant like Your Son Jesus. Forgive my selfish pride and help me to sacrifice myself for a cause greater than I am. Let me be Your servant, Father. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I bristle in pride when people ask me to do a humble task? Am I too good to be a servant?



**October 15**

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 21-22

**Memory Verses: Matthew 22:36-40** “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

**Song:** [“The Greatest Commands”](#)

According to the Lord, the essence of true religion is consuming love for the Lord God and loving your neighbor as yourself. Everything depends on these two. There is no true religion without them.

Love for God does not relieve responsibility to keep the Lord’s commandments; they ensure it. One who passionately loves the Lord God will not be content to give lipservice to the commandments, while he does as he pleases. Love for the Lord constrains him to pay attention to every commandment of the Lord.

“For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised” (2 Corinthians 5:14-15). A whole-hearted lover of God will not hold back from God. Whatever God says, he will do; and wherever God sends, he will go.

“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

Love change our hearts to look at others differently. Love expands the soul so that one may live for a larger purpose than fulfilling selfish desires. Love is the grand motivator. It is the essence of what God desires from us and through us.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, grow the kind of love in me that is consuming. May every beat of my heart and every thought of my soul declare my utter love for You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I love God more than anything? Is my love for God consuming? Is my love for my neighbor to the same extent that I love myself?



**October 16**

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 23:1-25:13

**Memory Verses: Matthew 25:10-13** And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

**Song:** [“Take Time to Be Holy”](#)

There is a substantive difference between those who are ready and those who are not. When the time comes for entrance into the eternal kingdom, one must be ready. There is no returning to the past and preparing for the Lord. If we are not ready, there will not be an open door for us.

Each of us must periodically evaluate our relationship with the Lord. The five foolish young ladies thought they were in good standing with the Groom (the Lord), but they were not. They deceived themselves and took for granted they could make up for their deficiencies at the last minute and be all right. They were greatly mistaken.

And why didn't the wise help the foolish? They couldn't. There are some things you cannot share. Character and preparedness to meet God are two things one cannot give to another.

Each must prepare his heart, his life, and his soul to be with God. No one can take it for granted there will be time later to get things right. No one knows when the day or the hour of testing will come; but when it comes, opportunities cease.

Are you prepared to enter the kingdom? Is your heart right with God? Have you obeyed the gospel, and is your name in the Lamb's book of life?

Are you holding to some sins you should give up? Are you growing in your faith and love toward God?

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me to keep my heart and my soul prepared for the day and hour Your Son Jesus returns. Forgive my foolish ways and help me to remain strong in faith and love. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I take the Lord's kindness for granted? Have I prepared my soul for heaven?



**October 17**

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 25:14-26:68

**Memory Verses: Matthew 26:26-29** Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

**Song:** ["The Old Rugged Cross"](#)

Jews had remembered the Passover since the days of Moses and the deliverance in Egypt, but now there was a new memorial meal. It was not of a physical deliverance from an evil ruler and his army. It was rather a spiritual deliverance for all who believe. God delivered Moses and Israel with a mighty arm, but God has delivered you and me with the sacrifice of a body and blood.

This memorial meal remembers the ultimate sacrifice of the righteous Son of God, who gave Himself as a ransom for many. He did not have a quick or easy death. No, for hours He hung between heaven and earth with His hands and feet nailed to a cross. In extreme anguish of body, He gave Himself lovingly and fully. Bearing the sins of all mankind, He remained on the cross.

Though He could have called twelve legions of angels, the Lord Jesus remained on the cross to the very end. No one could give so much, so lavishly, and so lovingly. Each taste of bread and each drink of the cup calls to our minds this exquisite sacrifice of a righteous man for an unrighteous mankind.

The blood He shed for our sins established a covenant of reconciliation between God and man. Because He died for us, we could once again be close to God and call Him Father. This memorial meal calls for humility of heart and consecration of character. What a Savior we have, and how worthy is He of remembering perpetually!

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, may I never forget the sacrifice of Your Son for my sins. Help me to remember the love and the sacrifice You were willing to make on my behalf. I am so sorry I have sinned against you, but I'm so thankful You were willing to send the Lord Jesus for my sake. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I remember what Jesus did for me on the cross? Has the cross touched my life and helped me to make a change?



**October 18**

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 26:69-28:20

**Memory Verses: Matthew 27:45-46** Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

**Song:** [“No One Ever Cared for Me Like Jesus”](#)

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” is a quotation from Psalm 22:1. This is a prayer psalm which begins with a cry of anguish and ends as a song of praise. Jesus, knowing his hour had come, loved them to the end (John 13:1). Every child in Israel knew this psalm. If we hear only the first words of this psalm we may miss the bigger message. While suffering on the cross, Jesus kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously (1 Peter 2:23; cf. 4:19).

Some have recently accused the Father God of child abuse in sending Jesus to the cross, not remembering Jesus went there on his own initiative (John 10:18). For the joy set before Him, Jesus endured the cross (Hebrews 12:1-3).

He was willing to become our sin bearer, to take on our sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:21-24). In order to do this, the Lord Jesus had to bear the punishment and death of the cross (Matthew 16:21).

The story of the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus assures me of His amazing and overwhelming love for my soul. No one ever cared for me like Jesus. He was willing to bear the most agonizing death and the utter rejection of man to bear my sins—my sins.

How could I not love Him and be willing to obey Him?

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for loving me enough to give Your only begotten Son for my sins to cleanse and sanctify me. Oh, Father, I know I do not deserve all Your Son has done for me. I know I deserved the penalty. Thank You, Father, for caring for my soul. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I live with an understanding of what Jesus Christ gave up in order for me to live eternally? Am I thankful? Have I made Jesus Lord? Have I made Him Lord today?



**October 19**

**Scripture Reading:** Mark 1-3

**Memory Verses: Mark 2:10-12** But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic— “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.” And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”

**Song:** [“In Heavenly Love Abiding”](#)

How blessed the poor paralytic was to have four friends who were willing to carry him to the Lord! Don't you wish you had such loyal friends? Perhaps you do; be thankful for them.

The house was too full; they couldn't get in the house. So they decided to go to the roof, take away part of it and lower the man into the house through the roof. Such determination! These friends and the paralytic were not going to miss this opportunity! They wanted healing for their friend and would go to great lengths to get it, even to the point of tearing up the roof of another man's house!

When Jesus saw “their faith”—the faith of the paralytic and his friends, he said, “My son, your sins are forgiven!”

The scribes questioned why Jesus would say this; only God can forgive sins! They assumed Jesus was blaspheming! But Jesus knew their hearts; He knew what they were reasoning among themselves.

Jesus said, “Why do you question these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'?” Jesus proved his right to be the Son of God and forgive sins by healing the man there and then.

Jesus proved Himself to be what He is—Divine! You can count on Him.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, help me never to question Your power to make a difference in my life and to forgive my sins. Keep me strong in faith and determined to come to You when I am in need. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I come to Jesus no matter what? Do I believe? Do I question the power of the Lord?





**October 20**

**Scripture Reading:** Mark 4-5

**Memory Verses: Mark 5:19-20** And he did not permit him but said to him, “Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.” And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.

**Song:** [“Seeking the Lost”](#)

Legion had been tormented by the numerous demons that filled his body. They caused him to act as a madman, to go unclothed, and to dwell among the tombs.

And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and bruising himself with stones (Mark 5:3-6).

Jesus cast the unclean spirits out the man and sent them into the swine who were feeding on the mountain side. The swine rushed down the steep bank into the Sea of Galilee and were drowned, but the man was freed from the unclean spirits. He was back to normal.

Legion wanted to follow Jesus, to become one of his disciples. But the Lord had a better plan. “Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you.” This is still a right way to reach out to the lost and to bring them to the Lord.

When others see and hear of the Lord’s grace in your life, they too will want to come to the Lord for help and blessing.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for all that You have done in my life to bring about a change for good. Help me, by Your grace, to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Help me to live in such a way that others may see Your work in my life. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I tell others of God’s goodness in my life? Do I so live as to bring glory to God?



**October 21**

**Scripture Reading:** Mark 6-7

**Memory Verse: Mark 7:37** And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, “He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.”

**Song:** [“The Great Redeemer”](#)

Jesus touched many individual lives, healing all those who came to Him (Matthew 15:29-31; 18:8). Whether they were demon-possessed, lepers, lame, crippled, blind, deaf, or mute, Jesus healed every one of them.

“And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well” (Mark 6:56).

Unlike many faith healers today, Jesus healed them all. All they had to do was touch the fringe of his garment! Jesus never failed, never blamed others for a lack of faith, and never turned people away. Faith healers don’t want the “maimed” or paralytics to come to their places of healing today, because they know they can’t really heal as Jesus did.

Jesus does all things well. He doesn’t have to make lying excuses. He doesn’t have to fear retaliation for his false promises. He is genuine; He is “God with us.”

Jesus tried to keep people from telling about their healing, but there was no stopping them. They went out and told the story all the more. They knew He truly was the Son of God.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for sending our Lord Jesus to save us from our sins. Thank You for providing for us the truth about how He is genuinely Your Son. Oh Father, grant us strong faith to follow Your will in our lives. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I see the goodness in Jesus Christ? Do I see how He does all things well? Do I imitate Him?



**October 22**

**Scripture Reading:** Mark 8:1-10:12

**Memory Verses: Mark 8:14-16** Now they had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. And he cautioned them, saying, “Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.” And they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread.

**Song:** [“He Leadeth Me”](#)

“Beware the leaven of the Pharisees!” We are profoundly influenced by what we take into our hearts, minds, and spirits. Good breeds more good, and evil breeds more evil. If we allow the leaven of Pharisaiism to get to invade our thinking, we will be corrupted by its influence.

1 Corinthians 15:33 says, “Do not be deceived: Bad company ruins good morals.” If we allow bad to make its inroad in our lives, it can ruin our morality. We’ll begin to do and say things we never would have imagined at an earlier time. Watch out for immoral books, movies, and television. They will corrupt your heart and desensitize you to sin.

The same is true of false teaching. The Pharisees believed their “oral torah,” their traditions, were just as binding as God’s written revelation. This is why they accused His disciples of sin by not washing his hands according the “tradition of the elders” (Mark 7:1-3; Matthew 15:1-2). Pharisees bound many laws they had no right to bind. Jesus did not want His disciples to fall into that habit. “Every plant which My Father has not planted shall be rooted up” (Matthew 15:13).

Do you have some leaven in you? It needs to be removed before it permeates your whole soul and spirit. Clean out the impure leaven.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for showing me the right way to walk, to talk, and to think. Help me to be faithful to Your teaching. Keep me from making my own rules and bind them on others. Help me to stay close to Your Word. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I listen to rules and messages of men that differ from the Bible? Am I willing to allow the Bible to correct my thinking?



**October 23**

**Scripture Reading:** Mark 10:13-12:12

**Memory Verses: Mark 11:15-17** And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. And he was teaching them and saying to them, “Is it not written, “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a den of robbers.”

**Song:** [“Holy Is the Lord”](#)

The temple was a holy place, the place where God's name dwelled, the place where people came to worship. The priests, however, had turned this holy place into a commercial center, which actually took advantage of the pilgrims who traveled for long distances.

The money changers exacted fees from the Jews who came from outside Jerusalem. Only temple coinage could be contributed. Those with money from other places had to convert their foreign coins into the temple currency in order to worship. The priests provided in the temple a place where they could exchange their currency for a fee—robbery!

The pilgrims often purchased animals in Jerusalem in order to sacrifice them in the temple. Their prices, of course, were inflated. When people brought animals, the priest had to inspect them before they could be offered. If the animal was not suitable, they could trade it in for a suitable one. Amazingly, many suitable animals were rejected in order to sell the priest's animals—robbery!

All this took place in the very large court of the Gentiles, the only place Gentiles could worship. Imagine trying to praise God in the midst of all this commercialism.

While our church buildings are not temples, what we do in them is holy. Christians should be careful to maintain holy attitudes, behavior, and respect for others as they worship. We are God's holy people offering holy lives and holy worship to a Holy God.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for all You have done for me. May the meditations of my heart and the words of my lips and the gifts of my hands be acceptable in Your sight. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I show God I regard my time with Him in worship as a holy experience? Do I treat my worship time as something common?



October 24

**Scripture Reading:** Mark 12:13-14:11

**Memory Verses: Mark 14:6-9** But Jesus said, “Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial. And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.”

**Song:** [“O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee”](#)

Mary, the sister of Lazarus, received her brother back from the dead and was overwhelmingly thankful. She came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head (cf. John 12:1-5). This was no small gift; three hundred denarii would have been a year’s salary for a laborer.

Nard was an expensive fragrance derived from the roots of the herb *nardostachys jatamansi*. Spikenard grows in the Himalayas. The extracted perfume is an oil, which was used by the Romans for anointing the head. Its great costliness is mentioned by Pliny. The fact that it was “pure” nard made it even more precious.

No doubt Mary wanted to do something very special for Jesus. She received her beloved brother Lazarus back from the dead. This was her demonstration of great appreciation for all the Lord Jesus had done.

There is a time to break the alabaster vial of ointment and give generously to the Lord. There is a time to say profoundly to the Lord, “I love You, I thank You, and I am so glad to know You.” We should live each day with such gratitude and appreciation for the Lord, but there are special times to remember the great things the Lord has done.

How have you thanked Jesus for your salvation? For your everyday blessings? For answering your prayers?

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You again and again for sending Jesus to die for my sins. Help me to so live that I may show my utter love for you. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I live with thankfulness in my heart for the Lord? Do I share my gratitude by service or by gifts to the Lord’s work?



**October 25**

**Scripture Reading:** Mark 14:12-15:47

**Memory Verses: Mark 15:37-39** And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

**Song:** "[Jesus Paid It All](#)"

So captured by the difference in Jesus at his crucifixion, the centurion acknowledged Jesus was the Son of God. Since Mark likely wrote this gospel in Rome to Roman Christians, this bit of information would have been significant.

Mark mentions Simon of Cyrene, who was the father of Alexander and Rufus (Mark 15:21). In Romans 16:13 Paul greets Rufus, "a choice man in the Lord, also his mother and mine." If the Rufus of Mark 15:21 and Romans 16:13 are the same person, the story of Simon of Cyrene and the crucifixion would be well known to them. They might even know of the centurion.

The veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, not bottom to top. God tore this veil, since it rose up ten cubits. This veil was behind the closed wooden doors of the temple. Someone would have to have gone into the Holy Place of the temple and climb up to tear it. But no man tore this; God did the tearing to show something new.

Jesus' death opened up a new way for man to come to God. "Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh" (Hebrews 10:19-20).

Jesus paid it all; all to Him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain; He washed it white as snow. Only His blood could pay for my sins and atone my soul.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for sending Jesus to pay it all for my sins. I am so sorry He had to die a cruel death, but I am thankful He loved me enough to sacrifice Himself for my sake. Help me, Lord, never to forget. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I live with the realization that Jesus paid it all for me? Could I look at the death of Christ and realize that He is the Son of God?



**October 26**

**Scripture Reading:** Mark 16; Luke 1

**Memory Verses: Mark 16:3-6** They were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?” Looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large. Entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed. And he said to them, “Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, *here is* the place where they laid Him.

**Song:** [“Do You Know My Jesus?”](#)

The resurrection morning, when the women came to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus, turned out to be different from what they expected. They bought spices and came to do one last kindness to a beloved person, whom they thought was still dead.

But He was not dead. He had risen, just as He predicted. They could see the place where His body lay. Though not mentioned by Mark, they could also see the linen wrappings (John 20:5-7). There was no dead body to anoint in this grave; the body of Jesus didn't need anointing with funeral spices. He wasn't dead.

The resurrection is for us today an anomaly; it is truly not the normal or natural. It is supernatural, miraculous, and beyond our comprehension. No wonder they expected to find the Lord Jesus still dead. What they found amazed them! They told the disciples, but the disciples refused to believe it (Mark 16:10-11). Jesus “reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen” (16:14).

They had seen His miracles for more than three years; they had heard His predictions of His death and resurrection. They still didn't believe the word of the women. Peter and John had to go look for themselves, and Thomas refused to believe till he could stick his finger in the wounds! Jesus took it all in stride and proved Himself to them (Acts 1:1-3).

Do you think these doubters would give their lives for Jesus, if they had not been convinced? Their change from unbelief to belief cannot be explained except by the fact that the Lord Jesus truly was raised from the dead. He is the Son of God (Romans 1:4)!

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for furnishing proof of the Lord Jesus by raising Him from the dead and revealing Him to the disciples. Help me to believe, even though I have not seen with my eyes as they did. Help me to love you with all my heart. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I believe the testimony of the resurrection of Jesus Christ? How do I explain the stone rolled away? How do I explain the linen wrappings?





**October 27**

**Scripture Reading:** Luke 2-3

**Memory Verses: Luke 2:10-12** And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”

**Song:** [“Jesus, Name Above All Names”](#)

The Scriptures speak much about the birth of Jesus. Daniel predicted he would be born during the days of the Roman Empire (Daniel 2:44). Isaiah predicted he would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14). Micah tells us he will be born in the city of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).

Magi (wise men) spent many weeks traveling from the East and following the unique star of the King of the Jews. They brought expensive gifts to worship Him (Matthew 2:1-12). No other birth had such a remarkable sign!

Shepherds watching their flocks near Bethlehem witnessed the glory of the Lord shining upon them; they were terribly frightened (Luke 2:8-9). They announced the birth of a Savior who is Christ the Lord in the city of David! They observed a multitude of heavenly hosts praising God: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” (2:14).

When the shepherds came to Bethlehem to find Christ the Lord, the Savior, the King of the Jews, they found him in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. Lying in a manger? Here was the Divine Son of God in the most common place, the place where they feed livestock. Such is the nature of the God-man, Christ Jesus. He had Divine glory in heaven but came humble to the earth.

God celebrated His birth in remarkable ways, but what the Magi and the shepherds found was a birth of a king among the animals. There was no room for them in the inn. He became poor that we might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9; Ephesians 2:4-7).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for sending Your Son to be my Savior and my Lord. There is truly no one like Him. Give me strength to serve Him all my days. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I see the baby or the Lord? Do I realize how unique and special He is?



**October 28**

**Scripture Reading:** Luke 4:1-6:26

**Memory Verses: Luke 5:4-5** And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” And Simon answered, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.”

**Song:** [“A Wonderful Savior”](#)

Faith in God provides a unique tension in life: will we trust our own judgment or follow the Lord? Peter and his co-workers had labored all night at their lifelong profession. Did the carpenter know anything about fishing on the Sea of Galilee? Did He know where the fish were? Did He ever bring in a load of fish? Did He know the way fish think and act? He says, “Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” What catch? We worked all night and got nothing in return for it. We’re tired. “But at your word I will let down the nets.”

Peter was not prepared for what God had in store. They enclosed a great quantity of fish, so much so their nets began to break. They call for their partners to come and help them. They filled both boats so full, the boats began to sink!

Peter, seeing this, fell at the feet of Jesus, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord” (5:8). In all our lives we think we know much about what we do. Some still think Jesus was, after all, just a carpenter turned preacher. They still do not realize He is Lord, the Son of God. One grows much the day he understands how great is the wisdom and power of the Lord! He grows much when he quits trusting in his own wisdom and believes God.

Jesus recruited them to catch men, and they left everything and followed Him (5:10-11).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for giving me the opportunity to serve. Help me to be a faithful servant and trust in Your wisdom and power. I know my understanding is limited. Help me to believe when I don’t understand. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I question the Lord’s wisdom? Do I try to edit His instructions?



**October 29**

**Scripture Reading:** Luke 6:27-8:25

**Memory Verses: Luke 7:41-43** “A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?” Simon answered, “The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt.” And he said to him, “You have judged rightly.”

**Song:** [“Love Lifted Me”](#)

One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to come and eat at his house. While Jesus reclined at table, a woman brought an alabaster vial of perfume, washed the feet of Jesus with her tears, wiped them with the hair of her head, kissed His feet, and anointed them with the perfume (7:37-38).

The Pharisee thought, “If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner” (7:39). Pharisees would never have allowed an unclean woman to touch them; they were separatists.

But Jesus could see into her heart and knew this was an act of gratitude and respect from a sinful woman who appreciated what Jesus came to give. “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.” And he said to her, “Your sins are forgiven” (7:44-48).

The Pharisees grumbled that Jesus forgave her, but the point is obvious. Salvation calls for appreciation. The Pharisee had little, and the woman a lot. What about you?

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You so much for forgiving my sins, for sending Jesus Christ to pay a price greater than I deserve. Thank You, for loving me enough to care for my soul. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I show the Lord my appreciation? Do I criticize others when they are generous? Do I realize how great a gift salvation is?



**October 30**

**Scripture Reading:** Luke 8:26-10:16

**Memory Verses: Luke 9:34-35** As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!”

**Song:** [“Lord, We Come Before Thee Now”](#)

Jesus took Peter, James, and John up to the mountain to pray. There He was transfigured into a glorified state. He was talking with Moses and Elijah about his upcoming departure and what He was to accomplish in Jerusalem (7:28-31).

Sleepy Peter, not realizing what he was saying proposed the building of “three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” Moses was the great Lawgiver and Elijah the great prophet. All his life, Peter had heard these men praised for their faith. To meet them and be in their presence must have overwhelmed Peter.

However, “a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud” (7:34). God then entered the conversation with a declaration: “This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!” Moses and Elijah had been God’s spokesmen, but now Jesus His Son was the spokesman for God! Listen to Him!

In our world of opinion polls, democratic votes, and consumer rights, we think of Jesus Christ as one of us. He is not! He has never been! He is the Son of God! When He speaks we should listen and obey. This is not the time to make Jesus one of the boys; He never has been. He is Lord! He is the only Lord! Listen to Him!

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for giving Jesus. Help me to give Him the proper respect and to hear and obey everything He says. Forgive me, Father, for thinking that Jesus is like other great leaders. I know, Father, He is Your chosen one. Keep me in line with His words. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I listen to others before I listen to Jesus? Do I consider others as wise as Jesus? Do I think of Jesus as just one great religious leader among many?



**October 31**

**Scripture Reading:** Luke 10:17-12:12

**Memory Verses: Luke 10:36-37** Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

**Song:** ["The Greatest Commands"](#)

"Not my business!" That's what the priest and the Levite thought. They found excuses in their own minds for "passing by on the other side." What did they pass?

"A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead" (10:30).

Having been on the road between Jericho and Jerusalem, I can say this is an exceptionally convenient place for robbers to hide and surprise a traveler. There are numerous narrow grooves in the mountains beside the road, places where robbers can suddenly jump out and overcome an unsuspecting person.

The traveler was helpless, hurting, and embarrassed. He needed help, and the Samaritan helped him. Jews looked down on the Samaritans, because of their corrupted religion (2 Kings 17). But this Samaritan proved more loving than either the Levite or the priest.

Luke especially points out that people from all walks of life can nevertheless be kind and good to others. If this is true, how much more so should Christians be kind to the hurting?

The lawyer who asked, "Who is my neighbor?" learned that others besides his own kind were also neighbors. He learned we have responsibilities to all in need.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for loving me when I needed You. Help me to imitate that love and care for others who have need. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I only help people I like? People I consider like me? Am I afraid to help a stranger?



## November 1

**Scripture Reading:** Luke 12:13-14:11

**Memory Verses: Luke 13:2-5** And he answered them, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

**Song:** [“Higher Ground”](#)

There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. When something bad happens to someone, people wonder why. In Judaism it was not uncommon to blame the tragic event on someone’s sin. They figured the sinner got what was coming to him.

Pilate, though he lived in Caesarea by the sea, usually came to Jerusalem for the feasts to ensure order among the Jews. He apparently killed some Galileans for insurrection at a time when the sacrifices were being offered at the feast.

The “tower in Siloam” was likely one on Jerusalem’s city wall above the pool of Siloam; it may have been associated with Pilate’s construction of an improved water-supply system for the city. Apparently it fell during construction and killed eighteen.

Jesus’ point is clear: “Other Jews are no better than the ones who died and all need to repent. If you do not repent, you will perish too!” Jesus was insistent on their need to repent of their wicked ways.

The parable of Luke 13:6-9 teaches that God has an end to His patience. He will wait for a time, but there is an end. May none of us try the patience of God but put to death the sinful ways of our lives (Romans 6:8-14; 8:12-13; Col. 3:5-11).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for loving me enough to provide a way of salvation for me through the blood of Jesus Christ. Help me to put to death my sins, so that I may live with you. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I flirt with sin? Do I keep pet sins while getting rid of others? Do I see the need to repent in my own life?



**November 2**

**Scripture Reading:** Luke 14:12-16:31

**Memory Verses: Luke 15:17-19** “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”’”

**Song:** [“I Must Needs Go Home”](#)

We often take for granted what we have until we lose it. So it was with the prodigal son, who would have gladly been one of his father’s servants rather than die with hunger. The son had much but squandered it all with morally loose living. His sins cost him dearly.

Was the son afraid to go home and face his father and brother? It seems likely. Sin makes a man small in his own eyes. “The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion” (Proverbs 28:1). Here desperation led the son to wake up and come to his senses.

When you come to your senses and see evil for what it is, you will not want it anymore. You will see what harm it has done to you and how you have harmed yourself and probably others. When people see evil for what it is, they become disgusted with it. You can’t love God and love evil at the same time (1 John 2:15-17). Sometimes it takes the harshest things in life to wake us up toward what is right and good.

The father never let the son complete his rehearsed speech. A son is always a son, and the father lovingly embraced and blessed his penitent son. He gave him the “best” robe, a ring, sandals, and a celebration. His dead son came back to life; his lost son was now found! These are great reasons to rejoice.

Do you rejoice over the restoration of another?

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for Your loving and forgiving ways. Thank You for taking us back when we come to You in penitence. Help us, Father, not to be like the older brother who could not forgive. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I forgive those who penitently come home? Do I believe people can change? Do I sin how ugly my sins are to God?





**November 3**

**Scripture Reading:** Luke 17:1-19:27

**Memory Verses: Luke 18:13-14** But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

**Song:** “[Amazing Grace](#)”

The Lord Jesus told a parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt. The Pharisees had their traditions, the oral law by which they lived and judged others. They believed because they kept a law of their own making, they were better than others.

He pictured two men in the temple praying. “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get’” (Luke 18:10-12).

Jesus wearied of the Pharisee to the extent He would not even tell the whole prayer. He explained that the man was not praying to God but to Himself. He was loudly and publicly reading his resume to everyone. Such self-righteousness did no good with God.

Our task is to humble ourselves and realize our salvation comes at the hand of the Lord. “Be merciful to me, the sinner,” is a good prayer for us all. We need God’s mercy and grace, because none of us can earn our way to heaven. Grace is a gift, and we thank God for it.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for grace to forgive all my sins. I know that I am nothing apart from You. Father, You have been so good to me, and I praise You always. May Your mercy continue to keep me always. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I look down on others or think I am better than others? Do I realize how much I need the grace of God?



**November 4**

**Scripture Reading:** Luke 19:28-21:9

**Memory Verses: Luke 21:3-4** And he said, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

**Song:** "[All to Jesus I Surrender](#)"

Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. Mark notes that "many rich people were putting in large sums" (Mark 12:41).

Jewish tradition claims that thirteen receptacles for gifts to the temple treasury were in the Court of Women, accessible to Israelite women as well as to men. The temple often showed flamboyant wealth. Its officials would probably waste this widow's money; but this powerless woman acts out of true devotion and is the greatest giver in God's sight.

The poor widow put in two *lepta*, small copper coins that amount to a cent (Mark 12:42). This was the smallest of the Jewish coins, very meager compared to the large sums.

It is not how much we give but how much we sacrifice that matters in God's eyes. The world is captivated by ostentatious outpourings, but the Lord blesses giving in secret (Matthew 6:3-4). God is not impressed with pretentious displays of generosity to be seen. He is interested in the genuine heart pouring out love through its secret sacrifice.

It is not what we give but what we sacrifice that matters to God. A sacrifice reveals the true heart of the giver.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for loving me enough to sacrifice Your beloved and only begotten Son for the sins of my soul. Help me to sacrifice myself so that I may declare my love for You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I give or sacrifice? Do I sacrifice my surplus or my living? Do I give out of love or out of duty?



**November 5**

**Scripture Reading:** Luke 21:10-22:46

**Memory Verses: Luke 22:31-32** “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”

**Song:** [“O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee”](#)

The Lord had promised the apostles they would sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. No doubt the disciples felt strong in their place in the coming kingdom. But the Lord’s prediction would soon find fulfillment. The disciples would scatter, Judas would betray, and Peter would deny Him three times.

Peter said to him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death.” Jesus said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me” (22:33-34). Peter indeed at the time of the arrest took up a sword and struck off Malchus’ ear, but at the time of testing denied he even knew Jesus three separate times.

And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, “Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly (22:60-62).

Jesus knew what Peter and the others would do. In spite of it, Jesus said, “I have prayed for you.” Jesus prays for individuals. Let that sink in. Could it be that the Lord has prayed particularly for me as an individual, even when I have done my worst? He ever lives to intercede for us (Hebrews 7:25). He is our mediator (1 Timothy 2:3-7). He is our advocate (1 John 2:2). He has done more than merely sacrifice Himself on the cross; He has worked tirelessly to keep us saved.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for forgiving me, when I have least deserved it. Thank You for not casting me aside for my sins, but for giving me another opportunity to do right. Help me to help others to stay faithful. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I know how much God cares for me? Do I realize God’s enduring commitment to me as a person?



**November 6**

**Scripture Reading:** Luke 22:47-24:23

**Memory Verses: Luke 23:33-34** And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments.

**Song:** "[At Calvary](#)"

The contrast is stark and amazing. The Roman soldiers crucified three men, and two were criminals. The one in the middle was distinctly different. The criminals were getting what they deserved, but the one in the middle took on a burden from what everyone else deserved.

The criminals railed at Him, the soldiers gambled over his clothes. The Jewish leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!" The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews" (Luke 23:35-38).

This scourged Savior in all the uproar somehow kept His focus on what He was doing rather than be led into petty revenge and self-pity. As they pounded nails through His hands and feet, he kept saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He could see what they could not see. He could see how important the event of His death was to the salvation and future of all mankind. He could even pray for forgiveness for those who hated and killed Him.

Such amazing perception! Such startling love! Such astounding purpose! While being reviled, He uttered no threats but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously (1 Peter 2:21-24). We too must learn to consider God's will and God's way when the world is in an uproar around us.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for the example of Jesus Christ, for teaching me how to live when the world turns against me or does not understand. Help me to forgive others as You have forgiven me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I focus only on the temporary and miss the eternal? Do I allow the ugliness of others to distract me from the will of God?



**November 7**

**Scripture Reading:** Luke 24:24-53; John 1:1-2:11

**Memory Verses: John 1:1-5** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

**Song:** ["I Believe in Jesus"](#)

There has never been a time when Jesus was not. Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58). Jesus is the Word become flesh (1:14) who lived in glory with the Father before time began (17:5). The Word was not only with God; He was and is Divine.

Through the ages many men have sought to become gods; but far more remarkably Scripture declares God humbly and obediently became man (cf. Philippians 2:5-8). The One who made all things entered into the world which He made as one of them. He brought life and light to the world, so that man could see and come to know God.

The Word that became flesh dwelt among us and lived as we lived (1:14). We could see the glory of God in His character. He was full of grace and truth, which mankind needed and needs so desperately.

Jesus explains God to us (John 1:18); we know what God our Father is like by looking at Him. The more we understand Jesus, the more thankful we become that we have such a God as our Father. Jesus said, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (14:7).

No one knows when Jesus was born or when He will return, but we know He is worthy of our praise and devotion. He is the Word, who has always been and will always be. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords (Revelation 17:14), who has brought to us life and immortality. He has brought grace and truth, love and honesty. He came to us, and we are so thankful.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for sending Your Son to lift us up from our ways and to see the light of life. Help us to devote ourselves to Your grace and truth. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I put the Lord first in my life? Do I live in the light of the Lord's grace and truth? Do I see God the Father in Jesus the Son?



**November 8**

**Scripture Reading:** John 2:12-4:38

**Memory Verses: John 3:16-17** “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only [begotten] Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

**Song:** [“Nothing But the Blood”](#)

God is in the saving business. Jesus did not come into the world to condemn the world but to save the world. Some enemies of the cross never get beyond the Lord’s wrath upon the sinful world.

They do not value the love or the holiness of God. They do not realize the utter harm sin has brought upon man. It is because they love evil that they despise God. “And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed” (John 3:19-20).

God is in the saving from sin business, because man needed deliverance from this present evil world (Galatians 1:4). Nothing but the blood of Jesus would do (Hebrews 10:4-7).

God sacrificed His Son, watching Him suffer in pain for hours and die for the sins of the world. God so loved the world and so hated the harm sin does, that he was willing to send His Son to the cross to redeem us from sin and transfer us into His kingdom (Colossians 1:13-14).

Such love calls for love in return. God calls us to leave sin and evil and to come to Him. “The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him” (John 3:35-36). Faith and obedience are ways of life for the one who is captivated by the love of God.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for sacrificing Your Son for my sins. I am so sorry for what I have done, but I am thankful for what Jesus did to save me. Oh Lord, help me to love You daily with all my heart and soul. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I love the Lord with all my heart and soul? Do I live in such a way that I glorify God with my life? Do I linger in the shadows rather than come to the light?



**November 9**

**Scripture Reading:** John 4:39-6:51

**Memory Verses: John 5:28-29** Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

**Song:** ["When We All Get to Heaven"](#)

The Scriptures clearly teach all who in the tombs will hear the voice of the Son of Man and come forth from the tombs. Only God could raise the dead, for only God has the power to put spirits into dead bodies and bring them back to life. Jesus has the power of life!

The Lord Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man" (5:25-27).

On another occasion Jesus told Martha, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

Jesus is our resurrection and our life! He is the only One who can make a difference in our eternity. Let us come to Him with humility and in obedience. How we live in this life will make an eternal difference in the next one. Some will rise to life, while others rise to judgment. We want the first and not the second.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for giving me life and the hope of a resurrection. Help me to so live as to bring honor and glory to Your name. Grant me the opportunity to live always with You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I live with the judgment and the resurrection in mind? Have my sins been covered by the blood of Jesus? Is my name in the Lamb's book of life?





**November 10**

**Scripture Reading:** John 6:52-8:20

**Memory Verses: John 7:15-17** The Jews therefore marveled, saying, “How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?” So Jesus answered them, “My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. If anyone’s will is to do God’s will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority.

**Song:** [“Fairest Lord Jesus”](#)

Attitude matters! Some choose to do God’s will, and others do not. Those who believe in the Lord and choose to do God’s will find that Jesus teaching proves true and Divine. He was not speaking as merely a man; His teaching came from the Father.

Jesus said, “I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me” (5:30).

We must never take the words of Jesus for granted. They will judge us on the last day. “The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me” (12:48-50).

Jesus took the Word from His Father seriously, because His commandment is eternal life. Jesus did not act on His own initiative but only spoke what He heard the Father say. This is a good example for preachers and teachers today. Follow the words of Jesus and the Father carefully and do not be presumptuous. Do not act on your own authority.

Jesus was not educated in worldly wisdom; He was educated personally by the Father. His education is vastly superior to any on earth today as well. We cannot do better than to listen to Jesus.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for giving us Your Word through Jesus so that we might know with confidence what Your will is for our lives. Help us to live obediently and not act on our own authority. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I consider the teaching of Jesus as the supreme and final authority? Do I act on my own wisdom or authority?



**November 11**

**Scripture Reading:** John 8:21-10:18

**Memory Verses: John 10:7-10** So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

**Song:** [“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”](#)

Sheepfolds provided a necessary means of protection for the sheep at night. Sometimes the folds were in caves; sometimes they were inside an enclosed hedge. Sheepfolds kept the wolves and lions away from the sheep. Shepherds often shared sheepfolds in order to watch out for each other’s sheep. There was usually only one way into or out of the fold.

These folds had no wooden doors; they had fleshly ones. The door to the fold was the shepherd himself, who positioned his body so that nothing could go in or out without going through him. God takes care of His own (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Jesus admits those to the fold that belong to Him, but He keeps others out. His fold contains the saved, who will be blessed with pasture, life, and an abundance. Others seek to exploit and destroy, but Jesus is the good shepherd, who watches over His flock.

The Lord Jesus is the one and only door to salvation. One must go through Him to find the abundant life (John 14:6). The Lord takes of His own and provides for them every need (Philippians 4:19; Matthew 6:33).

We can rejoice at our Door, the Savior Jesus Christ, who sacrificed Himself for us so that we might live (1 Peter 2:24). We enter life, because He died. We have abundance, because He made himself poor (2 Corinthians 8:9). We are thankful for His love; He indeed is the good shepherd.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for giving us joy, peace, love, and forgiveness through Your Son Jesus Christ. We have been blessed so abundantly through His watch care. We rejoice to have such a great and glorious God. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I count my blessings each day? Do I realize all the care and protection the Lord gives to us? Do I rejoice in my salvation?



**November 12**

**Scripture Reading:** John 10:19-12:11

**Memory Verses: John 11:47-48** So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the Council and said, “What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”

**Song:** [“Crown Him with Many Crowns”](#)

Though he had been dead for four days, Lazarus came forth from the tomb at the command of Jesus Christ. His sisters wondered at the delay. Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died” (11:21). But Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

She thought it would be on the last day, but Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” (11:25-26).

That is the real question: do you believe what Jesus says? Dear reader, you must think about this in your own life. Do you believe His promises of forgiveness, of eternal life, or of hearing your prayers? Do you believe?

Apparently the enemies of Jesus believed. “What are we to do? For this man performs many signs (miracles that demonstrate God is with Him). If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him.” The enemies of Jesus knew His real power; they plotted against Him because He threatened their way of life. “The Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.” Caiaphas supposed it was expedient one man should die for the people rather than the whole nation perish (11:50).

Though they knew His power from God, they killed Him anyway. Jesus Christ is all He claimed to be; He is Lord. Let us serve Him and crown Him with many crowns, for He is the Lord and Savior of the world. Do you believe this?

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for demonstrating to us through the signs that Your Son truly is the Lord and Christ. Grant us faith through Your word to believe all You say and teach. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I believe? Do I believe strongly enough to act?



**November 13**

**Scripture Reading:** John 12:12-14:11

**Memory Verses: John 14:1-3** “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

**Song:** [“Sing to Me of Heaven”](#)

That Jesus was leaving them broke the hearts of the disciples. They had heard his prediction of his death and resurrection, but they never quite grasped what He was saying (Matthew 16:21). In John 14:1-3 the Lord makes a promise to come and get them and take them back to where He is going.

Where is He going? He is going to the Father (14:28). In days to come they would see Him ascend into heaven to be with the Father until He returns (Acts 1:9-11). Peter proclaimed that He was at the right hand of God (Acts 2:33).

What is He doing? He is preparing a place for us. In the Father’s house are many rooms or dwelling places—homes. God is making a home just for us, a place suited and reserved just for us in heaven (1 Peter 1:3-5). That place is imperishable, undefiled and will not fade away.

When will He come again? No one knows (Matthew 24:35-36).

God wants His people to dwell with Him. There will come a great gathering day, when God will gather His own to live with Him forever and ever in that wondrously prepared place. In the ages to come, He will “show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:7).

There can be no greater inheritance than to spend eternity in the kindness of God.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for washing me free from sin and giving me an inheritance in Christ Jesus. Thank You for preparing a home for me with You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I realize how much God loves me? Since I am a citizen of heaven (Ephesians 2:19-22), do I live like a child of God?



**November 14**

**Scripture Reading:** John 14:12-17:13

**Memory Verses: John 14:23-24** Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me.”

**Song:** [“Love Divine”](#)

Christianity begins, ends, and lives in love. No other word can so describe the vertical and horizontal relationships. Christianity without love is vain, useless, and nothing (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). We love, because He first loved us (1 John 4:19).

Love is a verb, however. It is not a state but a way of life; it is filled with demonstration not boasts (1 John 3:16-18). Jesus understood love to be shown through obedience to His commandments. “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (John 14:15). “Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him” (14:21).

We are loved by the Father when we keep the words and commandments of Jesus. This is not legalism or sterile obedience. This is loving devotion to the will of the Father. Jesus Himself showed His love for His Father by His obedience to the Father’s will. He said, “so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me” (14:31).

Jesus taught, “Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full” (John 15:9-11 NASB).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for loving me. Help me to love You and keep Your word, so that You may know and the world may know I love You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I live my love for the Lord? Do I demonstrate my love by keeping His words and commandments?



**November 15**

**Scripture Reading:** John 17:14-19:42

**Memory Verses: John 19:28-30** After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst." A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

**Song:** ["Victory In Jesus"](#)

Only John records four of the seven sayings of Jesus upon the cross. Three times Pilate as governor proclaimed, "I find no guilt in Him" (18:38; 19:4, 6). Though he offered Barabbas to the mob (18:38-40), and though he washed his hands before the crowd (Matthew 27:24), Pilate turned over an innocent man to be scourged and crucified (19:16).

Taken to Golgotha, bruised and cut by beatings, Jesus watched the callous Roman soldiers drive nails through His hands and feet. He watched them divide up his outer garments and gamble over his tunic (19:23-24). The Jewish leaders mocked and reviled Jesus as he hung for hours upon the cross.

In the midst of all this, Jesus looked down from the cross to see the women who cared for Him. On his heart was His mother. To Mary he pointed to John as her son; and to John he pointed to Mary as his mother. Jesus did not focus on himself but on the mother He loved and His dear friend John, who took the mother of Jesus into his household.

Jesus said, "I thirst." Of all the physical challenges Jesus faced on the cross, it is amazing He only mentions His thirst. He said nothing about His shame or His pain. He said nothing to the Jews who reviled and mocked Him. He quietly bore His cross; He didn't complain.

When the suffering was done, He said, "It is finished!" in complete triumph over the pain and the sin. Jesus, the perfect example of love and devotion to the will of God, triumphed for us. He triumphed so that we could have forgiveness. Oh, what a victory!

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for sending our Savior. Thank You that He triumphed over sin and death and the ugliness of mankind. Thank You for being willing to forgive our sins because of His sacrifice. Help me, Father, to so live that I may not take this grace for granted. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I live so as to give glory to Christ? Do I live thankfully? Do I remain calm in the midst of hatefulness directed at me?



**November 16**

**Scripture Reading:** John 20-21; Acts 1:1-2:13

**Memory Verses: John 21:21-22** When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about this man?” Jesus said to him, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!”

**Song:** [“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”](#)

After Peter’s threefold denial of the Lord, Jesus asked Peter three times, “Do you love me?” Three times Peter affirmed his love for the Lord Jesus.

Jesus foretold this to Peter, “Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.” (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, “Follow me” (John 21:18-19).

When Peter saw the disciple whom Jesus loved (John), he asked the question, “What about this man?” Many people are in the business of hypothetical questions, that take the focus off of what God says into the realm of speculation. What about him?

Jesus answers that it is irrelevant what happens to others. “What is that to you? You follow Me!” Hypothetical questions designed to question the necessity of faith, repentance, or baptism are in the same category as Peter’s question. It is unimportant what God requires or expects of others; what is important is what God requires or asks of us.

“But what if a tree falls on someone on the way to the baptistry?”

“What is that to you?” Jesus says; “You follow Me!”

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for helping us keep our focus on what really matters: our relationship with You. Help us do what is right regardless of what others do. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I focus on God’s requirements for me? Do I allow what I think should be God’s will for others color my thinking? Or do I listen to the Lord?





**November 17**

**Scripture Reading:** Acts 2:14-4:37

**Memory Verses: Acts 2:40-41** And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

**Song:** ["My Jesus, As Thou Wilt"](#)

"Autosoterism": this is a term which refers to self-salvation. The Bible clearly teaches no one can save himself through meritorious works (Ephesians 2:8-10). We cannot earn our salvation but rather receive our salvation as a gift from God.

But gifts must be received, and God does offer gifts with conditions which must be met. No one earns the gift by meeting the conditions, but we cannot receive the gift until we meet the conditions.

For instance, the Israelites were not healed of their bites from fiery serpents until they looked upon the bronze serpent Moses set upon a pole (Numbers 21:5-9). The Lord God gave the city of Jericho into their hands of the Israelites (Joshua 6:2), yet the people "took the city" (6:20) after marching around the city for seven days. God cleansed Naaman of his leprosy, but Naaman had to dip in the Jordan River seven times (2 Kings 5:10-14). Jesus anointed the blind man's eyes with clay made from his spittle and told him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. The man did so and came back seeing (John 9:6-7). In each case the blessing was not given until the condition was met. This is not meritorious, this is faith acting in response to the promise.

No one supposes the Israelites earned their healing by looking or earned the city of Jericho by marching. No one supposes Naaman earned healing by dipping or the blind man earned his sight by washing. The condition was required but not an effort to earn the blessing. The grace of God is not earned by meeting conditions; it is complied with by meeting the condition. One acts by faith in doing what God says not to earn the blessing but to comply with the condition of the gift. So it is with repentance and immersion in water in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38). One acts by faith to meet the condition of the gift. It is in that since one saves himself from a crooked generation.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for the gift of salvation; I know I can never earn it. But help me to have faith in Your words and promise, faith enough to do Your will and meet the conditions You have given to me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I think I can save myself by meritorious works? Have I met the conditions of God's grace with a response to the gospel?



**November 18**

**Scripture Reading:** Acts 5:1-7:29

**Memory Verses: Acts 5:30-32** “The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”

**Song:** [“Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus”](#)

The high priests and his associates laid hands on the apostles and put them in a public jail. But an angel of the Lord during the night opened the gates of the prison and told the apostles to “go and speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this Life” (5:19-20).

When the chief priests heard the apostles were once again preaching in the temple they sent the guard and brought them back before the Council (Sanhedrin).

And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, saying, “We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man’s blood upon us” (5:28-29).

But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men” (5:30). This has always been true. We must put God before any other authority. The courage of the disciples arose from their conviction Jesus had arisen from the dead. “We are witnesses to these things.” Their faith came from seeing Jesus after the resurrection and from watching Him ascend into heaven to be seated at the right hand of God.

Peter notes that repentance is a gift. God does not do our repenting for us, as some have claimed; but God does give us the opportunity to repent at the preaching of the truth. When we obey the preaching, God blesses us. The reasons for our obedience to the God of heaven are manifold. Let us never hold back on account of men but obey God rather than men.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for giving me the opportunity to repent and change my life. Thank You for giving me the forgiveness of sins. May my will always be to do Your will. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I listen to people before I listen to God? Is God the final authority in my life?



**November 19**

**Scripture Reading:** Acts 7:30-9:22

**Memory Verses: Acts 8:34-36** And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?”

**Song:** [“Do You Know My Jesus?”](#)

Ethiopian Queen Candace’s treasurer came to worship at Jerusalem and was returning home. While riding in his chariot, he read from the prophet Isaiah and was puzzled who might be the subject of his reading.

From Isaiah 53, Philip began preaching Jesus to this eunuch, who wanted to know what the Scripture meant. We do not know all that Philip preached, but Isaiah 53 certainly speaks of the death of Jesus for the sins of the people and how he shed his blood.

Philip preached Jesus, that is, he “gospelized” Jesus to the eunuch. He preached the good news of His sacrifice for our sins (1 Corinthians 15:3) and of our opportunity to have eternal life.

What the eunuch asks in response is remarkable to some, but it shouldn’t be. The eunuch asked, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” Apparently “gospelizing” Jesus includes teaching on the need for baptism, because the eunuch wanted to be baptized right then and there.

His sense of urgency about baptism was not an accident. He does not ask about what baptism is or why; he asks if there is anything that would stop him from being baptized. To him baptism was a given necessity; it was not an option. To be right with Jesus who died for his sins, he knew baptism was necessary; and he felt this urgency.

Consequently, Philip and the eunuch went down into the water; and Philip immersed him into the death of Christ (Romans 6:3-7), so that the blood of Jesus could cleanse him from sin. “And he went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:39), because his sins were forgiven.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for cleansing me of my sin by the blood of Your Son Jesus. Thank You for someone who came to “gospelize” Jesus to me, so that I might know of how to respond in faith, repentance, and baptism. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I understand baptism is a part of the gospel of Christ? Have I been baptized for the forgiveness of my sins?



**November 20**

**Scripture Reading:** Acts 9:23-11:30

**Memory Verses: Acts 11:13-15** And he told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter; he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.' As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning.

**Song:** "[Wonderful Grace of Jesus](#)"

Cornelius and his family and friends were the first Gentile converts. For some years the Jewish Christians preached the gospel only to other Jews, but Cornelius' prayers came up before God as a memorial (Acts 10:4). God remembered His promise to the Gentiles; the gospel was for every creature in all the world (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16). The gospel was to go the uttermost parts of the world (Acts 1:8).

God had to convince Peter and his six companions by a vision from God and the gift of tongues that repentance and remission of sins were given to the Gentiles too. But how were they saved? Some think the gift of tongues was the means of their salvation, but this is not so.

They received the gift of tongues even before they believed (Acts 11:15), for they received this gift when Peter began to speak. He had not even told them about Jesus yet; how could they believe (Romans 10:17)? One must hear the gospel before he can believe.

Actually Acts 11:14 tells us how they were saved. Peter preached "words" to them; that was the means of their salvation. They had to hear and obey what Peter taught them, just like everyone else who was saved. The gift of tongues was not for salvation, but to convince Peter and the Jews they should begin evangelizing Gentiles (10:34-35; 11:18). Consequently, Peter ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (10:48). This is the same message he gave the Jews on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:38. It is the same message of salvation for all everywhere: believe, repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. We are baptized into the death of Christ (Romans 6:3), the place where Jesus shed His blood.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for giving me a means to come into contact with the blood of Your Son through hearing the gospel and being baptized. Thank You for sending Your Son to die for my sins and giving me hope. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I listen to what God says? Have I been baptized into Christ?



**November 21**

**Scripture Reading:** Acts 12-13

**Memory Verses: Acts 13:36-39** “For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers and underwent decay; but He whom God raised did not undergo decay. Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.

**Song:** [“All to Jesus I Surrender”](#)

David served the purpose of God in his generation. God worked His plan through David in David’s day, and He works His purpose for you and me in our generation as well. If we let Him, God can do great things through His people (Philippians 1:6; 2:12-13).

But the promise of not seeing decay was not for David. David’s body decayed. The promise of resurrection from Psalm 16:10 (quoted in Acts 13:35) spoke not of David but of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Son of David.

Through the Lord Jesus we have the forgiveness of sins proclaimed! Jesus brought us a faith that would free us “from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.” The Law could condemn, but it took the blood of Jesus to atone for and forgive our sins (Hebrews 9:15; 10:1-4).

The Law like David had its purpose for its generation, but the Law was not for all time and all people like the new covenant. The Law and the old covenant made at Sinai was for Israel (Deuteronomy 5:1-2). It was to be replaced by a new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:6-13; 10:8-10).

The Law consigned everything under sin, but forgiveness comes through faith in Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:22). The Law was a slave guardian that watched over an immature Israel and to lead Israel to Christ. Once faith in Christ came, people were no longer under the Law (Galatians 3:23-25).

Let us be thankful our Savior came to us bringing us faith and forgiveness.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You Jesus Christ who suffered death for my sins that I might be able to serve You, Father, in my own generation. Thank You, Father, for loving me enough to use me in Your service. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I serve the purpose of God faithfully in my generation? Do I realize the beauty and grandeur of the new covenant ratified by the blood of Jesus?



**November 22**

**Scripture Reading:** Acts 14:1-16:10

**Memory Verses: Acts 15:37-41** Now Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

**Song:** [“Learning to Lean”](#)

Even close friends will sometimes disagree about what is best for the work of the Lord. Barnabas wanted to take along John Mark. This is a classic case of one brother holding to his friend and kinsman, while another brother looked to the success of the task. One was person-centered, while the other was task-centered. Many disagreements to this day mirror this same difference of focus.

John Mark was the son of Mary, a Jewish Christian, in whose home the church gathered to pray for Peter (Acts 12:12). John Mark was either the nephew or the cousin of Barnabas (Col. 4:10). He accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first evangelistic journey but departed from them at Pamphylia, returning to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13).

His early departure from the mission led to a sharp contention between Paul and Barnabas. Barnabas wished to take John Mark with them on their second journey, but Paul disagreed. Consequently, Barnabas separated from Paul and took John Mark to Cyprus, while Paul took Silas and went to Syria and Cilicia (Acts 15:36-40).

In later years Paul took a different view of John Mark. Mark sent greetings with Paul to Philemon (Philemon 24). Paul urged the Colossians to receive Mark if he came to them (Col. 4:10). Paul in his last letter to Timothy sought for Mark, who would be “useful to me for ministry” (2 Tim. 4:11).

While Paul disagreed with Barnabas, the time came when Paul saw the change in John Mark. May we too all be able to recognize when we were wrong in our judgment of another and work to reconcile with a slighted brother.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for loving me enough to put up with my immaturities and my weaknesses. Help me to be patient with others as they mature in faith. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I jump to conclusions about my brethren too quickly? Do I judge others inadequate or do I give them a second chance? Do I realize that sometimes a dividing our efforts can in the long term result in much more good?





**November 23**

**Scripture Reading:** Acts 16:11-18:28

**Memory Verses: Acts 17:30-31** The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

**Song:** [“Humble Yourselves”](#)

When Daniel Webster was asked what his most profound thought was, he answered that it was his accountability to God. Accountability is no small matter with God; there is a day when the books will be opened and every person judged according to their deeds by the things which are written in the book (Revelation 20:11-15). Those whose names are not found in the Lamb’s book of life will be cast into the lake of fire.

The book by which we will be judged arises from the sayings of Jesus (John 12:48). Hebrews 4:12-13 says, “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”

We do not know when that fixed day will come, but we know it will come. When it comes our eternity will be fixed as well. We must be prepared for the day and hour (Matthew 25:1-14).

God requires repentance of all people everywhere. No one is exempt. Repentance is the heartfelt turn from sin to righteousness, from the world to the Lord, and from selfishness to service. Repentance is a change of heart that leads to a change of life.

Repentance is the hardest part of obedience to the gospel. It is not a change for a moment but the beginning of a new life that has died to sin, so that one can live to righteousness. Peter tied repentance with baptism in Acts 2:38. Baptism without repentance is in vain, and repentance without baptism is futile. Accountability before God requires both.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for granting to me the opportunity to repent of my sins and to live for You. Help me each day to overcome my temptations so that I may live for You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I say no to sin and yes to righteousness? Do I let sin reign in my life?





**November 24**

**Scripture Reading:** Acts 19-20

**Memory Verses: Acts 19:18-20** Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.

**Song:** [“Redeemed”](#)

When people come to Christ, they should be done with sin (Romans 6:1-2). Those who live according to the flesh must die, but those who by the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body will live (Romans 8:12-13).

“Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator” (Colossians 3:5-10).

The converts in Ephesus confessed their sins and burned their books. They did not sell them for profit, because they saw the books as unfit for anyone to read. They burned them not as great financial loss but as great spiritual gain. Do you have books you need to burn?

The presence of sin in our lives always hurts. We cannot hide it for a while; we cannot gloss it over; and we cannot ignore it. We must destroy the sin in our lives. Sweeping away cobwebs will not stop them; we must kill the spider.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for sending Your Son to die for me. Help me to put away the sins in my life, because I know they are offensive to You and destructive to me and those I love. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I have books I need to burn? Do I have sins I need to put to death?



**November 25**

**Scripture Reading:** Acts 21:1-23:25

**Memory Verses: Acts 22:14-16** And he said, ‘The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.’

**Song:** [“Nothing but the Blood”](#)

Saul of Tarsus came from Jerusalem to Damascus to put people in prison for believing in Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus sent a bright light that blinded Saul. This was a turning point in Saul’s life. He was blinded but saw clearly for the first time that what he thought he was fighting and what he was really fighting was two different things. He thought he was fighting for God against the Christians. He learned that Christ, whom he was persecuting, was really the Lord!

But the experience on the road did not wash away his sins. The Lord sent him into Damascus, where he stayed on the street called Straight. For three days he did not eat or drink anything (Acts 9:9). When Ananias came to him, he found Saul praying (9:11). These were likely the most fervent prayers Saul had ever prayed, but prayer did not wash away the sins of Saul. Three days of fasting and prayer were not sufficient to wash away sins; they never are for the person outside of Christ. That is not how one becomes a Christian.

Ananias came to Saul, and God healed Saul from his blindness. But Saul was still in his sins. Ananias’ said, “And why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name” (Acts 22:16). This tells us when Saul was finally clean. People do not wash because they are already clean; they wash because they are dirty. Saul still needed washing from his sins in spite of the road experience and in spite of fasting and prayer.

Baptism is the time, but the blood of Christ which is administered in baptism is the means by which souls are cleansed from sin (Romans 6:3-7). We are baptized into the death of Christ, where the blood was shed. Baptism unites us with Christ in his death. Without the blood of Christ, we can never be clean. In baptism God cleanses us. We do not merit salvation by baptism, we merely receive it through the grace and mercy of Christ (Titus 3:3-7).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for saving the chief of sinners, Saul. That gives me hope You can forgive my sins too. Thank You for washing me clean of the past I now despise. Help me to live for You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I have sins I need to have cleansed by the blood of Christ? Have I been immersed in water for the forgiveness of my sins (Acts 2:38)?



**November 26**

**Scripture Reading:** Acts 23:26-27:8

**Memory Verses: Acts 24:24-25** After some days Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus. And as he reasoned about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment, Felix was alarmed and said, "Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you."

**Song:** ["The Sands of Time"](#)

"When I get an opportunity" is a phrase on many lips. Procrastination and distraction can rob us of the opportunity to do as God wills. But in Felix's case, it was fear that drove him to ignore the opportunity to find salvation.

Felix was a man given to his passions. He stole his wife Drusilla from another man. He often got angry and abused his servants. One can easily see why he became afraid. He stood condemned as an unrighteous person who lacked self-control. He didn't want to think about it. He would rather stay lost than face changing.

What reason does anyone have for not being a Christian? One can think of many reasons to trust and obey Christ, but no one can think of a good reason to turn Jesus down. Who will say to Jesus on the last day, "here is why I will not follow you"? Can you look into His eyes and accuse Him of some deficiency?

So far as we know, Felix never obeyed the Lord. He chose to obey his passions. He had time to talk to Paul about money but not about salvation.

What would you do if you had an exclusive opportunity to have an inspired apostle at your beck and call for two whole years? My friend, what are you doing now? You have all the New Testament at your beck and call whenever you please, and you have had that privilege for years. When you have an opportunity? My friend, today is your time.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for giving me Your word that I may know Your love and Your will for my life. Keep me from procrastination, distraction, and fear. Help me to take my opportunities each day to take up my cross and follow You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I waste opportunities to study or to serve? Have I deceived myself with phony excuses for repentance and obedience?



**November 27**

**Scripture Reading:** Acts 27:9-28:31; Rom 1:1-15

**Memory Verses: Acts 27:23-26** For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, and he said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar. And behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you.' So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. But we must run aground on some island."

**Song:** ["I Believe in Jesus"](#)

The Romans were taking Paul from Caesarea to Rome to face Caesar, but their ship faced a violent storm. Each day the wind was more contrary. "And on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned" (27:19-20).

Paul had warned them earlier, "Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives" (27:10). They did not, however, listen to Paul and continued on taking a chance. They guessed wrongly, and the ship was in great peril.

When all hope was gone, an angel spoke to Paul with a welcome reassurance. He would stand before Caesar. Paul's magnificent confession, "I believe God," ought to reassure our hearts as well. What God told Paul through the angel proved to be true! God always speaks the truth. You can depend on it!

When men contradict God and seem convincing, don't believe them but believe God. A six-day creation? I believe God. Forgiveness? I believe God. Resurrection? I believe God. Heaven and hell? I believe God. Homosexuality a sin? I believe God.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for teaching me the truth in Your Word. Help me to believe You in all things and to have confidence in Your promises. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I believe God only when He agrees with me? Do I believe God only when He agrees with science? Do I believe God only when He agrees with my culture?



**November 28**

**Scripture Reading:** Rom 1:16-5:11

**Memory Verses: Romans 1:21-23** For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

**Song:** ["Count Your Blessings"](#)

What is the defining characteristic of a Christian? Faith is essential, love is critical, and hope is indispensable. Romans 1:21-23, however, strikes at the very heart of why some become Christians and some do not. When people know God, honor him as God, and give thanks to Him they show wisdom and follow Christ.

Many fools claim to be wise. They have their gods, but their gods are futile and imaginary. A fool is one who lives his life as if the God of Heaven, the immortal God, did not exist. Fools make their own worthless gods. These gods feed the selfishness and thanklessness inside their spirits. When people give up on God, God gives them over to shameful and dishonorable passions (1:24, 26, and 28).

When people do not see fit "to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them" (Romans 1:28-32).

Count your blessings and never give up on God. Be thankful for all He has done for you (Psalm 103:1-5). Keep the cross in your heart.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You always for loving me and saving me by the blood of Jesus. Keep reminding me, Father, of all that You do for me, so that I will not forget You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I have futile gods in my life? Am I thankful? Do I acknowledge God in every circumstance of life?



**November 29**

**Scripture Reading:** Romans 5:12-8:25

**Memory Verses: Romans 6:16-18** Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.

**Song:** [“Wonderful Grace of Jesus”](#)

Romans chapter six opens with the question, “Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?” He answers the question with “By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?” Conversion is not merely salvation. God does not save us to leave us where He found us. He makes us into the people He wishes us to be.

Before our conversion we are slaves to sin, dead in sin. In conversion we obey from the heart a standard of teaching necessary to transform our lives from a slave of sin to a slave of righteousness. Our obedience does not earn the transformation but rather meets the qualification God has given to bestow the blessing of the transformation. God transforms us just as He frees us from sin when we obey His standard condition.

God gave us that condition in Romans 6:3-7. One must penitently and with faith obey the Lord by being baptized. We are baptized into the death of Christ, where Jesus shed His blood. The blood cleanses us from sin (Ephesians 1:7; Revelation 1:5). Baptism unites us with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection and frees us from sin. Baptism is not so much what we do as it is God’s work upon us (Colossians 2:12-13). We obey God through baptism; it is the obedience of faith (Romans 1:5; 16:26).

But baptism is not all there is. One must also live the transformed life. Set free from sin, we must never let sin reign over us (Romans 6:12) or be instruments of unrighteousness. Let us leave the old shameful ways and live for the Lord (6:21-23), wherein is eternal life.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for saving me from sin. Keep me from going back to my old ways. I am so thankful I am not what I used to be. Thank You, Father, for cleansing me and giving me new life. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I let my old sins back into my life? Am I enslaved by any sin? Am I grateful for what God has done for me? Do I live ashamed of myself?



**November 30**

**Scripture Reading:** Romans 8:26-11:24

**Memory Verses: Romans 8:31-32** What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

**Song:** [“Near to the Heart of God”](#)

The Roman Christians of the first century endured tremendous persecution during the first century. Misunderstood, falsely accused, and despised they bore the brunt of the anti-Christian sentiment of a pagan world that did not know God.

Only a dozen years after Tertius wrote these words for Paul (Romans 16:22), Paul himself would face decapitation for his faith. Yet in all this, he knew God would make good out of this tragedy (Romans 8:28) and that he was more than a conqueror through his faith (8:37-39).

Paul knew that if the Lord was willing to die for his sins and the Father was willing to give up his Son, then God would graciously help him and provide all things for him. Even death could not separate the child of God from the love of the Father in heaven.

The cross is more than just a demonstration of love (5:6-8); it is an assurance of God’s enduring commitment to our blessing and spiritual well-being. Though the world turns against us and falsely accuses us, God still stands by our side with His love and care.

Paul could say, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (8:18). He knew that everything in this life is temporary except the love of God for our souls. What God has in store for us in the future makes all our sacrifices here as if they were nothing.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for loving me through all the struggles I face in this life. I know that You have prepared a great future for me, and nothing can separate me from Your love. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I so look at the world that I forget the love of God? Do I forget the assurance of the cross that God is committed to blessing me?





**December 1**

**Scripture Reading:** Romans 11:25-15:33

**Memory Verses: Romans 12:1-2** I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

**Song:** ["O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee"](#)

Jews normally thought of sacrifices as lambs, oxen, cattle, or birds. They also offered wine and grain. Paul does not call for sacrifices like those of the old covenant. He calls for sacrifices more in line with the new covenant.

Jesus sacrificed his body on the cross for our sins (Hebrews 10:1-10; 1 Peter 2:24). We are called to deny ourselves and offer ourselves not to death but in life. We offer our bodies as a living sacrifice. This is how we offer ourselves spiritually. We praise the Lord with our lips and do good deeds (Hebrews 13:15-16). This is how we labor in God's temple today.

Our duty in offering ourselves is not to be like the world. We must live on a level higher than the world lives. We must not think as the world thinks but renew our minds according to the will of God. We do not conform; we transform. By transforming through the renewing of our minds to the will of God, we show the world what the will of God is like: that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

There is no better way, no more worthy life, and no more blessed existence than living out the will of God. It is the perfect way. It is acceptable in God's eyes. It proves truly good.

Christians must not settle for second best. They must not conform to what seems good but lacks the beauty of the Lord. They must choose what is best—the Lord's way.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for giving me the good and perfect way to live in the teaching of Your Son Jesus. Help me to live what You have taught. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I live what I believe? Do I practice what I preach? Do I show the world the superior way of life in following Jesus?



**December 2**

**Scripture Reading:** Romans 16; 1 Corinthians 1:1-4:13

**Memory Verses: 1 Corinthians 1:20-21** Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.

**Song:** [“How Firm a Foundation”](#)

While the world may or may not like preaching, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. God had only one Son, and he was a preacher. While people may not like preaching, they desperately need its message.

God saves us through what is preached, the message preached (NASB). The gospel indeed saves (Romans 1:16; James 1:21; 1 Peter 1:22-25). This is how God chose to reach people with the message of His love, forgiveness, and hope.

Preaching the gospel is proclaiming “good news” and persuading. The Corinthians “received” the gospel, “took their stand” on the gospel, and were “saved” by the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-3). No other message is so filled with hope and promise. Without the gospel we are without hope and without God (Ephesians 2:11-12).

Some think the gospel is merely a proclamation, but evangelism is persuasion. “Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Corinthians 5:11). No preacher can make another person do anything, but the goal of preaching is to persuade people to love and to follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

The eunuch in Acts 8 responded to the gospel of Christ by requesting baptism. Whatever gospel Philip preached, it included baptism with faith and repentance. What good is good news that has no request for response? We respond to good news with love, meeting the condition out of faith, acting in hope.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for the gospel message of truth and salvation. Thank You for loving me enough to send the Lord Jesus to die for my sins. Thank You for sending a person to bring me the message of hope. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I share the gospel with anyone? Has any lost person ever heard me speak a good word about Jesus? Am I thankful for the message preached?



**December 3**

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Corinthians 4:14-7:40

**Memory Verses: 1 Corinthians 6:9-11** Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

**Song:** [“The Old Rugged Cross”](#)

The power of the love and forgiveness is without parallel; it reaches deep into the soul of every believer. If we let Him, God can transform us from sinful and hopeless beings into righteous saints.

I have often said nothing surpasses the need to take a long look at the cross and what the Lord Jesus accomplished there. Through love he has reached into the souls of the sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, and swindlers with His cleansing blood.

The Lord washes us clean from our sins, makes us holy, and declares us innocent. Such transformation amazes even the skeptic! If people let God work in their lives by loving Him and following His teaching, they can see His incredible power.

But when people turn down God and the cross of Christ, they lose everything. They lose the opportunity to become what God intended them to be. They lose their joy of Christ, the hope of heaven, and the love of brethren. How sad to have lived this life without the power of God working in one's life!

Do not be deceived. Sin will cost your soul for eternity. You cannot stay in a sinful condition and go to heaven. So, why not let God transform your heart and life?

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for working in my life to cause me to be born again in the image of Your Son. Help me, Father, to keep denying myself and to die to sin. Thank You for washing me, making me holy, and declaring me innocent. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I let God control my thinking and behavior? Have I been washed in the blood of the Lamb in baptism?



**December 4**

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Corinthians 8:1-12:11

**Memory Verses:** 1 Corinthians 9:22-23 To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

**Song:** [“Seeking the Lost”](#)

Paul’s heart and soul was sold out to God and to winning other souls for Him. He would do whatever it took to “save some.” Paul said, “But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24). Again he said, “I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls” (2 Corinthians 12:15).

He knew he would have to bend in areas where he could bend to please people but without displeasing God. He became “all things” to “all people” that “by all means I might save some.” He knew that by being like them he could win some.

But this does not mean Paul compromised his faith at any time. In 1 Corinthians 9:21 he realized that “not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ” was his duty. He never excused himself to sin in order to reach people for Christ.

Paul knew that one could not lead others to a place where he was not himself going. One does not lead sinners to Christ by flirting with sin.

The sinners in Jesus’ day came to the Lord, not because the Lord compromised his values and morals, but because the Lord genuinely love them and told them the truth. He offered grace and preached repentance. That is what gospel preaching is all about.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for giving me an opportunity to serve You. Help me to reach out to people in love but without compromise. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I have a burden for souls? Do I compromise my beliefs if I think it will give me some advantage in speaking to people about the Lord? Do I understand I am always under the law of Christ?



**December 5**

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Corinthians 12:12-15:28

**Memory Verses: 1 Corinthians 13:1-3** If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

**Song:** ["The Greatest Commands"](#)

Nothing is more important in Christianity than loving God. One who does not love God does not know Him, for God is love (1 John 4:8). If I don't love, I can't do or be what God intended for me to do or to be. I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I don't love I am nothing. If I don't love, I gain nothing.

Love is a way of life, a way of thinking, and a way of acting. "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends" (1 Corinthians 13:4-8).

Love is superior to faith and hope, because both faith and hope are temporary. Faith will one day become knowledge and hope will one day be realized (2 Corinthians 5:7; Romans 8:24-25). While the miracles were to cease (1 Corinthians 13:8-10), faith, hope and love were to remain; but the greatest of these is love (1 Corinthians 13:13).

All the miraculous gifts mentioned in chapters 12-14 of 1 Corinthians were not as important in their lives as love. These gifts were even more temporary than faith and hope. They were to vanish and cease. Love, on the other hand, was permanent in this life and in the one to come. God's love never fails.

1 Corinthians 14:1 says, "pursue love." This is the imperative of this marvelous treatise on love. We must pursue that which is so valuable.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for loving me and teaching me how to love. Help me to love others the way Jesus has loved me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I have genuine love in my heart toward God and toward other people? Do I act out of love or out of selfish motives when I serve God?



**December 6**

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Corinthians 15:29-16:24; 2 Corinthians 1-2

**Memory Verses: 1 Corinthians 15:54-57** When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Song:** ["Victory in Jesus"](#)

God raised Jesus from the dead. That fact is at the heart of our faith. Christianity stands or falls on the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, but no event in all of ancient history stands on better evidence than the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Jesus appeared and persuaded his unbelieving disciples through many convincing proofs (Acts 1:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8). The fact that the disciples died preaching their faith shows the reality of his resurrection. Jesus is all He claimed to be!

Now, this matters when we go out to the cemetery. Death and judgment are inseparable (Hebrews 9:27). The Lord's resurrection means that we have a life beyond and accountability to Him as the one and only Lord. If the Lord Jesus has been raised from the dead, then we belong to Him and not to ourselves. We must live for him.

"And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied" (1 Corinthians 15:17-19).

But since Christ has been raised, we have the hope of eternal through his blood and victory over death. Christ is our victory! He is our hope and life!

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for raising Jesus from the dead and giving us hope of life beyond with You in eternal joy and peace. We are thankful for the victory we have in Christ. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I trust God? Do I believe in the resurrection? Do I live my life realizing I am accountable to the Lord?



**December 7**

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Corinthians 3-7

**Memory Verses:** 2 Corinthians 4:1-2 Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.

**Song:** ["I Know Who Holds Tomorrow"](#)

There is a stark difference between true Christianity and religious hucksters. Those who belong to Christ are not interested in tampering with God's Word so as to permit their disobedient beliefs and exploitive methods. False teachers are in the twisting and tampering mode of Bible understanding.

They think religion is a means of gain (1 Timothy 6:3-6). Their love of money and their lusty ways lead them into a disgraceful way of handling God's word. Paul instructed Timothy to be a worker who did not have to be ashamed, handling the word of God accurately (2 Timothy 2:15).

Paul believed it better to rely utterly upon God. He had said, "Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:4-6).

The false teacher always thinks he has a better way than God's, but he never does. He deceives himself and those who hear him into thinking there is an alternative way more palatable to the flesh. There never is. God's way is both the right way and the best way. Nothing else compares.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for giving us Your word, which helps us to be competent servants. We are thankful Your way is the right and best way. Help us, Father, to live according to Your will always. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I twist the text of Scripture to make it permit what I want to do? Am I satisfied to follow the commandments of the Lord?





**December 8**

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Corinthians 8-12

**Memory Verses: 2 Corinthians 9:6-8** The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

**Song:** [“My Eyes Are Dry”](#)

Giving to God is often a matter of attitude and trust. Giving tests our priorities, whether we will put God ahead of ourselves or not. The one who lacks faith will give sparingly and grudgingly. The one who deeply trusts is happy to share with God, for He knows that God will bless him for it.

Some people give out of duty. They remind me of Jimmy Stewart’s prayer in the movie, *Shenandoah*. Stewart’s character details all the long labor he performed to put the food on the table, but he thanked God “anyway.” No cheer, no thankfulness!

The Macedonians first gave themselves to the Lord and then by the will of God to help the needs of the saints in Judea (2 Corinthians 8:1-5). If we first give ourselves to the Lord, we will gladly, bountifully give of our means to help in God’s work.

God is able to make all grace overflow and abound so that you’ll have more than enough in everything and all the time to thrive in every good work for the Lord. Trust God to give you what you need to do His work. You may not always know where and when God will open the windows of heaven for you, but believe that He will.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for Jesus who made Himself poor that we might be rich. Thank You for every blessing. Help me, Father, to use what You have given me for Your service. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I give cheerfully or grudgingly? Do I give sparingly or bountifully? Do I trust God to make available in abundance what I need to do His good work?



**December 9**

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Corinthians 13; Galatians 1:1-4:11

**Memory Verses: Galatians 2:20-21** I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if justification were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

**Song:** ["My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less"](#)

There is but one gospel that can save. All others are counterfeit and lead to being accursed (Galatians 1:6-9). Be care what you listen to and what you believe. False hope is cruel.

There is no gospel but the gospel of Christ. One cannot be saved by believing in other faiths or other gospels. One cannot earn his salvation by keeping the old Law of Moses. We are now under faith in Christ and no longer under the Law (3:23-25). Nor are we under the modern, man-made substitutes for the gospel. Anything God hasn't planted will be uprooted (Matthew 15:13); there is no reason to put faith in them.

Paul knew his gospel was the right and only one. "For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:11-12).

We should not be ashamed to say we can know and be blessed by the only true gospel. This is not arrogance; it is trust. Nor should we be ashamed to be crucified with Christ and allow Christ to live in our lives. Faith in the one who loves us and gave Himself for us is no small thing. Those who count us arrogant do not understand what they are missing. Rather than shrink from a shame imposed on us by those who are ignorant, let us rejoice in our faith!

Just as Paul took a stand against Peter for his hypocrisy, so we must take our stand for our faith without shame or embarrassment.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for the good news of the gospel in the blood of Jesus Christ, who willingly gave Himself for me to rescue me from this present evil age. Help me to be faithful to You always. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I put my hope in things other than the blood of Jesus? Do I think I can earn my salvation through keeping the old Law? Do I get embarrassed by my faith in Christ?



**December 10**

**Scripture Reading:** Galatians 4:12-6:18; Ephesians 1:1-14

**Memory Verses: Galatians 5:22-26** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

**Song:** [“In Heavenly Love Abiding”](#)

When we allow God to work in our lives unfettered by our selfishness or desires, He does great things. The fruit (not fruits) of the Spirit is “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control”; there are no laws against these things or things such as these. God works what is good in lives, and there is no need for laws against them.

Contrast this fruit with the works of the flesh (5:19-21), which keep everyone who practices them out of heaven. They are evil, destructive, and alienating.

If you belong to Christ, you will crucify the flesh with its passions and desires. You realize the harm in the works of the flesh and know that you must do more than cover them up. You must kill them and be dead to them. The person who lives by the flesh must die (Romans 8:13 NASB), but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

God is in the saving, giving life business. His way is not only the right way; it is the best way! It yields the most good, the most joy, the most love, and the most kindness!

We can be thankful for all that God has done in our lives. The seed of kingdom produces much fruit, if we allow it to sink deep into our hearts and lives (Luke 8:11-15). Let us not allow weeds and thistles to choke it out. Let us not allow the rocks of doubt and strife to rob us of a moist and fertile earth. Let us have a good and honest heart.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for giving me a life of love, peace, joy, and goodness. Continue to bless me with all that You have prepared for me through Your Word. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I find love, joy and peace in my life? Do I allow the works of the flesh to destroy the life I could be living? Have I put to death the deeds of the body?



**December 11**

**Scripture Reading:** Ephesians 1:15-5:14

**Memory Verses: Ephesians 4:31-32** Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

**Song:** ["You Are the Song That I Sing"](#)

We are sons of our Father in heaven! We are not pagans. We do not think, act, or talk like the pagans do. We have every reason to rejoice and treat others with kindness because of what God has done for us.

It is popular to say "I don't get mad, I get even." But this is not the way of the Christian. To put away is to remove by force, if necessary. Remove all your bitterness by forgiving; totally rid yourself of the old grudges. Remove all your wrath and anger; be kind instead. Quit shouting your displeasure and slandering others at all; be tender-hearted toward the weaknesses of others. Rid yourself of all that ugly ill-will inside, lest it eat you up.

The Christian way is always the way of kindness towards all. It is kind in business, kind in the car, and kind in the home.

God forgave you; find it in your heart to forgive those who sin against you. Be the son of your Father who is in heaven (Matthew 5:43-48). "Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil" (Ephesians 4:26-27).

Don't let the devil get a foothold in your heart by piling up the anger that will eat you up inside. Resolve your problems quickly and do not hold onto them. They will weigh you down spiritually and rob you of your joy in Christ.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for forgiving me. Help me to resist the temptation to anger and to remain thankful and kind. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I hold grudges? Do I complain loudly and bitterly when I am done wrong? Do I recall God's grace and forgive?



**December 12**

**Scripture Reading:** Ephesians 5:15-6:24; Philippians 1-2

**Memory Verses: Ephesians 6:10-13** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

**Song:** [“Soldiers of Christ Arise”](#)

We are in a war we cannot afford to lose. We are not battling for our lives or our homes; we are battle for our souls and the souls of those we love. If we lose we lose everything. This is not the time for hesitation or for apathy. We must win.

We are not fighting physically against flesh and blood. We are fighting spiritually against the forces of evil that tempt so as to enslave in sin and finally destroy. The weapons of our adversary come in the forms of lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17). The adversary is a deceiver (John 8:44) and has no qualms about pretense and telling lies to get the advantage (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). He will not play fair.

Your adversary has been deceiving and fighting for the souls of men and women for a long time. He knows human weakness (Job 1:6-12). He will do everything in his power to trip you and trap you and destroy you (1 Peter 5:8).

“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm” (Ephesians 6:13). If you are not prepared in heart to fight, you will lose. If you are not willing to fight, you will surely lose. If you do not give it your all, being strengthened with the might of God, you will lose.

Arise and fight! Fight for your soul, fight for your children’s souls, and fight for your friends’ souls. If you give up, they might give up too. Fight on, make every sacrifice, strain every nerve to stand! Only one of you will be standing at the end of the battle, either you or the devil. Stand firm, stand strong, and win!

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for saving me. Give me strength to fight the devil and win. Help me day to put on the equipment of faith, hope and love. Put in my hand and heart the sword of the Sprit that I may do battle and win. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I know how serious this conflict is? Am I ready to do battle? Do I find my strength in God?



**December 13**

**Scripture Reading:** Philippians 3-4; Colossians 1

**Memory Verses: Philippians 4:4-7** Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**Song:** [“Learning to Lean”](#)

Stop worrying about anything. When you are troubled take your cares to the Lord in prayer. When you pray, be thankful. God really is near and knows.

It is not easy to lean on God, when we are in the habit of bearing every burden on our own. We may think everything depends on us. It does not. God can help us carry our burdens (1 Peter 5:7) and can see us through the valley (Psalm 23).

Let God build a garrison around your hearts and minds. He is, after all, the God of peace who knows how to provide for and protect His own. God can give you peace that passes understanding.

When Paul faced an uncertain future, he took comfort from his faith. “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better” (Philippians 1:21-23).

Paul could rejoice in the Lord even in prison, even in doubt about the future, because God’s grace was present and sufficient (2 Corinthians 12:9). One can feel defeated, lose heart, and give up if he chooses. How much better it is to lean on the Lord, to put yourself in the hands of God.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for caring for me and being willing to strengthen me and help me bear my burdens. Give to me each day the peace that passes understanding; guard my heart and mind. I rejoice in Your Son Jesus for all He has done for me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I feel the whole world depends on me, or can I cast my burdens on the Lord? Do I have the peace that passes understanding? Do I rejoice each day in the Lord?



**December 14**

**Scripture Reading:** Colossians 2-4; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-2:12

**Memory Verses: Colossians 3:1-4** If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

**Song:** ["I Must Needs Go Home"](#)

The change in our spiritual lives must also make a change in our mindset and worldview. The Christian has undergone a change: the old man of sin is dead, and he is raised up with Christ.

Let the Christian set his heart and mind on things above, on heaven. Let him seek his future there. Let him forget the things of this earth and seek first the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 6:33). Christ is our life, our future, and our hope. Our life is now hidden with Christ in God, and there is nothing else to compare!

So, in consequence to that, put to death what is earthly in your life (Colossians 3:5-11). Do not merely excuse it, cover it up, re-label it, or ignore. Kill it! God has better plans for you. You are a Christian. Your life is hidden with Christ. "Put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator" (3:10).

As a Christian you are chosen, holy, and beloved (3:12). God cherishes you as His child. You are not a stranger, not a number, and not an afterthought. You are next to His heart. He invested the blood of His Son in you. So, live in such a way as to glorify and thank Him for what He has done for you (3:12-17).

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him (3:17).

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for all the love and care You have given me. Help me, Father, to set my mind and heart on You. Deliver me from sin and fill my life with love. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I set my heart and mind on things above, where Christ is? Have I put on the new self renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator? Have I given thanks? Do I wear the name of the Lord Jesus?





**December 15**

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Thessalonians 2:13-5:28; 2 Thessalonians

**Memory Verses: 1 Thessalonians 5:15-22** See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.

**Song:** [“Sweet Hour of Prayer”](#)

In this burst of imperatives, Paul gives some great advice to young Christians living in a pagan city. He urges them to live a life above those who are around them, “for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness” (5:5). The Thessalonian Christians were not to be like the Gentiles who “do not know God” (4:5).

What identifies a Christian who knows God to those who do not know God? Perhaps 1 Thessalonians 5:15-22 gives as clear a picture as any: 1) not taking vengeance, 2) doing good to all, 3) always rejoicing, 4) never quitting on prayer, 5) giving thanks in spite of it all, 6) never shutting out the Spirit, 7) not despising God’s messages, 8) testing everything, 9) holding onto everything that is good, and 10) refraining from every kind of evil. This is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you!

Earlier in the chapter, Paul instructed the Thessalonians how to treat each other: “We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone” (5:14).

Christianity is not a faith in solitary. It is designed to impact and persuade. Its character, convictions, and commitment uplifts and enlarges the soul. It gives constant joy, constant hope, and constant peace. It fills the heart with love and removes rebellion.

How we live speaks volumes to those who are around us, many of whom even today still do not know God. Let us so live that others may see God in us.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for revealing Your will to me in Christ. Help me to so live that I may reveal to others Christ living in me. Help me to hold fast to what is good and refrain from what is evil. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I test everything, hold fast to what is good, and abstain from every form of evil? Do I rejoice, pray, and thank God always and in every situation? Do I find myself despising what God says?



**December 16**

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Timothy 1-5

**Memory Verses: 1 Timothy 2:3-6** This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.

**Song:** ["What A Friend We Have in Jesus"](#)

Though some get the wrong idea, churches are in the saving business. The prime directive is the preaching of the gospel of salvation. God wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

If the church is in the saving business, why does it seem that she condemns so many things? The church tells people the truth that sin will condemn them. It is imperative that people know what sin is so they may come out of it. Sin condemns, and the church rightly speaks out against it because it is a danger.

One must have knowledge of the truth about sin and salvation. The message of hope is the message of repentance. Repentance of what? Sin! God loves us enough to tell us the truth about what is dangerous to our soul, so that we may appreciate the love of Christ on the cross.

Jesus not only died for us; He is our mediator. Because of our sin, we needed a mediator with God, so that one might plead our case (Hebrews 7:24; 1 John 2:1-2). Thankfully, we have as our mediator the One who gave himself as a ransom for all. He is the One who wants every man, every woman, every boy, and every girl to be saved.

Because of the cross, we can have no doubt about how much God loves us and wants us to live with Him forever and ever.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for loving me, even when I have not loved You. Thank You for sending Jesus to give Himself as a ransom for me and to mediate for me. I thank You, Father, for caring so much. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I know and love the truth? Am I willing to face the sin in my own life and give it up? Do I see people who speak the truth about sin as friends or foes?



**December 17**

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Timothy 6; 2 Timothy

**Memory Verses: 2 Timothy 4:1-5** I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

**Song:** [“Have Thine Own Way”](#)

The work of preaching proves to be both difficult and rewarding! Preachers have their marching orders: preach the word, be ready always, reprove, rebuke, and exhort with complete patience and teaching.

Not everyone wants to hear. Some close up their ears and stiffen their necks. Some leave the truth to go hear pleasant things. They would rather believe a lie that consoles for the present than hear the challenging truths that lead to eternal life. Many people know more about mythical vampires and witches than they know about the apostles.

Many don't want to hear about sin, repentance, or judgment. Like Felix they avoid hearing the truth, because they do not wish to make changes.

Some preachers err by preaching half-truths and by never knowing what it is to reprove or to rebuke anyone. Error goes unchecked, and lives remain in sin. This is not God's will.

Healthy teaching tells people what they need to hear, not merely what they want to hear. Preachers need complete patience in their teaching, but patience does not mean one should ignore the truth.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for the truth, even when it is difficult to hear. Thank You for people who are willing to tell the truths we need rather than give us only the messages that make us feel good. Father, keep me near the cross and keep me healthy spiritually. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I tune out the truth and only listen to what makes me feel good? Do I despise those things that keep me healthy?



**December 18**

**Scripture Reading:** Titus; Philemon; Hebrews 1:1-2:10

**Memory Verses: Titus 2:11-14** For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

**Song:** [“Redeemed”](#)

God did not cleanse us from sin to leave us alone. He had a grander purpose for us than merely to relieve the pain of sin. God seeks to reshape our lives. We leave ungodly and worldly passions to pursue a life of self-control, righteousness, and godliness. God will not leave us where He found us; He takes a person where He finds him and makes him into what He wants him to be.

The one given to selfishness learns by the grace of God to become selfless. The person given to fleshly passions learns to give his heart to that which is good and godly! He turns from the present to the eternal.

God purifies for Himself a people for his own possession, people who zealously pursue good works. Sinners become saints. They become the person they can respect; they are no longer ashamed of their lives. Grace motivates and teaches one to rise above the past.

One can say, “I’m not all I ought to be; I’m not all I going to be; I’m not all I want to be; but, thank God that by His grace, I’m not what I used to be.”

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for helping me to see the need to change my life. I am so grateful, Father, that You loved me enough to invest in me to redeem me by the blood of Your Son Jesus. Help me to become the servant You desire for me to become. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I realize what God has invested in me? Have I learned the lessons grace teaches? Have I become a different person?



**December 19**

**Scripture Reading:** Hebrews 2:11-6:20

**Memory Verses: Hebrews 4:14-16** Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

**Song:** [“Fairest Lord Jesus”](#)

Sin makes us ashamed of ourselves. We sin and shrink away from the world. We are afraid we will be found out. Like Adam and Eve we think we can hide from God in the bushes and escape the consequences of our actions. We even think that if we ignore God, we will not have to face our responsibilities.

But God already knows about our sins, and so does Jesus. He knows what is in a man, and no one has to tell Him (John 2:24-25). He knows all about us and loves us anyway. Christ knows what it is to be tempted (Matthew 4:1-11); He was tempted in every respect just like we have been tempted.

There is one difference between the temptations Jesus endured and the ones we have. Jesus never gave in. He remained sinless. Who knows how hard Jesus must have fought against the devil to remain pure and holy? We give in to the temptation, and the fight is over. Jesus endured to the uttermost the temptations of this world. Because of this, the Lord Jesus understands and can sympathize with us.

Rather than shrink away, hide, or cover up our temptations, let us with courage come to the One who understands for help and strength. From the Lord Jesus we can “receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” He will sustain us, if we fearlessly come to Him for help.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for the help of the Lord Jesus when I most need it in the times of temptation. Father, I don’t ever want to sin against You; help me today when temptations come my way. Thank You for your mercy and your grace. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I hide my sins from others? Do I lie to myself about my sin? When temptation grabs hold of me, do I shrink away from God or do I boldly come to Jesus for help? Have I been to the throne of grace lately?



**December 20**

**Scripture Reading:** Hebrews 7-10

**Memory Verses: Hebrews 8:10-12** “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.”

**Song:** [“The Great Redeemer”](#)

God made two great covenants with man. The first was limited to the people of Israel (Deuteronomy 5:2-3) from the days of Moses to the time of the cross. But, finding fault with the people, God promised a new covenant not like the covenant he made with their fathers at Horeb (or Mt. Sinai) when He brought them out of the land of Egypt (Jeremiah 31:31-34; cf. Exodus 31:16-17; 34:27-29; Deuteronomy 4:13).

The new covenant was to be a better covenant, built upon better promises (Hebrews 8:6-7). “In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away” (6:13).

In the old covenant everyone had to be taught about the Lord. They were born into the covenant and had to be taught. The new covenant is not like that. One is first taught and by faith chooses to come into the covenant through repentance and baptism (Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:18-20). One is born into the first covenant; one is “born again” into the second.

When God forgives us, he mercifully forgets our sins against us (Hebrews 8:12; cf. 2 Corinthians 5:19). He no longer counts our sins against us. The blood of Jesus has removed those sins.

Jesus came with a fleshly body to offer Himself as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. His blood is the basis of our new covenant. A covenant is a legal binding relationship in which promises and requirements exist forever. The Lord Jesus came to do the will of the Father and offer Himself, by which He abolished the first covenant and established the second (Hebrews 10:8-10).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for the opportunity to enter into an eternal covenant with You through the shed blood of Your Son Jesus. Thank You, Father, for forgiving me and remembering my sins no more. Help me to so live as to show my utter gratitude for this matchless gift and ongoing relationship. I love you, Father. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I so live in covenant with the Father through Christ that I show my love and commitment? Am I grateful my sins are remembered no more?



**December 21**

**Scripture Reading:** Hebrews 11-13

**Memory Verses: Hebrews 12:1-2** Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

**Song:** ["The Old Rugged Cross"](#)

The hall of the faithful found in Hebrews 11 speaks mightily to us. They are not witnesses *of* us but witnesses *to* us that faith in God is worth every sacrifice. "Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval" (Hebrews 11:1-2). They remained faithful under tremendous pressure and pleased God. This speaks to our need to remain faithful so that we too may please Him (Colossians 1:10).

"They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (*men* of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground" (11:37-38). They gave all to be faithful.

How can we remain faithful? We must fix our eyes on Jesus, "who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God." Jesus endured the cross by thinking of the joy before Him in heaven with His Father and those who were faithful. He endured, and so can we. We must see the unseen rather than fall prey to the present.

Let us set aside our sin and the unnecessary distractions that slow us down and keep us from running our race with Christ. We overload ourselves with unneeded burdens that steal our faith and joy in the Lord. Let go of whatever hinders your faith. It will help you get to heaven.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for showing me how to live in the example of Jesus Christ. Keep me close to Him all of my days. Forgive me for distractions that hinder my progress in Christ and forgive my sins that weigh me down. Help me to run with patience. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I let sin keep my heart from a full devotion to God? Am I so distracted by the world that I forget my Lord?





**December 22**

**Scripture Reading:** James 1:1-4:10

**Memory Verses: James 2:14-17** What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself.

**Song:** [“I Am Resolved”](#)

The gulf between talking and doing is a great one. Talking love is not the same as giving it through our actions (1 John 3:16-17). Talking faith is not the same as showing it. A faith that talks long and does nothing is dead and useless. It cannot save anyone.

James said, “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does” (James 1:22-26).

The doctrine of “faith alone” falls short every time. James argues, “Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” and he was called the friend of God. You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone” (2:21-24). Faith without works is dead (2:26).

If you believe, what are you waiting for? Why are you hesitating to act on your faith either in obedience to the gospel or in the pursuit of good works? Why are you not changing your ways? Why do you ignore the changes?

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for helping me to see myself by giving me Your Word. Help me to change my life so that I may please You in all respects. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I see myself by the word of God and go away ignoring my state? Am I making the changes I know I need to make to please God?



**December 23**

**Scripture Reading:** James 4:11-5:20; 1 Peter 1:1-3:12

**Memory Verses: 1 Peter 1:3-5** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

**Song:** ["Blessed Assurance"](#)

Heaven! What a blessed thought! Heaven is the place "reserved" for me. God has my name on it. I have often spent the night in a hotel, and one of the first questions I hear is, "Do you have a reservation? What is your name?" When I give the clerk my name, he or she looks into the computer and checks to see the details of my reservation. I am always pleased to know there is a clean room and a warm bed waiting for me.

Nothing, however, could compare with the home God has planned for me. That home never grows old, never breaks down, never fades, and never gets dirty or defiled. God did not merely reserve a room for me like every other room; He prepared it for me as His child. It is not temporary like a hotel room; I will live there forever. My Father provided that room just for me.

The Father will lavish His love on me in the ages to come (Ephesians 2:4-7). He will provide to me an "abundant entrance" into the heavenly kingdom (2 Peter. 1:10-11). On the day He brings me to my eternal home, He will award to me a crown of righteousness and a crown of life (2 Timothy 4:6-8; James 1:12).

In that new home there will never be sickness or dying, never be sin or sorrow, and never be parting or darkness. God will be there. Christ will be there. The Holy Spirit will be there. All the saints of every generation will be there. To be in that number is the greatest of all blessings.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for reserving a place for me to live with You forever and ever. Help me to so live that I may be counted worthy of a heavenly calling. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I plan to live with God forever? Do I live so that I may please God? Have I been cleansed in the blood of the Lamb?



**December 24**

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Peter 3:13-5:14; 2 Peter 1-2

**Memory Verses: 2 Peter 1:10-11** Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

**Song:** [“Each Step I Take”](#)

Hell is real, and heaven is too good to miss! I do not want any questions, uncertainties, or roadblocks on my journey to be with God. I know that as long as I practice “these things” I can have an entrance abundantly supplied to me. What are these things?

“Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge, and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness, and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love” (2 Peter 1:5-7).

Peter contrasts the person who has forgotten to apply all diligence to add these things to his life. “For he who lacks these *qualities* is blind *or* short-sighted, having forgotten *his* purification from his former sins” (1:9).

Faith, moral excellence, knowledge (of God and His way), self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love are essential to outfit one for heaven. One who has been set free from the defilements of the world wants to live with these qualities in his life.

We must with each step we take draw closer to God and “be all the more diligent” to make our calling and election sure.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for the blood of Your Son which cleanses me from sin. Help me, Father, every day to do my very best to please and serve You. Thank You for calling me through the gospel and choosing me from my obedience. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I give all diligence to please God or do I give the bare minimum? Do I practice my faith with eye-service (when someone is watching) but live for myself at other times? Have I fully embraced all seven virtues?



**December 25**

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Peter 3; 1 John 1:1-3:12

**Memory Verses: 1 John 1:7-10** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

**Song:** ["It is Well with My Soul"](#)

God makes conditions for His children; He is not unconditional. God distinguishes the Christian who walks in the light from the Christian who walks in darkness. He approves the first and disapproves of the second.

"If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin" (1:6-7).

A Christian can fool himself into believing everything is all right, when it is clearly not all right. The Christian who walks in darkness or lives in sin is lying to himself if he claims he has a good relationship with God. There is no fellowship with God for the person who practices evil. But if that person walks in the light, there is fellowship with God and continued cleansing from sin by the blood of Jesus Christ His Son.

No person can live flawlessly; walking in the light doesn't mean that. If someone could live a flawless life, he would not need the blood of Jesus to cleanse him. Walking in the light describes the thrust of a person's life; such a person sets his heart and soul on serving the Lord in every respect. Though he tries his hardest, he will still need the blood of Jesus to cleanse his weaknesses and sins.

God does indeed take care of His children. The atoning sacrifice, Jesus the righteous One, is also our advocate before the Father, pleading our case as an intercessor (1 John 2:1-2). His blood continues to cleanse and His plea continues to advocate for us. What a Savior!

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for saving me by the blood of Jesus and continuing to cleanse me as I walk in the light. Help me, Father, never to take grace for granted and turn from following You. Keep me in the path of light. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I set my heart and soul on serving the Lord Jesus? Do I walk in the light as He is in the light? Do I take the grace of God for granted?



**December 26**

**Scripture Reading:** 1 John 3:13-5:21; 2 John; 3 John; Jude 1-16

**Memory Verses:** **3 John 2-4** Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

**Song:** ["I Love the Lord"](#)

What if your physical health and your bank account reflected the prosperity of your soul? Some, no doubt, enjoy riches in money but poverty in soul. Some, no doubt, enjoy healthy bodies but emaciated souls.

“Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord” (2 Peter 2:2-3). It is sad indeed that some who should be mature in the faith must still be nursed with milk (Hebrews 5:11-14).

John rejoiced greatly upon hearing his brethren were “walking in the truth.” He had no greater joy than to know his spiritual children were standing strong in the truth they believed. They had not been seduced by the anti-Christ (1 John 4:1-4) or given in to the belief that Jesus Christ did not come in the flesh (2 John 7).

We must never go beyond the Scriptures but must abide within the Scriptures if we hope to maintain our relationship with the Father and Son (2 John 9). Going beyond into false teaching is evil (9-11).

More than anything I want my children to go to heaven when they die. I want this more than anything else. No wonder John greatly rejoiced over his children “walking in the truth.” He knew their souls were prospering.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for the Truth, that teaches me what to believe and how to live. Help me to remain faithful to the Truth so that my soul may prosper. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I have a prosperous soul? What if my physical health and my bank account reflected the prosperity of my soul?



**December 27**

**Scripture Reading:** Jude 1:17-25; Revelation 1-4

**Memory Verses: Revelation 2:10-11** 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.'

**Song:** ["Victory in Jesus"](#)

The church at Smyrna faced many overwhelming difficulties. The Lord said, "I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan" (2:9). The devil had it in for this struggling family of Christians.

They faced tribulations, troubles they didn't earn. They faced poverty in their physical circumstances, but the Lord reminded them they were rich spiritually. They had an inheritance waiting for them in heaven.

They faced blasphemy. Can you imagine trying to make a living while Jews were speaking against you at every turn? The Lord didn't run their synagogue, but Satan did. From this group of hateful people came much harm.

The Christians at Smyrna would face ten days (a short time) of testing in prison. They would be secluded, perhaps beaten. Some would face death. The Lord's message was "be faithful to the end; be faithful even if you have to die; and I will give you the crown of life." They can kill your body, but they can't steal the crown of life (cf. Matthew 10:28).

God's promise to you is not subject to the powers of men. They can do you great harm or even kill you, but they cannot touch what God has promised to you. Be faithful.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for blessing me so richly and giving me eternal promises. Help me to be faithful to You and to Your Son Jesus in times of testing so that I may not disappoint You. Thank You, Father, for loving me so much that You would sacrifice my Lord Jesus. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I complain in times of testing? Do I realize God sometimes tests me for faithfulness? How do I fare in times of testing?



**December 28**

**Scripture Reading:** Revelation 5:1-9:11

**Memory Verses: Revelation 7:13-14** Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?” I said to him, “Sir, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

**Song:** [“Nothing But the Blood”](#)

John revealed through the Spirit: After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” (7:9-10)

The only thing that can cleanse the robes of our lives is the blood of the Lamb. Nothing else will do. We are able to stand before the throne not by any merit we have earned on our own but through the blood of the Lamb. We can have white robes through the blood of Jesus.

We come into contact with that blood through baptism (Romans 6:3-4); we are baptized into the death of Christ. Those who stood before the throne proved themselves faithful unto death. They suffered during the great tribulation, but they passed the test. They remained faithful to the end.

The palm branches in their hand declared peace with and praise to a triumphant God who gave them victory over their enemies. They lost their lives but won their souls. The ones who persecuted them may have won the physical victory, but they would lose the more important spiritual war. What a great loss for them but a great victory for the faithful.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for washing me in the blood of the Lamb. Thank You for the victory You have given me through Jesus. Help me to so live that I may prove faithful to You in times of tribulation. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I have my robe washed in the blood of the Lamb? Do I live in peace and victory with the Lord? Am I faithful?





**December 29**

**Scripture Reading:** Revelation 9:12-14:8

**Memory Verses: Revelation 12:10-11** And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.

**Song:** [“Jesus, Name Above All Names”](#)

The Christians in John’s day faced incredible challenges from the devil in the form of the devotees to the worship of the emperor of Rome. Domitian had proclaimed himself a god and demanded that all the citizens and non-citizens worship him by offering a pinch of incense. He thought to unite the citizens behind him by this means.

In every city government agents enforced Domitian’s ruling. The Christians in the seven churches of Asia had to face the choice of whether to serve Lord Domitian or Lord Christ. Of course, Satan himself had empowered the emperor to persecute the church.

But Satan and Domitian would not win this war. The dragon, the old serpent who lies and murders, the devil, never wins in the end. He may draw many to his side and focus his attack on God’s people, but he cannot overpower the Lord Christ or those who follow him.

In the second century, it was often said of Christianity, “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the kingdom.” The more Rome killed them, the bigger the church grew. The church has outlasted Rome and many other things. It is an eternal kingdom (Luke 1:33).

It is eternal because the Lord Christ rules over it, and He is eternal and omnipotent. No one can destroy Him, but He will one day judge them.

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for giving us the triumph in Christ our Lord. Help us not to fear the world but to hold close to You and to Your Son Jesus. Help me always to resist and to fight against the schemes of the devil. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I serve the world or do I serve the Lord Christ? Do I see the victory beyond this life? Do I realize the bigger picture than here and now?



**December 30**

**Scripture Reading:** Revelation 14:9-18:24

**Memory Verse: Revelation 17:14** They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.”

**Song:** [“All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name”](#)

The beast and all his followers will make war against the Lamb. The beast is associated with the harlot city which sits up seven hills (Rome). The background and context bear out the Roman persecution against the name of Christ and those who belong to Him.

Rome was the most powerful force in the world at this time. Their wealth, their strong armies, and their popularity all appeared to suggest they would dominate and destroy the small bands of Christians throughout the empire. But Rome will not win. The Lamb will conquer all of them, because of who He is.

Jesus Christ is the Lord of lords and the King of kings. Those who choose to follow Him are called the chosen and faithful. God will look after them. God will be with them. They will win this war. The devil has already lost, and his beasts will lose too. They may seem strong, but they are no match for the One who rides the white horse.

“And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh” (Revelation 19:19-21).

**Prayer:** “Oh Father, thank You for helping me in my battles. I know that You have all power and glory, and no one can stand in opposition to You. Keep me at Your side and help me to be faithful always. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

**Thought Questions:** Do I give in to the beast or do I fight with the Lamb? Am I faithful? Am I willing to stand with Jesus Christ, when the world goes with the beast?



**December 31**

**Scripture Reading:** Revelation 19-22

**Memory Verses: Revelation 21:1-4** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

**Song:** "[Heaven Came Down](#)"

Heaven is the holy city, filled with joy and peace and goodness. It is God's magnificent, eternal home for His people. The dwelling place of God is with man. Those who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb may enter.

God made a paradise for man in the beginning with the Garden of Eden. God was in wonderful, direct fellowship with man. When man sinned, he was cast out of the garden and separated from the tree of life. But God has placed the tree of life in the heavenly city. "On either side of the river, [was] the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (22:2).

God knew we needed life, and He also knew we needed healing. The leaves will keep us strong and healthy. God will take away all our pain, for the former anxieties and struggles are gone. Even death is gone. We will live in glory and in comfort with our God forever and ever!

God is so good, and it is fitting that we continually praise His name throughout eternity. Nothing is more important than being with our Heavenly Father forever. We must not allow anything or anyone to build a barrier between the Father and us.

**Prayer:** "Oh Father, thank You for preparing for me a place to dwell with You forever. Keep me always in your love and favor. Deliver me from evil and forgive my transgressions. I love You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

**Thought Questions:** Do I long for heaven? Am I prepared to go there? Is there anything that is barrier between God and me?