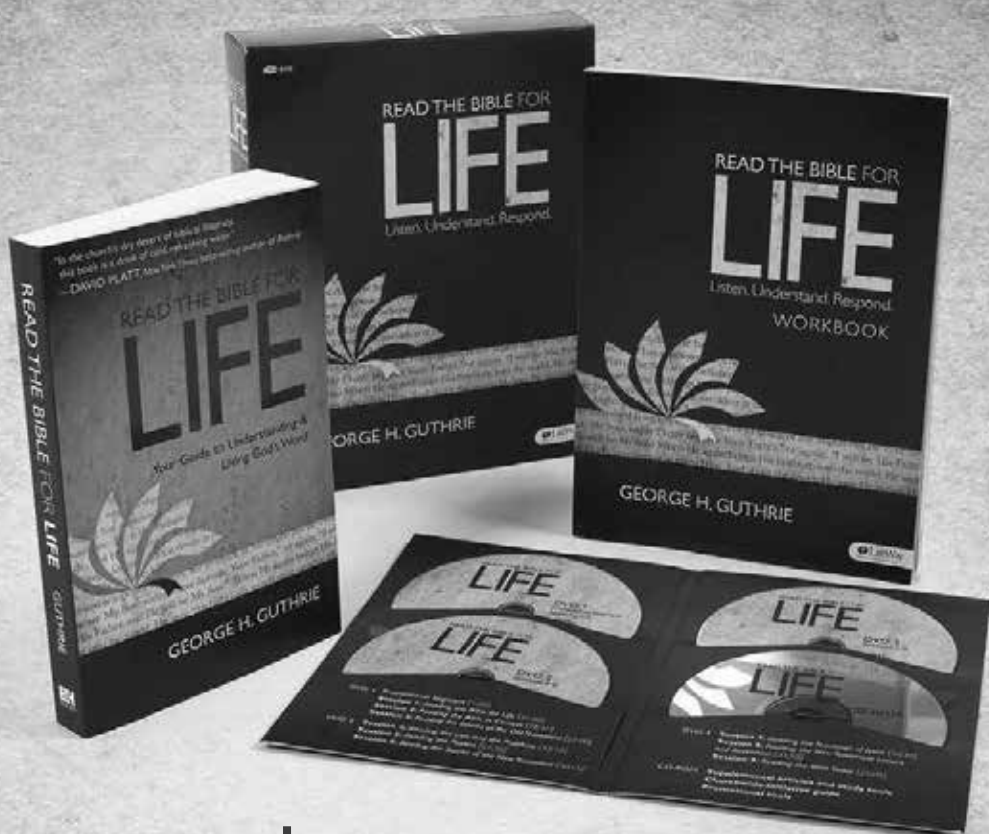


Open Windows

FALL 2013

A Guide for Personal Devotions

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Open Windows

*"his windows being open . . .
toward Jerusalem."—Daniel 6:10*

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Open Windows provides brief daily devotionals based on selected Scriptures for adults in Southern Baptist churches and others who choose to use them.

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We believe that the Bible has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and that all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. The 2000 statement of *The Baptist Faith and Message* is our doctrinal guideline.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version.

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Production & Ministry Team

Tammy Drolsum *Content Editor*

Pam Nixon *Content Editor*

Chandra Bennett *Editorial Team Leader*

Alan Raughton *Adult Ministry Specialist*

David Apple *Adult Ministry Specialist*

Management Personnel

Bill Craig

Director, Publishing

Faith Whatley

Director, Adult Ministry

Phillip Nation

Director, Adult Ministry Publishing

Debbie Johnson, Ken Braddy, Amy Lowe

Managers, Adult Ministry Publishing

Send questions or comments to:

**Editor, *Open Windows*,
One LifeWay Plaza,
Nashville, TN 37234-0175.**

Or make comments on the web at
www.lifeway.com.



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The ABC's of Salvation

Some people think a personal relationship with God is something only theologians can comprehend. Actually, God's plan of salvation is simple enough for everyone to understand. Here are the ABC's of salvation.

ADMIT

Admit to God that you are a sinner. All persons need salvation. Each of us has a problem the Bible calls sin. Sin is a refusal to acknowledge God's authority over our lives. Everyone who does not live a life of perfect obedience to the Lord is guilty of sin. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23) Since none of us is perfect, all of us are sinners (Romans 3:10-18).

The result of sin is spiritual death (Romans 6:23). Spiritual death means eternal separation from God. By God's perfect standard we are guilty of sin and therefore subject to the punishment for sin, which is separation from God. Admitting that you are a sinner and separated from God is the first step of repentance, which is turning from sin and self and turning toward God.

BELIEVE

Believe in Jesus Christ as God's Son and receive Jesus' gift of forgiveness from sin. God loves each



of us. God offers us salvation. Although we have done nothing to deserve His love and salvation, God wants to save us. In the death of Jesus on the cross, God provided salvation for all who would repent of their sins and believe in Jesus. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

CONFESS

Confess your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord to others. After you have received Jesus Christ into your life, share your decision with another person. Tell your pastor or a Christian friend about your decision. Following Christ’s example, ask for baptism by immersion in your local church as a public expression of your faith. “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:9-10).

Writers This Quarter

Ronnie Floyd (Sept. 1-7) senior pastor, Cross Church, Springdale, Arkansas; lead pastor and strategist, SEND North America; general editor, LifeWay's Bible Studies for Life; author of numerous books

Angie Golmon (Sept. 8-12) retired copy editor, LifeWay Christian Resources; member and homebound ministry coordinator, Hernando Baptist Church, Hernando, Mississippi

Deb Douglas (Sept. 13-19) minister to women and Hope Ministry leader, First Baptist Church, Bossier City, Louisiana

Jenna Fleming (Sept. 20-24) homemaker; pastor's wife, choir member, women's ministry leader, Union Avenue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tennessee

Mark Simpson (Sept. 25-30) adjunct instructor, Liberty University Online, School of Religion; pastor, MorningStar Baptist Church, Centerville, Ohio

Woody Wilson (Oct. 1-7) senior pastor, Southside Baptist Church, Palestine, Texas; former International Mission Board missionary to France; author

Brandon Massey (Oct. 8-12) student minister, First Baptist Church, White Hall, Arkansas

Darla Brantley (Oct. 13-19) adult Sunday School teacher, First Baptist Church, Winfield, Alabama; special education aide, Winfield City High School

Writers This Quarter

David Young (Oct. 20-24) retired pastor; author; <http://daveswatch.com>; <http://watchinginprayer.blogspot.com>; member, Parkland First Baptist Church, Tacoma, Washington

Sheryl Waller (Oct. 25-31) organist, First Baptist Church, Pearl River, Louisiana; librarian, Picayune High School, Picayune, Mississippi

David George (Nov. 1-7) director of missions and church planter catalyst, Chugach Baptist Association, Anchorage, Alaska; member, First Baptist Church of Anchorage

Jeanine Bozeman (Nov. 8-13) senior professor of social work, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary; co-teacher of intergenerational Bible fellowship class, First Baptist Church, Covington, Louisiana

Donna McKinney (Nov. 14-20) adult Sunday School teacher, chair of the missions committee, Downtown Baptist Church, Alexandria, Virginia; deputy public affairs officer, Naval Research Laboratory

Tom Hudson (Nov. 21-30) retired editor, LifeWay Christian Resources; adult Sunday School teacher, Tulip Grove Baptist Church, Hermitage, Tennessee

Sunday, September 1

Contemplate God's Sovereignty

Devotional Passage:

Romans 11:33-36

Read the Bible Through:

Proverbs 21–23

1 Corinthians 6

For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Romans 11:34

When tragedy strikes the lives of those who love God, how do you respond? Every time a school shooting, suicide, child abuse, or some flagrant injustice occurs, questions about God abound. Matthew 5:45 reminds us that God makes the sun to shine and the rain to fall on both the evil and the good. Christians are not exempt from illness, loss, pain, and suffering.

Today's Scripture passage addresses the sovereign nature of God. Sovereignty is described as God's rule and work according to His eternal purpose—even when we may think events contradict or oppose His rule. Paul knew that God rules. Not one human being knows what God knows. Nor can one understand His ways. His mind is incomprehensible and His ways untraceable!

Yet, here is the wonder of our God: the supreme Ruler of all desires to have a love relationship with us through His Son Jesus Christ. He cherishes your fellowship. The next time something happens in life that does not make sense, remember that God knows everything. He sees it all. He knows it all. He promises His constant presence. Take Him at His Word and trust His heart of love, mercy, and grace.

Lord, since You are in complete control, I choose to trust You regardless of my circumstances.

Monday, September 2

Be Diligent in Your Work

Devotional Passage:

Proverbs 22:29

Read the Bible Through:

Proverbs 24–26

1 Corinthians 7

Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.

Proverbs 22:29

Northwest Arkansas has been the birthplace of some of America's greatest companies including Walmart and J.B. Hunt. The entrepreneurial spirit thrives there. Although it appears to be an unlikely setting, the secret to these success stories can be traced to hard work, diligence, persistence in spite of problems, and a commitment to giving back when blessed.

The Book of Proverbs provides principles for a wise and successful life. The principle today is: When you are skilled and diligent in your work, God will bless you. We have seen this promise verified in the examples of godly businessmen such as Truett Cathy (Chick-fil-A).

Whatever the skill, learn it. Whatever the task, achieve it. Whatever you do, do it consistently and prayerfully. Give it your best. Do it heartily as unto the Lord and with humility.

It is remarkable to discover how true this principle is in life. Some of the world's greatest leaders and most successful business persons, come from the most obscure places. Geographical roots and human limitation never limit God. Dream. Excel. Believe.

Father, You can do anything. Therefore, I will give my best in everything.

Tuesday, September 3

Custom-Designed

Devotional Passage:

Psalm 139:1-14

Read the Bible Through:

Proverbs 27-29

1 Corinthians 8

I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. Psalm 139:14

Celebrities are often known for wearing exclusive designer clothing. Their designer outfits are paraded on red carpets in front of multiple cameras. Being a successful fashion designer requires meeting the highest standards of design including taking precise measurements required for cutting intricate patterns. The fabrics are sewn together with skill creating one-of-a-kind dresses and outfits that generally are very expensive.

When God creates a human being, He is infinitely more intentional and skillful than the greatest fashion designer. Our finite minds cannot grasp the work of our awesome Creator as He designs every person. God has created each person on the planet as a unique, distinct masterpiece. Each individual is skillfully and wonderfully made. This is why He knows you. This is why He cares about you.

Humans make mistakes. Even the best designers make mistakes. God does not. He has made you just as He wants you—a unique person with a unique design. Therefore, trust Him. Praise Him. God has a plan for you that no one else has been created to do. Go fulfill it.

Lord Jesus, since You know me best, use me as You see best—however, whenever, and wherever.

Wednesday, September 4

Love in Deed and Truth

Devotional Passage:

1 John 3:16-19

Read the Bible Through:

Proverbs 30-31

1 Corinthians 9

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. 1 John 3:18

The world is responding to Christians and churches that demonstrate compassion in their communities. Many churches have adopted certain areas or projects of need in their community, working diligently to help and restore the lives of people. These efforts have caught the attention of a world that too often perceived the church only as an organization that claimed to care, more than it demonstrated care.

Southern Baptist Disaster Relief efforts in recent years have earned national acclaim on mainstream news outlets that have noted that there are 85,000-95,000 trained Southern Baptist disaster relief volunteers. These volunteers have served in areas hard hit by natural disaster such as Hurricane Katrina and Superstorm Sandy.

How can one claim to have the love of God in him when he does not demonstrate compassion to the needy? Christians cannot just claim to love others, we must demonstrate love in our deeds and service. Compassion is active, not passive. Love is action, not mere words. When your deeds communicate “I care about you,” then others will hear your words when you say, “Jesus died for you. He can forgive you. He can save you.”

God, help us to love people like Jesus loves people. Give us opportunities to show Your love to others.

Thursday, September 5
Who Is Lord?

Devotional Passage:
Philippians 2:5-11

Read the Bible Through:
Ecclesiastes 1-3
1 Corinthians 10

And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:11

In the game of football, the teams that emerge in championship games generally are the ones who have a quarterback who excels at his ability to play that position. Many qualities make a quarterback great, but the most successful quarterbacks are respected leaders. Their leadership commands attention, which results in the entire team responding to them.

When you repented of your sin and trusted in Jesus Christ and Him alone for your salvation, Jesus became the Savior and Lord of your life. As Lord, that means He calls the shots. He tells you where to line up and how to live when you are under pressure.

The Greek word *kurios* is used in the New Testament to identify Jesus as Lord. The word refers to one who has authority over another person. The disciples used the word when referring to Jesus in Matthew 8:25, 16:22, Luke 9:54, and John 11:12. Jesus is the Lord of lords.

Jesus is not just the quarterback of your life; He is the Lord of your life. No one has ever done what Jesus has done. He is Lord, Leader, King! All to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus, I reaffirm and recommit my life to You today. I confess that You are my Lord. Help me to demonstrate that belief to others.

Friday, September 6
Contentment

Devotional Passage:

1 Timothy 6:6-8

Read the Bible Through:

Ecclesiastes 4-7

1 Corinthians 11

But godliness with contentment is great gain.

1 Timothy 6:6

More is never enough seems to be the motto for life in America. You have seen it—and probably felt it, too. The American philosophy as related to things is, “If I can afford it, get it; and if I can’t afford it, charge it!” This craving for possessions—especially things we don’t need—has resulted in too many ruined lives, devastated families, and a vulnerable nation.

God has a better idea. He calls His people to godly lifestyles. In this passage, Paul coupled the call to live in godliness with the spirit of contentment. Ultimate satisfaction and sufficiency can only be attained by abiding in Christ. He alone is the all-sufficient One. When godliness and contentment are wedded in the hearts of God’s people, blessings abound.

Do not seek what the world has to offer, for it is never enough—and it will never lead to true contentment. Seek the God of heaven, and seek to further His kingdom on earth. Allow Him to develop His character inside you as you find your sufficiency in Him. Focus your attention on the pursuit of the “mystery of godliness” that Paul described (1 Tim. 3:16) rather than on the pursuit of all the “stuff” that the world holds valuable.

Father, help me to truly know who You are and to find true contentment in my relationship with You.

Saturday, September 7

Better Than Cards or Flowers

Devotional Passage:
2 Corinthians 1:3-5

Read the Bible Through:
Ecclesiastes 8–12
1 Corinthians 12

*Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.
2 Corinthians 1:3*

When someone dies, we attempt to bring comfort to the person's family by sending a card or flowers. If we knew the deceased or the family really well, we feel the loss and experience the pain much more deeply. That is the nature of being in close relationship with others. We share their hurt, feel their pain, and empathize with their loss so much more.

But as wonderful as good friends can be, we know One who is even more capable of comforting us in times of grief and loss. God Himself walks with us. His presence is better than a card, letter, or flowers. He shows us His mercy. Paul identified Him as the "Father of mercies." We know His kindness and feel His tender care through His presence by the Holy Spirit.

In this passage, Paul described "the God of all comfort" who allows us to be conduits for His comfort to others. As we experience God's comfort in our times of loss, He prepares and equips us to comfort others in their times of grief. We can be His hands, His feet, and His heart, demonstrating mercy and comfort.

Lord, thank You for comforting me and being with me in loss so that I may be Your agent in comforting others.

Sunday, September 8

Pray with a Forgiving Spirit

Devotional Passage:

Mark 11:22-26

Read the Bible Through:

Song of Solomon 1-4

1 Corinthians 13

And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. Mark 11:25

Did Jesus really mean what He said about forgiving others? Yes. Is a habit of praying with a forgiving spirit humanly possible? No. Only after we have experienced God's forgiveness can we pray with a forgiving spirit. It is only by the power of the Holy Spirit that it becomes possible to pray with a forgiving spirit. In our own strength we cannot.

The Lord agrees. However, as I open my heart to God, He will bless me with grace and forgiveness. Then, overwhelmed by His grace, I can forgive others even though it hurts. I can choose to forgive anyone who offends me because I have experienced the grace of God's forgiveness in my own life. That's the only way I can be obedient and forgive others.

What about you? Do you always pray with a forgiving spirit? Do you struggle with offenses that are so bad sometimes that you find it hard to forgive? God's answer for you is the same. "Open your heart to My grace and forgiveness and be so overwhelmed you choose to forgive even when it hurts. You will forgive regardless of how you feel because I have forgiven you." Yes, Lord.

Father, with every offense help me choose to forgive because You said, "Forgive." Then I can pray effectively.

Monday, September 9

God Keeps His Promises

Devotional Passage:

Genesis 21:1-5

Read the Bible Through:

Song of Solomon 5-8

1 Corinthians 14

*And Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.
Genesis 21:2*

When Abraham was 75, God promised to bless him with a son. God reaffirmed that promise several times. However, as time passed, Abraham must have wondered: Will it ever happen?

God assured Abraham his servant Eliezar was not part of His plan to bless Abraham. Nor was Ishmael.

Still more time passed with no son. No doubt, Abraham's, and especially Sarah's, heart wrenched with every thought of the unfulfilled promise: *This is humanly impossible!*

God responded: "You're right, Abraham. This is humanly impossible. But is anything impossible with Me?"

Within the year, when Abraham was 100 years old, Sarah gave birth to a son, just as God had promised. God always keeps His promises. And God keeps His promises at the times which He sets.

What do you do while you are waiting for God to fulfill a promise? Remember, God is faithful. To be anything else would be against His character. However, what we do while we wait reveals what we believe to be true about God's character. Do you trust Him to keep His promises?

Father, make my heart perfect toward you so I will believe your promises and respond in faith and patience.

Tuesday, September 10

From Evil to Good

Devotional Passage:

Genesis 50:15-22

Read the Bible Through:

Isaiah 1–4

1 Corinthians 15

But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Genesis 50:20

Can God really turn evil to good? Yes, indeed. Joseph's story is biblical proof that He can. As the favored son, Joseph's words and deeds bred hatred toward him from his brothers. They plotted and sold him into slavery in Egypt. They planned evil for Joseph. At the bottom of the pit and after being sold, it would have been hard to see much good in the situation.

In every situation in Egypt, Joseph acted with integrity, believing God was working on his behalf. Somehow through it all—false accusation, unjust imprisonment, then elevation to the second highest position in Egypt—Joseph learned that God can turn evil to good. In the end, Joseph testified to his fearful brothers that what they meant as evil against him God had turned to good. Many lives were saved as a result (including their lives).

Are you in a hard place due to others' actions? Do you need God to turn to good what others meant toward you as evil? Though all things may not be good, God can work all things for good to those who are called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28). Keep trusting God to do it for you too.

Father, I trust You to work all things in my life for Your good as I follow You in obedience.

Wednesday, September 11

God's Presence and Provision

Devotional Passage:

Matthew 6:25-29

Read the Bible Through:

Isaiah 5-7

1 Corinthians 16

Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Matthew 6:26

What is our greatest source of comfort as believers? God's presence and provision. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus stressed God's provision for us by identifying how God provides for birds.

In the mid-90s, my husband was diagnosed with Pick's disease. For nearly two decades, he was in slow decline until July 2011 when he really began to deteriorate. By January 2012, he could not care for his personal needs. He continued to decline until June 13, when he was hospitalized. I had no idea he would never return to our home. In the early hours of June 24, God took him to his eternal home. What a glorious day for my husband!

God provided for my husband's needs; he is now in God's very presence. God provides for my needs—the comfort of His presence in the Holy Spirit, physical provision, and encouragement from family and friends.

Whether dealing with personal loss or a national tragedy such as we remember today, I am reminded of a great truth. For the believer, the greatest source of comfort will always be God's presence and provision. Look around. He's working on your behalf too.

Father, thank You for Your comforting presence and provision—especially at the times when I need it most.

Thursday, September 12

Many Contribute to the Harvest

Devotional Passage:

John 4:31-38

Read the Bible Through:

Isaiah 8–9

2 Corinthians 1

*I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour:
other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.
John 4:38*

Many contributed to the evangelistic harvest in Sychar. It started at Jacob's well. Jesus arrived at the well thirsty and hungry. With a simple request for a drink, Jesus engaged a woman in conversation. Suddenly her sinful lifestyle came into view as Jesus revealed Himself to her. She got it! Excited, she ran into town to share the news: "I met a man who told me everything I ever did. Could He be the long awaited Messiah?"

How did this Samaritan woman hear about the Messiah? John didn't record how she heard, but obviously she knew that the Messiah would come. While we don't know who sowed that seed in her heart, we do know that when she was exposed to the full truth—when she met Him for herself—her heart opened. She responded and Jesus reaped the greater harvest of many who believed.

Sowing. Reaping. Both are important; they work in unity to produce a bountiful harvest that brings glory and praise to God. God uses every witness—small and great—to produce a harvest of believers.

Are you participating in this plan by sharing your faith? Are you contributing to the harvest?

*Father, how awesome it is to have the privilege to share in
bringing in Your harvest!*

Friday, September 13

Rejoice

Devotional Passage:
Philippians 4:4-7

Read the Bible Through:
Isaiah 10-12
2 Corinthians 2

*Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.
Philippians 4:4*

Giddy with glee is the best way to describe a child playing in a fountain on a hot summer's day or tossing leaves in the air on a cool, brisk fall day. Happy to be alive, happy to be playing, and thankful for freedom to be beyond the classroom, children rejoice in life.

That is the way I want to live life. Rejoicing to be alive, savoring the moments, and rejoicing in my salvation. Instead of focusing on what is wrong with the world, I want to be someone who is focusing on how Christ has blessed me beyond belief. As Christians, the Lord wants us to live with abandon, giddy with glee at being alive. As believers, we should lead the way in celebrating the little things life offers because of all God has done for us.

In a world of conflict and problems, imagine how we would capture other's attention if we lived celebrating salvation, celebrating life, celebrating that God is at work in us. Just as our eyes are drawn to watch children playing happily, so are the world's eyes drawn to Christians who realize how much they have to celebrate and how little they have to grumble about. As Phil Robertson, the father on the A&E hit cable show "Duck Dynasty" says, "Happy, happy, happy!" Rejoice, and live happy!

Father God, remind me daily of how much I have to celebrate! Let me live rejoicing for all You have done in my life.

Saturday, September 14
God Is for You

Devotional Passage:
Romans 8:31-34

Read the Bible Through:
Isaiah 13-14
2 Corinthians 3

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? Romans 8:31

A careful observer often will notice the moment a person who has been diagnosed with cancer goes from being a victim to a fighter. Upon being diagnosed with breast cancer, Lisa's moment was obvious. She went from tears and disillusionment to living victoriously no matter what challenges she faced. Lisa realized her diagnosis was not a surprise to God but rather something He would use to build her faith. Lisa went from being a quiet, in the background person, to sharing her story at every opportunity.

While we might be caught off-guard and surprised by many of the events of life, God is not surprised by the challenges we face. The difficulties of life are not to defeat us, but to grow us in faith. He has given us the most precious gift, salvation through His Son, and adopted us into His family because He loves us.

God's love is a protecting love, but it is also a teaching love. It is a love that allows us to face challenges in order to become more like Him. We are His precious children and He wants nothing less than His best for us! When faced with the difficulties of life, always remember that God is on your side!

Father God, give me the wisdom to see You in all of life's challenges. Thank You for adopting me into Your family.

Sunday, September 15

Source of Strength

Devotional Passage:

Philippians 4:12-13

Read the Bible Through:

Isaiah 15-18

2 Corinthians 4

*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.
Philippians 4:13*

When the cartoon character Popeye needed strength to face his enemies, he pulled out a can of spinach and sucked it down. He then moved forward to overcome whatever challenge that was before him. The spinach gave him the extra strength he needed to fight evil and protect his beloved, Olive Oyl. Afterward, Popeye would sing a song of praise to himself, toot on his pipe, and end the cartoon.

Unfortunately, many Christians treat prayer like Popeye's can of spinach. Prayer is not just a can of spiritual spinach to be taken out and gobbled down at the moment we face troubles. Yes, God does hear our desperate prayers. However, we miss out on continual spiritual blessing if we reserve prayer for only the desperate times instead of living in an ongoing attitude of prayer. After all, we need God's strength at all times.

Our strength comes from our daily relationship with Christ. Strength comes from seeking to know Him through prayer, Scripture reading, worship, service, and ministry. Difficult days are promised in life, but strength to endure is available to us.

Father God, forgive me for only coming to You when I am desperately in need of strength. Help me to grow daily in Your strength through spending time with You.



Monday, September 16

Keep Up the Good Work

Devotional Passage:

Galatians 6:9-10

Read the Bible Through:

Isaiah 19–22

2 Corinthians 5

And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. Galatians 6:9

Waiting for an overdue baby is tedious and hard. The due date comes (and goes), expectations are high, and each sign (regardless of how small) is questioned as the start of labor. Aches and pains grow; the waiting becomes miserable. The focus changes from expecting the sweet gift of a baby to wondering when the pregnancy is going to end. The realization that pregnancy is one small part of a child's life is lost in the waiting. The work of waiting eclipses the joy of the baby.

In our lives as Christians, we get tired of waiting to see the results of spiritual maturity. We want to have a visual measure of success to help us gauge how God is working in and through us. We begin focusing on seeing the results (the external) rather than the process of the work (the internal) that God has given us. When we focus on the results, we miss the joy of seeing God at work in the intricate details of life. Focusing on the wrong thing tires us and zaps our energies away from our purpose: serving God with joy! Keep up the good work—spending time in God's Word every day, talking to God through prayer, and worshiping Him as an overflow of your love for who He is and all He does.

Father God, help me to not tire of serving You. Help me stay focused on serving rather than on the results.

Tuesday, September 17

Blessed Be the Name of God

Devotional Passage:

Daniel 2:19-23

Read the Bible Through:

Isaiah 23-25

2 Corinthians 6

Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his. Daniel 2:20

Leadng a cancer ministry, I walk into situations every day where I do not know what to say. In the past, I would fret about not knowing how I could help families in crisis. Experience has taught me, however, that God supplies the words when I need them. He uses my mouth to speak His love and care in ways that amaze me. Each time, it builds my faith in His work. I know it is not my own abilities at work but God at work through me. My job is to be available; He supplies wisdom.

That is exactly what Daniel recognized in this passage. There were some serious consequences that would happen if the king could not get an interpretation for his strange dream (Dan. 2:5). Daniel recognized that the true source of wisdom is God Himself.

Most of us have a desire to know completely what is going on with us and around us. As we face challenges, we want answers and crave God's wisdom right now. We expect answers as quickly as we expect our meal at a drive-through window. However, the Lord who sees and knows all, reveals truth as we need it, in His timing. God gives waiting time to prepare for His wisdom, build our faith, and spend time in prayer as we wait.

Father God, give me patience to wait on You. Remind me that You will supply what I need when I need it most.

Wednesday, September 18

Finished!

Devotional Passage:

John 17:1-5

Read the Bible Through:

Isaiah 26–29

2 Corinthians 7

I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. John 17:4

Torger Thompson spent years planning and painting a life-sized painting of the miracle at Pentecost. The painting filled a huge building in Dallas, Texas. As a child, I had the privilege of watching Torger paint this mural. When the painting was complete, I saw the beautiful finished painting with its intricate design and details. After the artist's death, fire destroyed the painting. One man's life work was destroyed in a matter of minutes, impossible to replace.

Jesus gave Himself to the Father's will, to complete the work for which He had been sent. His work would have eternal effects. It would not—it could not—be destroyed. By it, salvation comes to those who believe, and they are transformed for eternity.

As followers of Christ, we can be part of His eternal work by using the gifts He has given us to share Christ's love. Christ finished the work He was given by the Father. We, however, still have much to do in the work of making disciples that Jesus gave to us. When we serve Him, our work has eternal results. Our legacy is not earthly achievements but the impact we have on others.

Father God, thank You for allowing me to be a part of Your eternal work. Remind me each morning of the work I am to complete for that day.

Thursday, September 19

God Remembers

Devotional Passage:

Exodus 2:23-25

Read the Bible Through:

Isaiah 30-32

2 Corinthians 8

And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

Exodus 2:24

Walking close to a wall through the busy Houston airport, I noticed two tiles were missing. This disturbed me, and thoughts of vandalism came to mind. I marched across the terminal to an employee to report the supposed crime only to turn and discover what I perceived as vandalism was actually part of a mosaic, a beautiful work of art. Distance had given me a broader perspective; I could see how the absence of the tiles completed the artist's plan.

Being reminded of this experience led me to consider how we face the problems and difficulties we face in life. In our lives, we see the problems, challenges, and hurts in our life up close making them overwhelmingly large and preventing us from seeing beyond them. We fail to see God's hand at work because the problems consume our visibility. God is still at work. He is creating a beautiful mosaic in our lives with intricate detailing that flows together with His work in the lives of others. God remembers us even when we cannot see Him. He hears our cries and works for our best. Have faith! He is at work even when you can't see how all the pieces fit together.

Father God, when I fail to see Your Hand at work, remind me that You are working a beautiful mosaic in my life.

Friday, September 20

Real Neighbors Speak Truth

Devotional Passage:

Ephesians 4:23-25

Read the Bible Through:

Isaiah 33–35

2 Corinthians 9

Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another.

Ephesians 4:25

Aesop's Fable, "The Boy Who Cried Wolf," tells of a shepherd boy who deceives villagers into thinking that a wolf is attacking the flock. Time after time, the boy cries, "Wolf" in an attempt to deceive the villagers. When a wolf does arrive, the villagers do not believe the boy's cries for help, and the flock is destroyed. If the boy had spoken the truth all along, perhaps the villagers would have believed him and the flock could have been saved.

In his letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul told Christians to put away lying. In other words, he said, "Get rid of it! That was your old self." He spoke of the church as a community, belonging not only to God, but also to one another. When they lied, they sinned against God and were guilty of sinning against the community.

Our lives are to be marked by being completely truthful in our relationships with our neighbors—any other person in general, but especially fellow believers. If we are the least bit deceptive, we must put it away, seek forgiveness, and commit only to speak the truth. You want others to tell you the truth; they want the same from you.

Father, since I have put on the new self, may I be a real neighbor and speak only what is true. I pray that You would help me become a person known as being truthful.

Saturday, September 21

Exhort One Another Daily

Devotional Passage:

Hebrews 3:12-15

Read the Bible Through:

Isaiah 36–39

2 Corinthians 10

*But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today;
lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.
Hebrews 3:13*

Consider what you would need to climb a mountain. First, you need a partner who gives and responds to clear commands. You both must know and say the same commands and use the same terminology in voicing commands. When the climber yells, “Rope!” his partner needs to know that he is tossing down a rope and avoid getting hit by it.

Our Christian walk together is much like mountain climbing. We journey through rough terrain at times, and offer encouragement to one another to endure to the end. The writer of Hebrews reminds Christians that our faith cannot be lost. However, we are urged to exhort one another in Christ, so that our hearts will not become hardened by sin. When we see someone struggling, we need to help him or her so that he or she does not become ensnared by sin.

Who is your mountain climbing partner in your Christian walk? Accountability is essential to growing in personal holiness. You mutually exhort one another on the journey so that you may come to the end of it blessed and encouraged.

*Father, help me find someone to journey with in the faith
for mutual exhortation.*

Sunday, September 22

Be Alert

Devotional Passage:

1 Peter 5:6-11

Read the Bible Through:

Isaiah 40–41

2 Corinthians 11

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. 1 Peter 5:8

In John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Christian comes upon three men in fetters named Simple, Sloth, and Presumption. Zealous for his new faith in Christ, he pleads with them to awake to avoid destruction by the devil. Simple responds, "I see no danger." Sloth says, "Yet a little more sleep." Presumption tells Christian that one must rely on himself. All three decided to sleep while Christian continued alert on his journey.

Peter wrote to believers who were living in difficult times. Threats to their faith lurked around every corner. Thus, he urged his readers to live seriously and wisely. His lesson is not to be lost. As Christians we are to be alert on our journey of faith. The enemy, the devil, is real and has one purpose: to destroy.

What are we to do? Peter challenged his readers to do three things. First, resist the devil. Second, stand firm in the faith. Third, know that we are not alone in our sufferings. God's people all around the world are experiencing similar trials and temptations. Be alert! Beware of the devil. He is seeking those whom he can destroy. The first step in resisting the devil is to be aware of his activity.

Father, help me resist the devil, stand firm in the faith, and be alert on the journey with You.

Monday, September 23

Good Parenting

Devotional Passage:
Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Read the Bible Through:
Isaiah 42-43
2 Corinthians 12

And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. Deuteronomy 6:7

For a house to stand it must have a good foundation. If there is not an adequate foundation, then the home cannot withstand changing climate conditions or hold the home up for an extended period of time. Obviously, that is essential if the home is to retain its property value, let alone hold up the walls. Therefore, a strong foundation is a big deal for the homeowner.

A strong spiritual foundation for the home is even more important, even more so for parents who are raising children. The Lord commanded Israel to teach their children all that He had commanded them. Biblical instruction was to be a normal, natural part of everyday life. Of course, they first must have the Lord's commands on their own hearts.

The same is true for parents today. Good parenting relies on the strong foundation of the Word of God. Parents need to have God's Word on their hearts first, and then teach the Word to their children not just on Sundays, but every day. In this way, a house will be sure to stand.

Father, help me build my home on the foundation of Your Word. Guide me in the best ways to incorporate Your Word into our daily lives.

Tuesday, September 24

Get Over It and Move On

Devotional Passage:

Acts 15:36-41

Read the Bible Through:

Isaiah 44-47

2 Corinthians 13

And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; and Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. Acts 15:39-40

Remember playing Tug of War as a child? The game consists of a rope, two teams, and a marker dividing the teams. The object of the game is to pull your opposing team over the marker.

In this Scripture passage, Paul and Barnabas were in a kind of personal “tug of war” as they made plans for another missionary journey. Barnabas wanted to take Mark, but Paul was still upset at Mark for deserting them on their previous journey. As a result, Paul and Barnabas went their separate ways. Barnabas took Mark with him while Paul chose Silas to join him. Though they had their differences, the missionary work was not hindered.

As long as we are on this earth we will have conflicts with people, even within the church. The question becomes, “Will we let conflict disrupt our mission?” We must not elevate personal offenses or preferences over the Great Commission. A point comes when we need to drop the “rope,” get over our differences, and move on to do the work.

Father, may I be faithful to your mission, get over personal offenses, and move on in my service to You.

Wednesday, September 25

Behaviors to Avoid

Devotional Passage:

Proverbs 6:16-19

Read the Bible Through:

Isaiah 48–50

Galatians 1

These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him. Proverbs 6:16

The student did it as a dare thinking it would be funny to see how the class responded. The sound of his fingernails running down the chalkboard filled the room. Almost immediately, the sound was joined by a symphony of shrieks from his classmates—and above them was the teacher's cry. He knew instantly she found no humor in the little prank. The teacher informed the entire class just how detestable she found the sound. She then sternly warned against anyone repeating the exercise. That was the last time the student ever ran his fingers down the chalkboard in her class, or any other. He heard the message loud and clear.

Some attitudes and actions prompt a response from God much like the teacher reacting to fingernails being scratched on a chalkboard. He detests them and He does not want these things to characterize His children. These things do not reflect God's nature to others. God's hatred of the things listed in these verses emanates from the deepest reaches of His being. God's statement is loud and clear—attitudes and actions such as these are a stench to His nostrils, and those who seek to follow Him would be wise to grant them no place in their lives.

Father, lead me to pursue behaviors that are a sweet aroma to You rather than those that You hate.

Thursday, September 26

Teach with Confidence

Devotional Passage:
Acts 28:23-31

Read the Bible Through:
Isaiah 51-53
Galatians 2

Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him. Acts 28:31

It's ironic that Luke used the phrase "no man forbidding him" to describe Paul's teaching at this point in his life. At the time, Paul was a prisoner in Rome. He was unable to move about freely. His actions were under close watch. Yet, he was not deterred from boldly sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ publicly, candidly, and forcefully at every opportunity. He chose to look beyond his circumstances. Perhaps he was the first to coin the phrase, "It's easier to ask forgiveness than it is to get permission." In his case, it worked. The Roman authorities gave him a pretty long leash to teach and interact with others concerning the Lord Jesus Christ.

We tend to have a propensity to turn many things into hindrances to boldly proclaiming the gospel. Things much less formidable than what Paul faced deter us. In reality, we put up many hindrances ourselves rather than being 'forbidden' by others to share the gospel. Like Paul, our priority should be to see beyond our hindrances. We should make no apologies for sharing the gospel. We can boldly, and with confidence, proclaim that Jesus Christ is what all humanity needs.

Father, I want to lay aside everything that hinders and confidently share the gospel with anyone who will listen.

Friday, September 27

Nourishment for the Soul

Devotional Passage:

1 Peter 2:1-3

Read the Bible Through:

Isaiah 54-57

Galatians 3

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. 1 Peter 2:2

A hungry infant is unable to contain her excitement when she is aware that food is on the way. The sight of a bottle causes her eyes to get as big as doorknobs and her legs to kick like little pistons. As the nourishment of the bottle settles in, she coos and her eyelids grow heavy, satisfied by the good nourishment that fills her little tummy.

In these verses, the Christian's eagerness for the nourishment of the Word of God is to be comparable to that of an infant longing for her bottle. We are to crave the teaching of the Bible. Knowing that our Scripture mealtime is on the way our excitement should build, because we know that the nourishment of the Word will grow us into mature, healthy children of God.

Like a newborn baby, satisfied with the nourishment of a good bottle, those who feast on the words of Scripture find themselves spiritually satisfied having tasted that God is good. They most assuredly want to come back to have their spiritual tummies fed, thereby growing healthy and strong in Christ. Your challenge today, and every day, is to come to God's table expecting your spiritual hunger to be filled.

Father, thank You for the sweet nourishment of Your Word that keeps me healthy and growing.

Saturday, September 28

A Wonderful Heritage

Devotional Passage:

Psalms 127:1-5

Read the Bible Through:

Isaiah 58–60

Galatians 4

Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. Psalm 127:3

In Jewish tradition, this Psalm was recited during the thanksgiving service that followed the birth of a child. It was a reminder that children are God's gift to us, a glorious inheritance to cherish.

This reminder remains appropriate for us today. Children are a gift, not an achievement. They are a blessing from God and a vital building block for a healthy thriving society. God's blessing a city begins with His blessing on the family. If we desire to transform a nation we begin by raising godly children who stand firmly and boldly on their faith in Jesus. God intends for us to do no less with our inheritance from Him. This is the greatest legacy we can pass on to our children and our grandchildren.

At times we are led to believe that the greatest thing we can pass on is our stuff or our money. In reality, these things are useless—in the grand scope of eternity. Our children need our faith not our finances; they need our devotion to God not the deed to our house. We must seek to give future generations a solid faith foundation upon which to build an even stronger faith in God. While our children are God's gift to us, a strong heritage of faith is our gift to our children.

Father, thank You for Your gift of children. Help me pass on a godly legacy they may take up and pass on.

Sunday, September 29

An Open Door

Devotional Passage:

John 10:7-10

Read the Bible Through:

Isaiah 61–63

Galatians 5

I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. John 10:9

There are many kinds of doors, and each conveys its own message. Some are scary. Others are ominous. Still others are strong, weak, beautiful, colorful, dull, fun, or protective. Some doors say, “Go away”; some say, “Not now, I’m busy”; and others say, “Welcome.”

Jesus declared that He is the door to new, abundant life, meaning it is accessible only through Him. He alone allows us in. The message He conveyed in this teaching was not forbidding or foreboding. He did not say, “Keep Out! No Admittance.” Rather, He said that He stands at the door inviting us to come in. All He requires is that we come in through Him.

During His ministry on earth, Jesus welcomed liars, murderers, prostitutes, thieves, swindlers, overachievers, underachievers, addicts, outcasts, the abused, and the abusers. He continues to invite everyone to enter into the abundant life He offers.

As we enter, we can leave behind all our past—our guilt, our addictions, the skeletons in our closets, our shame, our accomplishments, our secrets, our worldly pleasures. We enter to receive the new life that He promises as well as the joy of being in His eternal presence.

Father, I come to Jesus and enter through Him to receive the forgiveness and abundant life You promise.

Monday, September 30

Chosen to Bear Fruit

Devotional Passage:

John 15:15-16

Read the Bible Through:

Isaiah 64–66

Galatians 6

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. John 15:16

It feels good to be picked. From children on the playground to teenagers trying out for a sports team to adults in the workplace—we feel special when we are chosen. We want to be wanted.

If you are in Christ, then Jesus has chosen you. He has picked you. Not only does He call you His friend, (who doesn't feel warm inside when someone we look up to introduces us as their friend?), He has given you an assignment. Just as chosen players on a team have assignments, those chosen by Christ are assigned the responsibility to bear fruit. Not just any fruit mind you, it is the kind of spiritual fruit that will last for all of eternity. Should you doubt your ability to produce such fruit, Jesus promises divine help through conversation with the Father.

You have been picked, given a purpose and a promise. The Holy Spirit empowers you to carry out Jesus' invitation to follow Him and become fishers of people. He has granted you the power to produce! Now go and carry out your assignment.

Father, I am humbled that You have chosen me for a mission. Guide me to produce lasting fruit for Your glory.



Tuesday, October 1

Personal Accountability

Devotional Passage:

Galatians 6:4-8

Read the Bible Through:

Jeremiah 1

Ephesians 1

For every man shall bear his own burden. Galatians 6:5

A man sits opposite me, his face buried in his hands, sobbing. Life has become unbearable. Mistakes, poor judgment, and sins have taken their toll. I ask him to explain his plight. He shakes his head and whispers, "It's just my burden to bear." He stood and slowly walked away, taking his burden with him.

Had he stayed a few more moments, I would have introduced him to the One who can lift our burdens. Yes, this man was bearing the consequences of his choices. Yes, the burden was his; he could blame no one else. He was reaping what he had sown. He alone was personally accountable before God.

Once we own up to our personal accountability, repent of our sin, and receive Christ, our burden-bearer, He lifts the burden from our shoulders. All heavy-laden people can be set free from the burden of their sin through faith in Jesus. That's the gospel; that's good news.

Followers of Jesus can enter this burden-lifting process. We can help bear others' burdens. We can offer counsel, pray, and witness to the saving grace of God through faith in Jesus. Don't wish for "a few more moments." Instead, share the message of being free of the burden of sin with others today.

Father, teach me to take responsibility for my own actions and thoughts. Help me deposit my burdens at the cross.

Wednesday, October 2

Daily Meditation

Devotional Passage:

Psalms 1:1-6

Read the Bible Through:

Jeremiah 2

Ephesians 2

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

Life consists of choices, contrasts, and contradictions. The psalmist put a choice of eternal consequence before the reader—the path of the wicked or the path of the righteous? On which path do you find delight?

The contrast is stark, making the choice seemingly easy. Of course, we would respond, “I will choose the path that leads to blessing and fruitfulness.” Yet, many choose to tread the path of the ungodly that leads to an empty, windswept life.

The righteous and the ungodly—the stark contrast is obvious in this psalm but often more difficult to notice in our day-to-day lives. The psalmist described a person who delights in and meditates upon the law of God. The righteous find their delight in the source of all joy—God.

The daily activity that makes all the difference in one’s life is this meditative approach to God’s Word—to read it, review it, recite it, and find delight in it. When we realize our deficiencies, our penchant toward sinful choices, and the weakness of the flesh, we must choose to spend time considering what God has said in His Word. This daily discipline will keep us on the right path of life—the way of the righteous.

*Father, help me make choices today based upon Your Word.
Stir in me a delight for all that is in Your Word.*

Thursday, October 3

Guard Your Impulses

Devotional Passage:

James 1:19-21

Read the Bible Through:

Jeremiah 3–4

Ephesians 3

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath. James 1:19

We've all been there. Nerves are frayed and patience wearing thin. Someone says something a bit out of turn, and we explode. We cease listening and start plotting our response. We say things we should not even think. Convinced revenge will be worth the effort, we let loose our counterattack.

James intentionally addressed those for whom he was concerned as “beloved.” Love changes everything, and Christ’s love changes us. Christ’s love for us—demonstrated through our words and actions—should affect our speech even in tense situations.

Being loved and loving others in Christ causes us to pause before lashing out. We listen more attentively. We measure our words carefully, fearing we may exacerbate the situation with a misspoken word. We reach out in love rather than in retaliation.

The Law of Moses was strict with its “an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth” version of justice, but Jesus brought grace to life’s situations. Even when turning the other cheek is not our first impulse, the Holy Spirit empowers us to slow down, think, and listen before we speak. He enables us to tune our hearts to God’s Word.

Father, keep me from impetuous reactions and anger-filled words. Guard my impulses by Your grace and love.

Friday, October 4

The Eternal One

Devotional Passage:

Revelation 22:12-13

Read the Bible Through:

Jeremiah 5–6

Ephesians 4

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Revelation 22:13

My grandson was so proud when he finally could count to 100. It was quite a feat. For a small child, an enormous distance exists between one and 100. One day soon, he will learn that he can count much higher. Math teaches us about infinity. Infinity means you can always add another number to your total.

The distance is greater still between finite humanity and infinite God. He is the Eternal One. The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet are Alpha and Omega, and they emphasize God as the beginning and the end. God always has existed, and He always will. There is nothing that predates Him and nothing beyond Him.

Before we think that God's eternality is merely about length of days, let's remember that we can neither qualify nor quantify Him. He is always greater than our equations and formulas, and nothing exists apart from Him. The Eternal One is the all-encompassing, all-consuming Lord. What an awesome God we serve!

Idolatry is the sin of limiting God to or replacing Him with an image or an idea. He is infinitely unlimited. Let us worship Him in all His sovereign grandeur, glory, and majesty. He is worthy to be adored forever.

Father, reveal Your infinite glory to me as I worship You today. Forgive me for limits I have placed on You.

Saturday, October 5

The Difference Maker

Devotional Passage:
Judges 6:11-16

Read the Bible Through:
Jeremiah 7–8
Ephesians 5

And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man. Judges 6:16

Harsh words can limit and demean. “You can’t do it. You’re not able.” Many a child balks before the challenges of life, convinced of his or her unworthiness even to try something. Negativity takes its toll on the young and inexperienced.

Gideon was convinced he could not do what God had called him to do. “My family is small and poor and I am little and weak. I can’t do it, Lord.”

The Lord responded, “I will be with you, Gideon. You can do it with my help.” Gideon went out and raised an army, only to have God pare it down to a measly 300 trumpet blowers. But the vast army of the Midianites was no match for Gideon’s God. He routed the enemy army, and Gideon chased them down.

This verse tells us that Gideon had smitten the army as one man. The victory was completely overwhelming. Multitudes of soldiers are nothing before the power of the Lord. The eternal truth for us today is that any enemy you face today is no more difficult an adversary than what Gideon faced. You, with the Lord’s help, can win the victory. God’s presence makes all the difference. You can do it ... with the Lord’s help.

Father, I trust You to be with me in whatever challenges today brings my way.

Sunday, October 6

Distinct from the World

Devotional Passage:

1 Peter 1:13-16

Read the Bible Through:

Jeremiah 9–10

Ephesians 6

Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. 1 Peter 1:16

In a famous Muppet song, Kermit crooned, “It’s not easy being green.” It is never easy to be different from everyone else. People tend to magnify the things that set us apart as weird or odd. We try to hide the obvious peculiarities. We want to blend in and be accepted.

The problem is, as followers of Jesus, God desires that we be set apart. There should be something different about those who follow Christ that sets us apart from the rest of the world.

Holiness is a big word, requiring purity of thought and action. The world needs to see that we are different, distinct, and set apart for God. But we are not holy in and of ourselves. Our holiness is a result of the holiness of God; we are holy only in relation to Him. On our own, we can never measure up to God’s standard of holiness.

A holy lifestyle requires obedience to God and His Word. We pursue the person and the presence of God who has revealed Himself in the Scriptures. It is written, “Be ye holy; for I am holy.” God is the standard by which we measure our own efforts to live with holiness. Like a soldier dresses for battle, we wrap ourselves up in the holiness of God, ready for what the day may bring. We strive to maintain a holy way of life until Jesus returns.

Father, I acknowledge my sin before You and ask You to make me holy, even as You are holy.

Monday, October 7

Happiness Is ... Serving

Devotional Passage:

John 13:12-17

Read the Bible Through:

Jeremiah 11-12

Philippians 1

If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

John 13:17

The Charlie Brown comics illustrate something I knew as a child: Security and happiness can be found in a warm blanket. I identify with Linus and his constant blanket companion. I wore out my childhood blanket. My mother had to pry it out of my hands when I was 9 years old. I was rather insecure as a child; my blanket gave me comfort when the world was big and scary.

Jesus explained that true happiness comes from a decision to follow and obey Him. He has set an example of how to live. We can do no better than to emulate Him. This teaching comes from the upper room after Jesus washed the feet of His apostles. He humbled Himself before them, took up a towel and water basin, and washed the dirt of the world from their feet. His act was one of great love. After washing their feet, Jesus told them He has set an example for service and challenged them to do the same for others.

While some churches practice foot washing, we generally look for practical ways we can symbolically wash feet—that is, finding needs and meeting them in Jesus' name. Happy is the Christian who finds ways to model Jesus' love. Truly, happiness is found in serving others.

Father, I find my security and happiness in serving You. Help me to meet needs in Jesus' name.

Tuesday, October 8

Learning from the Best

Devotional Passage:

Psalms 119:65-72

Read the Bible Through:

Jeremiah 13-14

Philippians 2

Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes.

Psalms 119:68

For years, I owned an old guitar that sat in my office collecting dust. One day, a man in our church came by and asked me about the guitar. I told him it was a cheap guitar that didn't have a good sound whenever I played it. He then proceeded to pick it up and easily played beautiful music with it. I was stunned! How could the same guitar sound completely different whenever I played it? Then, I realized that the guitar was never the problem. The real problem was that I never chose to spend time with a good teacher.

We often approach our relationship with God the same way. There are things in our lives that aren't right. We often make excuses to justify such things. The truth is that we don't have to live that way. The psalmist, in all 176 verses of Psalm 119, reminds us that God's Word is a treasure of guidance for living in relationship with God. In the 8 verses in today's passage, the psalmist focused on the teaching and instruction God provides. We have a good teacher in our Heavenly Father, and we can change by learning from His Word. If our lives are out of tune, the problem is likely that we are neglecting to spend time with the Good Teacher to learn from His Word.

Lord, help me not to neglect spending time with You.

Teach me through Your Word.

Wednesday, October 9

Your Works, His Glory

Devotional Passage:

1 Peter 2:11-12

Read the Bible Through:

Jeremiah 15–17

Philippians 3

Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. 1 Peter 2:12

Several years ago, I began visiting an elderly lady in the hospital on a weekly basis. There were days she was happy to see me—and then there were days she was incredibly rude. However, God gave me the grace to love and minister to her each week. About six months into our visits, she asked me, “How can I know for sure that I’m saved?” I was then able to share from God’s Word, and she received Christ into her heart!

Oftentimes, before we can share about our relationship with Christ, we have to earn the right to be heard. The word *behold* in 1 Peter 2:12 means “to watch over a period of time.” When unbelievers watch how believers live over a period of time, they should begin to inquire about the reason for their faith. If we truly are to impact this world for Christ, we must live in such a way that unbelievers will turn and give God the glory.

When others view your life, do they see something different about you—your speech, attitudes, actions, choices, and interaction with them that points them to see the glory of God revealed? That’s our challenge.

Lord, help me to live in such a way that people recognize the difference that You have made in my life.

Thursday, October 10

Be Ready

Devotional Passage:

Matthew 25:1-13

Read the Bible Through:

Jeremiah 18–19

Philippians 4

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. Matthew 25:13

For several years, I have accompanied my wife to the annual shopping frenzy known as Black Friday. Hundreds of people will wait in line for hours (in the cold, dark, early morning hours) before a store opens with the hope of getting an amazing deal. Waiting in a long line outside the store can be quite grueling, especially if the weather is inclement. However, I've observed that the people who are prepared usually endure and are in a position to get the good deals.

When it comes to eternity, we must also make preparations. In Matthew 25, Jesus told the parable of the 10 bridesmaids. All 10 bridesmaids waited for the groom to arrive, but not all of them were fully prepared when he finally arrived. Five of the bridesmaids had run out of lamp oil and were gone to purchase more oil when the groom unexpectedly arrived. Because of this, they missed out completely. The point of the parable is that if we aren't fully prepared for Christ's return, we can miss out on eternity in God's presence. Are you prepared for eternity? Have you received Christ into your heart? If not, why not do so today? If you are a Christian, share this story with someone else today.

*Lord, I turn from my sin and choose to receive
You into my heart.*

Friday, October 11
It's a Waste!

Devotional Passage:
Ecclesiastes 5:9-17

Read the Bible Through:
Jeremiah 20–21
Colossians 1

He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity. Ecclesiastes 5:10

Growing up on a farm provided many life lessons. Once, while driving Dad's truck, I thought it might be fun to do some riding in the mud. It didn't take long before the wheels of the truck began to spin on the muddy road. In a matter of moments, I had gotten Dad's truck stuck in the mud. I tried relentlessly to get the truck out of the mud, but the more I accelerated, the more the truck sank. What I thought would make things better actually ended up making things worse.

The allure of wealth is similar. Solomon not only experienced the allure of wealth, he also discovered that wealth cannot bring true satisfaction. In Ecclesiastes 5:10, the wise king stated that if you make gaining wealth the focus of your life, it will never truly satisfy. Much like my experience with mud, the more you run after money, the more you sink. Instead of making things better, the love of money actually causes more problems.

Is the pursuit of wealth the focus of your life? If so, ask God to help you seek Him as the source of true happiness. While the pursuit of wealth will ultimately be a waste of time, the pursuit of God will never be wasted.

Father, help me not to love money and the things of this world, but to trust in You as the source of true happiness.

Saturday, October 12
Be Merciful

Devotional Passage:
Luke 6:36

Read the Bible Through:
Jeremiah 22–23
Colossians 2

Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.
Luke 6:36

On a recent visit to my dad's home, he and I came across a small dog roaming the countryside. After we stopped and called the dog over, we noticed that she was in bad shape. She was covered in fleas and ticks, and it was obvious she hadn't eaten in quite some time. Needless to say, I felt sorry for her. Even though we already have two dogs, I took her home. After several trips to the vet, she greatly improved. Today, Zoe has truly become a beloved member of our family.

Mercy is showing compassion or forgiveness toward someone—similar to the act of compassion I showed to a dog on the side of the road. There are people all around us who are hurting spiritually. They are in bad shape because they are lost. Unless we are intentional, we may not see them, and we will miss the opportunity to make a difference in their lives. Unless we see what Jesus sees, we will not feel what Jesus feels. Jesus was moved to compassion when He came across those in need. He showed mercy to those who accepted Him—as well as to those who rejected Him. As believers, we must also be merciful to those in need, regardless of whether or not they accept or reject Christ.

*Father, open my eyes to see the needs around me
and to be merciful to those in need.*

Sunday, October 13

Thirsty?

Devotional Passage:

John 7:32-37

Read the Bible Through:

Jeremiah 24–25

Colossians 3

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. John 7:37

Every year, my city celebrates Mule Day to honor the hard-working farm animal. During this festival, our church members hand out free bottles of water to passing visitors. Interestingly, their reactions vary. Some people simply say “no thanks” and keep walking. Others hesitate, as if to suggest they want the water, not the catch. Still others indicate they already have a drink and are satisfied with their choice. Many gladly accept the offer of something to drink.

I find an interesting parallel in this Scripture passage. Jesus was at the Feast of Tabernacles (or Booths) in Galilee, a festival recalling the way God provided for His people while they wandered in the wilderness. Jesus made an offer to those who were thirsty. Did the festival goers gladly accept His offer? Did they look at Him like He was insane and keep walking? Did they recall the religious affiliation they already held and dismiss Him as a second-rate choice? Did they think there was a catch?

Are you thirsty? Jesus invites you to come to Him and drink. His offer is truly free; there is no catch. Nothing in this world can match the satisfaction you will find in the Living Water.

Father, thank You for quenching my spiritual thirst.

Monday, October 14
Never Alone

Devotional Passage:
2 Timothy 4:16-18

Read the Bible Through:
Jeremiah 26
Colossians 4

Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. 2 Timothy 4:17

Being a part of the family of God certainly has its advantages. When things are tough, we look to a brother or sister to offer comfort. However, sometimes, whether by oversight or malice, we may have the feeling no one cares. Circumstances seem to chase everyone away, and loneliness becomes our only companion.

Paul felt this way during the later years of his life. In prison once again for preaching the gospel, Paul asked God to forgive those who had abandoned him. Knowing that God had a plan to share the good news using a shackled old man, Paul kept preaching. In the midst of his loneliness, Paul kept preaching. Although Paul stared death in the face, he kept preaching. God never left Paul. He gave Paul strength to continue proclaiming Christ's love.

Even if others run away when we need them most, God will meet us in the midst of our sorrow. When we face loneliness or the very moment of death, we can trust Him. He will always stand with His children. Remember, Jesus said, "I will never leave thee" (Heb. 13:5).

*Father, thank You for reminding me that You are with me
and for sustaining me when I feel alone.*

Open Windows

PRAYER CALENDAR

Missionaries are listed on their birthdays, and your prayers are the best gifts they can receive. Visit the International Mission Board (IMB) Web site at <http://imb.org/compassionnet> to find daily updated prayer needs of Southern Baptist international missionaries or call (800) 999-3113 to subscribe to the missionary birthday e-letter sent on a daily or monthly basis. For more information about North American missionaries, visit the Web site at <http://namb.net> or call (770) 410-6000.

International Mission Board personnel are listed by region instead of country. This allows personnel who otherwise could not be connected to their countries to be listed by name. It also reflects the IMB's focus to reach people groups which span national borders. Some IMB personnel serving in high-risk areas cannot be listed. Please continue to pray for these who work among people groups in which the vast majority have not heard the gospel message.

AFFINITY GROUP LEGEND

AMP	American Peoples
CAP	Central Asian Peoples
DEAF	Deaf Peoples
EAP	East Asian Peoples
EURO	European Peoples
GRT	Global Resource Team
NAME	Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples
ASAP	South Asian Peoples
SEA	Southeast Asian Peoples
SSAP	Sub-Saharan African Peoples

To obtain missions prayer
request through these
SBC PrayerLines call:

**NORTH AMERICAN
MISSION BOARD**
(800) 554-Pray

**INTERNATIONAL
MISSION BOARD**
(800) 395-Pray

Sunday, September 1

International Mission Board: MC, MO, TW, (Central Asian Peoples); KF, RJ, (East Asian Peoples); Vikki Franks, (European Peoples); AL, MH, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); JH, TO, (South Asian Peoples); Chuck Barbour, Bonnie Doughtie, Melynda Gragg, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Betty Gardner, Charles Morrison, Missy Moses, Jan O'Dell, Jeanie Wood, Betty Rushing.

North American Mission Board: Hae Jung, (AZ); Jason Griffin, Keith Ivey, Seong Seo, Eduardo Zamora, (GA); Enrique Valdes, (KY); Jose Nater, (MD); Garrett Trunk, (MO); Kareene Todd, (MT); Barbara Kejr, (NM); Doris Powell, (OK); Austin Smith, (TN); James Smith, (WV).

Monday, September 2

IMB: Joshua Murphree, (American Peoples); AS, BT, CO, DA, LM, MB, (Central Asian Peoples); HM, JL, (East Asian Peoples); GM, (South Asian Peoples); CT, (Southeast Asian Peoples); John Hinds, Jaime Rhymes, Stephen Schwarz, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Sharon Everhart, Linda Miller, Lois Norman, Linda Witherspoon.

NAMB: Sammy Campbell, (AL); Chase Abner, (IL); John Horn, (IN); Jeff Cook, (LA); Victor Farag, (NJ); David Coppedge, (OH); Ramon Guzman, (OK); Bob Jones, (TX). **Retired:** Mary Nance, (CO); Carolyn Curtis, Ventura Robleto, (TX).

Tuesday, September 3

IMB: Miwha Han, (American Peoples); LM, TO, (Central Asian Peoples); AB, OK, (East Asian Peoples); Rachel McDowell, (European Peoples); JA, WH, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); KC, SV, (South Asian Peoples). **Retired:** Carol Chatman, Billie Fudge, Joanne Gray, Cal Hogue, Rodney Irby, Charlotte Kirby, Don McCain, Rosanne Tyner.

NAMB: Timothy Wicker, (AR); Christopher Wright, (IL); Robert Knight, (IA); Robert Reese, (MT); George Bannister, (OH); Vicky Duncan, Cricket Temkin, (TX). **Retired:** David Richardson, (AL); Hazelin Davis, (LA); Nancy Hern, (NC); Lorene Lumpkin, (TN).

Wednesday, September 4

IMB: Tommy Beard, Stephen Bowers, Ted Dewett, Melodie Lyons, (American Peoples); HW, (Central Asian Peoples); Charles Seelen, CJ, EC, IL, PB, (East Asian Peoples); Fernando Dzubuk, Amy Sparks, Robert Turner, (European Peoples); Kittie Trail, (Global Resource Team); BT, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Christopher Pettigrew, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Evelyn Corley, Walter Hunt, Paul Savage, Charles Whitten.

NAMB: Harold Gault, (CO); Marino Ramones, (HI); Bennie Romero, (NM); Matthew Jones, (OH); Crystal Capps, (SC); Kika Jamir, Jonathan Speed, (TX); Sergio Guardia, (VA). **Retired:** Lawrence Martin, (LA); Bob Tallent, (SC).

Thursday, September 5

IMB: Steve Dewbre, BL, (American Peoples); KB, (East Asian Peoples); Joe Kelley, (European Peoples); Roger Hesch, (Global Resource Team); JL, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); DL, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Betty Mitchell, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples).

Retired: Fred Beck, Jeane Myers.

NAMB: Barbara Glenn, (AL); Dennis Conner, (AZ); Jesus Pacheco, (OK).

Retired: Norma Charles, (GA); Jo Holmes, (TX).

Friday, September 6

IMB: Joseph Andrews, Gary Clifton, Frank Drinkard, Crystal Nelson, SB, SP, (American Peoples); LH, (Central Asian Peoples); CE, (European Peoples); DE, ML, (South Asian Peoples); KK, RF, SR, (Southeast Asian Peoples). **Retired:** Joy Bates, Elsie Brown, Fred Day, Bob Hall, Martha Ellen Marler, Marjorie Verner.

NAMB: Lee Merck, (AL); Dwight Huffman, Alberta; Allan Karr, (CO); Cody Lorange, (IL); Daniel Byrnes, Riley Voth, (KS); Richard Logsdon, (MD); Sharon Bradley, (OH); Dave Murray, (SC); Jewell Boyd, (TX).

Retired: Don Ledbetter, (CA); Linda Obregon, (GA).

Saturday, September 7

IMB: JP, (American Peoples); SG, (Central Asian Peoples); CE, (East Asian Peoples); GB, (European Peoples); JL, (South Asian Peoples); DH, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Trisha Dickinson, Blake Kimbrough, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Russell Fox, Earl Jolley, Lauree Moore, Paul Mosteller, Hoyt Roberts.

NAMB: Judy Zach, (AK); Ulysses Downing, Noland Turnage, (CA); Charlie Edmonds, (KY); Gloria Thompson, (LA); Gibran Murillo, (NE); Vijay Allampalli, (NC); Margaret Cole, (TN); Mca Holland, (TX).

Retired: Matt Gaston, (AZ); Anna Chaddick, (CA); Judy Cook, (GA); Luis Gomez, (NM).

Sunday, September 8

IMB: Kerri Dewett, Young Mo Kim, Guy Muse, Doug Roberts, (American Peoples); WS, (Central Asian Peoples); Kevin Qualls, DG, MC, MW, WA, (East Asian Peoples); Baker Hill, CD, MH, (European Peoples); KS, LN, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); TL, (South Asian Peoples); Keith McDougal, AY, (Southeast Asian Peoples);

Wade Coker, Cameron Liner, Heather Petro, DS, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Barbara Cole, David Ford, Jane Fray, Urban Green, Nannette Lites, Bill Phillips, Peggy Sue Siebenmann, Grover Tyner. **NAMB:** Sonny Strange, (KY); Rob Parsons, (MI); Ed Blackledge, (OH); Joe Chavez, (TX); Roy Carter, (WV); Mark Porter, (WY). **Retired:** Bill Fulkerson, Jewell Wall, (GA); Urban Green, (OK); Abraham Lerma, Irene Urbina, (TX).

Monday, September 9

IMB: Carol Schulz, (American Peoples); HS, (Central Asian Peoples); BG, JH, JP, MM, RS, SK, (East Asian Peoples); David Nam, Jason Palmer, Brad Pollard, (European Peoples); Karen Clark, (Global Resource Team); LM, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); CK, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Dorothy Miller, Cynthia Morreau, JL, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** William Bowers, John Divers, Betty Hart, Charles Love, Eva Smith, Penny Young.

NAMB: John Yi, (AL); Elena Kotler, (CO); Dionis Uruman, (HI); Derin Stidd, (IN); John Ronoh, (NJ); David Oldfield, Ontario. **Retired:** Don Worthington, (CO); Laura Hodges, (UT); Howard Kim, (VA).

Tuesday, September 10

IMB: Leticia Clark, Monica Hatton, (American Peoples); JJ, (Central Asian Peoples); AG, BB, KG, MW, (East Asian Peoples); Chanelle Acton, Robert Peabody, JB, (European Peoples); LC, RM, SM, Tim S, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); MD, (Southeast Asian Peoples).

Retired: Sandy Cole, Bill Curl, Peggy Dane, Wirt Davis, Nancy Jones, Peggy Mulkey, Elizabeth Panter, Peggy Williams, Philip Wilson.

NAMB: Scott Bates, (AK); Merle Doubet, Jeff Mashaw, (AZ); Tim Vester, (FL); Justin Funk, (IA); Enrique Bluvan, (KS); Osa Hollon, (KY), Chris Conley, (MO); Abi Solis, (OK); John Richardson, (PA); Valerie Rumpfelt, (RI); Gary Mathis, (SC). **Retired:** Leland Warren, (WA).

Wednesday, September 11

IMB: David Miller, (American Peoples); BH, EC, KP, RC, (East Asian Peoples); Alicia Barrett, TH, UQ, (European Peoples); BC, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); BW, JL, MI, RW, (South Asian Peoples); CA, CP, DE, (Southeast Asian Peoples); James Adair, KC, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Bob Crider, Betty Turner, Anne Fortenberry.

NAMB: Jim Pratt, (AZ); Ashley Jones, Terry Pickens, (CO); Robert Bohning, (MO); Bobby Erickson, (NM); Ray Larkin, (OK).

Retired: Ron Owens, (AR); Tom Kelly, Jerry Yates, (CA); Rob Carr, Irvin Dawson, Peter Kendrick, Virginia Whitehead, (GA).

Thursday, September 12

IMB: Don Friesen, Dennis Johnson, Stuart Sumrall, Rick Thompson, (American Peoples); TW, (Central Asian Peoples); Steven Jobert, Tim Mitchell, DC, DY, (East Asian Peoples); DB, OL, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); AH, DC, (South Asian Peoples); JB, TB, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Lloyd Farmer, James Pack, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Thelma Beaty, Dale Beighle, Donna Burnett, Ralph Calcote, Roberta Fisher, Cindy Hoover, Dick Kinney, John McNair, Ramona Mercer, Mike Shockley.

NAMB: William Lee, (CA); Richard Willyard, (IN); Jessica Braden, Lonnie Riley, (KY); Bob Hylton, (PA). **Retired:** Tommy Hinson, (CO); Ellen Hitt, (OR); Larry Theisen, (PA); Eliu Camacho-Vazquez, (TX).

Friday, September 13

IMB: RE, SS, (Central Asian Peoples); NP, (Deaf Peoples); CB, SK, (East Asian Peoples); Don Hulsey, (European Peoples); DM, (Global Resource Team); AM, DM, DS, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); BM, (South Asian Peoples); AD, (Southeast Asian Peoples); RP, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Linda Beck, Carolyn Dubberly, Joann Ethredge, Thomas Graham, Peg Templin.

NAMB: Ramon Rodriguez, (AZ); Deris Coto, (FL); Gary Hamrick, (HI); Steve Roe, (KS); Dick May, (MA); Joyce Smith, (NM); William Roberts, (TX); Chad Cummings, (WI). **Retired:** Andrea McGriff, (GA); Ray Gilliland, (KS); Louise Yarbrough, (SC).

Saturday, September 14

IMB: Harriet Eager, Mark Ellis, Christy Holcomb, James Tieman, (American Peoples); AA, CW, (Central Asian Peoples); HW, (East Asian Peoples); Janet Graves, JS, (European Peoples); CO, EP, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); TB, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Kevin Jones, Alan Locke, Rusty Pugh, Tim Tidenberg, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Karen DeLeon, Jack Gentry, Judy Hoaldrige, Mike Norfleet, Viola Palmer, Lowell Schochler, ML.

NAMB: Jermaine Pennington, Richard Taylor, (KS); Dan Sheffield, (MD); Aaron Brown, (MA); Joy Monroe, (MT); Nick Williams, (OH); Donna Cooley, Elistin Plymouth, (TX); Bradley Guest, (WA).

Retired: Dale Lindstrom, (CO).

Sunday, September 15

IMB: Deana Wolf, (American Peoples); CH, HG, (Central Asian Peoples); RB, RC, (East Asian Peoples); Steven Brubaker, Richard McSwain, RB, (European Peoples); MW, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); KR, SJ, VF, VT, (South Asian Peoples); Angela

Newton, LuSinda Spann, SD, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples).

Retired: Myrtle Daugherty, Laverne Gregory, Jo Ann Parham, Betty Smith, Glen Swicegood, Ernie D.

NAMB: David Rimestad, (CA); Mani Biswa, (MA); Margaret Persons, (NH); Jeri Roever, (NM); Tim Bissell, (NY); Tyson Martin, (OK); Melva Whitlock, (TX). **Retired:** Jacquelyn Elder, Debra Parrish, (GA); Troy Cunningham, (TN); Bernie Hargis, Paul Jenkins, (TX).

Monday, September 16

IMB: KB, LE, (Central Asian Peoples); AI, JS, YP, (East Asian Peoples); Judy Armacost, (European Peoples); GP, RF, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); MW, (South Asian Peoples); KG, KH, MH, (Southeast Asian Peoples). **Retired:** Evelyn Brown, Elisabeth Faile, Emilee Goff, John Smith, Shelby Smith, Wilma Weeks, Donald Crawford.

NAMB: Bob Burton, (IN); Ellen Udovich, (MD); Robert Chambers, LeAnna Pickerel, (OH); Joe Bryan, (TX); Shaun Stotyn, (VT); Bill Barker, (WV). **Retired:** Sylvia Buice, (GA); Jerry Corbaley, (HI); Nancy Rodriguez, (ID); David Ransdell, (KY); Elvenor Johns, (OH).

Tuesday, September 17

IMB: Jeff Holeman, Ron Roy, (American Peoples); CM, JB, (Central Asian Peoples); LW, RN, (East Asian Peoples); AK, LB, (European Peoples); Joe Lovell, (Global Resource Team); DK, NH, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); AS, BR, DF, (South Asian Peoples); EC, PS, SR, (Southeast Asian Peoples); GP, SC, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Bert Corbett, Clay Coursey, Brenda Hostetler, Jackie Phillips, Jim Ragland, Mary Stanton.

NAMB: Phil Langley, (CO); Warren Haynes, (IN); Nikki Kirby, (MS); Matt Kearns, (MO); Gene Young, (MT); Kevin White, (NE); Joel Kovacs, Stephen Long, (OH); Joe Flegal, (OR); Anthony Mancuso, (RI); Douglas Dixon, (SC). **Retired:** Hal Crane, (FL); Lupe Rando, (NE); Judith Edwards, (NM).

Wednesday, September 18

IMB: Richard Beal, (American Peoples); RG, SN, (Central Asian Peoples); JB, (East Asian Peoples); Zack Dove, J.P. Manley, RS, (European Peoples); Kenneth Woods, CM, HJ, TW, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); JT, (South Asian Peoples); MS, SP, (Southeast Asian Peoples); John McPherson, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples).

Retired: Lloydene Balyeat, Barbara Clement, Veta Nell Jolley, Marylu Moore, Ed Nelson, Evelyn Pemberton, Janice Ray, Jimmie Ross, Eldon Sturgeon, Cecil Thompson.

NAMB: Eh Wah, (IL); Michael McQuitty, (MD); Dallas Powell, (MI); Mary Callahan, (MS); Frank Stark, (MO); Tim Shamburger, (OH); Michael Couch, Hair Kelley, (PA); David Avant, (SC); Joel Gomez-Bossio, David Haynes, Daniel Rankin, (TX). **Retired:** Galen Irby, (AZ); Joan Theisen, (PA); Sofia Rojas, (TX).

Thursday, September 19

IMB: JE, JS, LW, (Central Asian Peoples); KR, MW, (East Asian Peoples); SP, SS, SY, (East Asian Peoples); Melinda Kyzar, Angela Stoda, (European Peoples); MB, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); EB, (South Asian Peoples); Tracy Richards, CA, DB, EC, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Alex Bowen, Andrew Hayes, Mary Polglase, JG, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Peggy Gilliland, Ed Horton, Norma Powell, Shirley Smith, Wayne Wheeler.

NAMB: Kay Carter, (AK); Ron Climer, (CA); Rick Lawrence, (FL); Aaron Davis, (HI); Jose Ramirez, (MA); Gary Smith, Ontario; Jonathan Burris, (TX); Eve Kee, (UT); Michael Mattar, (VA). **Retired:** Pablo Urbay, (FL); David Terry, (GA); Jim Myers, (ID); Norma Carpenter, (OR); Dolores Thomas, (TX).

Friday, September 20

IMB: Jennifer Barger, (American Peoples); AC, (East Asian Peoples); Tena Brock, Ingrid Woodbridge, (European Peoples); AG, DC, MR, (South Asian Peoples); KM, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples).

Retired: Vernon Dietrich, Annette Hall, Jesse Kidd, Wendall Parker, Ethne Stainer, Ted Stanton.

NAMB: Becky Lunceford, (GA); Dennis Runner, (IN); Pedro Taguinod, (MI); Kurt Simon, (MO); Susie Emery, (OH); Eleanor Land, Saskatchewan; Jeffrey Hurlbut, (UT); James Scott, (WY). **Retired:** Kay Keisler, (GA); Byron Lutz, (NY); Floyd Tidsworth, (SC); Lyle Selmann, (TN).

Saturday, September 21

IMB: Stacey Lowin, Alexander Montgomery, (American Peoples); JH, (Central Asian Peoples); DV, (East Asian Peoples); Michael Domke, Bailey Hughes, Cindy Jessup, John Purl, RC, VL, (European Peoples); AR, KP, SP, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); SA, (South Asian Peoples); CT, CZ, (Southeast Asian Peoples). **Retired:** Carolyn Burriss, Vertie McClelland, Elinda West.

NAMB: Dawson Lindblom, (AK); Greg Sawyer, (AZ); Vince Perkins, (AR); Charles Campbell, (IL); Philip Ritchey, (KY); Lambert Pabellon, (NE); Jason Johnson, Saskatchewan; Clarence Landry, Jeanne Nesbit, (TX). **Retired:** Pete Petty, (AR); Chrispin Smith, (LA); Hilton Lane, (MS); Hazel Rackley, (SC); Carol Webb, (TN).



Tim Bissell
6538 Baptist Way
East Syracuse, NY 13057

Birthday: September 15

From teaching Royal Ambassadors and Acteens to serving as International Mission Board missionaries in Russia, Tim and Elise Bissell have always answered God's call to serve wherever they were. "After our son became ill, we returned to the states and God provided a way for us to serve in New York and have a meaningful ministry. While the Russian city we served had less than 0.2 percent evangelical Christians, Syracuse has less than 4 percent. We saw that the vast majority in either city were lost and needed to hear the gospel in a way they could understand and respond [to]," shares Tim.

Today, Tim serves as a North American church planting missionary in Central and Western New York. This area is comprised of a variety of people groups with more than 4 million people living in Syracuse, Rochester, and Buffalo alone. Tim's work includes recruiting, assessing, training, and coaching men and teams that plant churches to reach more than 96 percent of people in the area who do not have a personal relationship with Christ. "I work to bring all possible resources to penetrate the lostness of our region and assist in the formation of new churches."

In your prayer time today, pray for God to give Tim wisdom and discernment as he works with potential church planters. Pray that God will call out men from the area to plant churches in their own communities.

Sunday, September 22

IMB: Jerry Cadenhead, Steve Haines, Noemi Macumber, (American Peoples); KC, (Central Asian Peoples); CC, (East Asian Peoples); JD, SC, (European Peoples); AC, PW, (South Asian Peoples); Pam Brownfield, CJ, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Don Brake, Shirley Gunn, Linda Watkins, Sandy Holt, Alicia Zorzoli.

NAMB: Kathryn Nunnolley, (AL); Joel Danganan, Whitney, Keep, (CA); Owen Smith, (CO); Ron DeMoss, (GA); Christopher Barrow, (MS); Innok Hwang, (NE); Dennis Holmes, (OH); Judy Holloway, Samuel Kioko, (SC); Tony Sellars, (TN); Melissa Bartley, (TX); Josh Skipper, (VA); Peggy Burns, (WA). **Retired:** Sharon Wells, (AK); Bill Hunke, (AZ); Dick Church, (GA); Leon Clay, (OK).

Monday, September 23

IMB: Dave Cone, (American Peoples); AO, BW, CC, SC, (Central Asian Peoples); HK, RC, VD, Vesta C, (East Asian Peoples); Larry McCrary, (Global Resource Team); CK, KS, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); JB, Joe B, MM, MP, (South Asian Peoples); BW, EG, HP, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Daniel Reynolds, Bridget Wilhelm, BI, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Dave Daniels, Betty Hoglen, Joy Johnson, Gene Roach, Coy Sample.

NAMB: Travis Nichols, (CA); Yong Suh, (GA); Nellene Carter, (NC); Bill Wellman, (OH); Won Lee, (WA). **Retired:** Frank Claiborne, (MO); Ronnie Reynolds, (NC); Cloyd Sullins, (OK); Darrell Robinson, (TX).

Tuesday, September 24

IMB: GL, (Central Asian Peoples); Mary Chandler, DJ, EK, (East Asian Peoples); AC, BG, BM, CS, GS, JT, ML, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); CE, (South Asian Peoples); Michael Howard, Linda Jackson, Grace Kim, CC, JP, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples).

Retired: Judith Bliss, Mary Anne Davis, Bob Hunter, John Monroe, Ellen Steele, Edith Vaughn-Parker, Jerry White, JoAnn Crawford.

NAMB: Richard Mullen, Cathy Palmer, (GA); Nettie Beck, Jim Shields, (IN); Lisa Huebner, (KS); Vickie Stewart, (MD); James Thomasson, (MA). **Retired:** Ileana Gutierrez, (FL); Elizabeth Clemons, Sandra Killebrew, (GA); James Huse, (TX).

Wednesday, September 25

IMB: Sharon Bennett, CL, JO, Lissa Roberson, WL, (East Asian Peoples); Keith Sullivan, (European Peoples); CR, ES, PK, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); GG, (South Asian Peoples); AC, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Todd Hoskins, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Mary Ella Gibson, Gail Joule.

NAMB: D Hale, Canada; David Bogran, (GA); Clarence Smith, (IN); James Hogan, Douglas Pilot, (PA); Marsha Mitchell, Puerto Rico; Jim Davis, (WV). **Retired:** Shannon Mae Kemp Midkiff, (AK); Fred White, (GA); Rafael Hernandez, (RI); Danny Kuykendall, (WA).

Thursday, September 26

IMB: Susan Bowers, (American Peoples); JL, (Central Asian Peoples); CR, PM, (East Asian Peoples); Cameron Armstrong, Melissa Lewis, Trey Shaw, (European Peoples); CR, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); Paul Ingold, AG, RS, (South Asian Peoples).

Retired: Billy Bullington, Evelyn Bullington, Daniel Burt, Bill Goff, Donna Harper, Keith Parker, Syd Pearce, Peggy Perrin, Nancie Wingo, Bill Hagewood.

NAMB: David Hockney, (HI); Rebecca Carnell, (KY); C Chappell, Jamie Denton (NC); James Drake, (WV). **Retired:** Mary Ferguson, (AR); Rodney Webb, (GA); Ken Forman, (KY); Norman Beckham, (NC).

Friday, September 27

IMB: Al Rodriguez, Mark Rutledge, DT, (American Peoples); AC, TT, (Central Asian Peoples); EY, SP, (East Asian Peoples); Matthew Maxson, Susan Robinson, (European Peoples); JG, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples). **Retired:** Mary Evelyn Divers, Clara Hutson, Hugh McKinley.

NAMB: Stephen Lindsey, (AZ); Phill Hall, (AR); Bradley Brisco, (KS); James Underwood, (NM); Mike Puckett, (OH); David Holmes, (TN); Bonnie Russell, (TX); Soong-Yol Hong, (WA). **Retired:** Rich Carney, (GA); Ken Robinson, (NM).

Saturday, September 28

IMB: Patti Quick, (American Peoples); JC, WK, (East Asian Peoples); Gregory Harvell, CG, CS, JW, SC, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Doug Lee, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Dan Cobb, John Floyd, Bud Fray, Felix Greer, Jo Anne Rollison.

NAMB: Eddie Chambers, (AL); Eddie Miller, (NE); Pedro Escobar, (NM); Jackie Miller, (TX). **Retired:** Jack Smith, (GA); Mary Warren, (NM); **June** Highlan, (SD); Vincent Inzerillo, (WA).

Sunday, September 29

IMB: Andy Leining, CL, CS, MH, (European Peoples); DD, EH, JP, MJ, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); MI, MM, (South Asian Peoples); Rhonda Reynolds, Vickie Tarleton, GN, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Jeanine Boyd, Jean Byrd, Joyce Davis, Jean Dickman, Bob Hampton, Mary Ellen Hill, Jo Ann Sturgeon, Diann Bailey.

NAMB: Sharalyn Vester, (FL); Jeff Jackson, (IN); Marty McCord, Bob Wilson, (KS); Larry Leming, (SC); Don Hanle, (TN); Patrick Ngwolo, PT Ngwolo, Bryan Sloan, (TX). **Retired:** Miguel Olmedo, (FL); Terry Henderson, Wanda Sunderland, (GA).

Monday, September 30

IMB: Laurie Bledsoe, Tina Louderback, Linda Muse, Gina Roberts, Carla Roy, PK, (American Peoples); Ed Jordan (Deaf Peoples); William Foster, Michael Miller, CH, CV, (East Asian Peoples); GM, (South Asian Peoples); David Daggett, BS, (Southeast Asian Peoples); LB, RL, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Emmett Barnes, Arthur Haylock, Louise Hill, Lois Langley, Evelyn Moss, Lillie Rogers.

NAMB: Barbara Sessions, (AL); Benjamin Beck, (IN); Pedro Velazquez, Alice Whitetree, (KY); Donald Reynolds, (MD); Andrew McDonald, (OK); Tracey Holmes, (TN). **Retired:** Joe Knowles, (AZ); Bobby Graham, (GA); Alejandro Leal, M Summers, (TX); Billy Wells, (WA).

Tuesday, October 1

IMB: Missy Wood, (American Peoples); BC, RB, (Central Asian Peoples); JW, MF, PB, SS, (East Asian Peoples); Benjamin Walgorski, JF, (European Peoples); IG, NC, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); JS, KB, SB, SW, (Southeast Asian Peoples); MC, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Max Alexander, Fred Harner, Daisy Kinney, Ginger McMinn, Gerry Milligan, Lanette Thompson.

NAMB: Sharon Dean, (CA); Nathan Templin, (CO); Charles Wilson, (GA); Eleanor Bowers, Carolyn Mathis, (KY); Michelle Bruss, (LA); David Jackson, (MD); Al Page, (NH); Lesly Georges, (NJ); James Whaley, (OH); Sean Wentley, (TN); Billie Moore-Young, (WA). **Retired:** Bob Brown, (AL); Howard Ramsey, (GA); Betty Brantley, LaVerne Davis, Mildred Kirk, (TX).

Wednesday, October 2

IMB: David Haynes, Tommy Lerner, Quentin Roberts, (American Peoples); SH, (East Asian Peoples); CH, (European Peoples); JL, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); RB, (South Asian Peoples); AN, HH, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Dave Jackson, Helmer Jensen, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Archie Jones, Marian Longbottom, Sam Longbottom, Don Orr, Charlotte Phillips, Norma Young.

NAMB: Jacob Elliott, (AL); Michael Melton, (AR); Jorvon Smith, (CA); Bill Gandy, (CO); Mark Jackson, (KS); Harry Thetford, (NC); Katy Townley, (OH). **Retired:** Chuck Turner, (MI); Chuck Sams, (OH).

Thursday, October 3

IMB: James Park, Steve Sloas, Joe B, (American Peoples); BO, MD, MH, SP, SS, (Central Asian Peoples); KK, (East Asian Peoples); Danielle Barker, Scott Jackson, TJ Odom, SH, (European Peoples); AM, TS, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); NS, (South Asian Peoples). **Retired:** Margaret Baker, Larry Davis, Pat Dunn, Patsy Eitelman, Kent Faris, Jerry Golston, Bobby Grayson.

NAMB: Fred Finnigsmier, (CO); Carrie Clement, Geoffrey Safford, (IA); Mark A Cress, (KS); Kevin Bruns, (KY); Jean Jeune, (MA); Diana Patty, (MO); David Storey, New Brunswick; Donald Tiger, (NM); Carlos Ruiz, (SC); Terri Benke, (TX). **Retired:** Candy Elliott, (GA); Cindy Golden, (SD).

Friday, October 4

IMB: Jeff Dunson, Gary Stone, Amanda Zachos, BH, LD, (American Peoples); AB, RT, SK, (East Asian Peoples); JW, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); DR, (South Asian Peoples). **Retired:** Betty Jean Bowlin, Hubert Fox, Susie Hartfield, Russell Hilliard, Rayella Johnson, Paula Kilpatrick, Linda Phillips, Betty Smith, Freda Trott, Von Worten.

NAMB: Francisco Tola, (FL); Richard Boyce, (IN); Joshua Eaton, (KS); Bessie McPeck, (KY); Larry Burnett, (MI); Frank Schneider, (NE); Jeff Calloway, (OH); Phil Law, (OK); Rex Bolis, Brian Smart, (TN); Jimmy Sanders, (TX). **Retired:** Ron Lawson, Beegie Stevenson, (GA); Fred Hill, (OH).

Saturday, October 5

IMB: Hope Martin, Brittany Shirey, LH, (American Peoples); AW, (Central Asian Peoples); DS, EL, FN, (East Asian Peoples); Troy Geddes, Catherine Kirkwood, DI, (European Peoples); AS, BJ, KJ, LG, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); JT, (South Asian Peoples); LL, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Pam Lynch, Wendell McDaniel, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Lidia Giannetta, Nancy Muskrat, Jo Redmon, Shirley Whittington.

NAMB: Yvon Xavier, (GA); Kristopher Smilko, (KS); Nar Rai, (MA); Sang Park, (MI); Zach Caddy, (MO); Larka Vesper, (NE); Holly, Procita, (NC); Liz Furches, (TN); Baron Mbala, (WA). **Retired:** Gail Dover, (GA); Johnniepearl Coffey, (OK); Norma Nogues, Puerto Rico; Martha Mora, James Williams, (TX); James Benson, (VA).

Sunday, October 6

IMB: Joel Brandhorst, RP, (American Peoples); MM, SB, SW, (Central Asian Peoples); JS, SI, YC, (East Asian Peoples); DT,

(European Peoples); SG, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); KS, (South Asian Peoples); DG, DS, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Christina Smith, RF, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Bettie Addleton, Donald Doyle, Mark Driggers, Janet Hill, Ramona Hodges, Faye Williams.

NAMB: Rufus Zingkhai, (CA); Aaron Harvie, (KY); Brian Moon, (MD); Kenneth Dillard, (OH); Chris Harvey, (OK); Paul Gonzales, Jim Richardson, (TX). **Retired:** Helen Stuart, (AL); Richard Rogers, (MI); Jerry Potter, (NC); Donald Smith, (PA).

Monday, October 7

IMB: Glynis Miller, Bobby Paul, Chad Reynolds, Arleen Street, MV, (American Peoples); AH, LE, TB, (Central Asian Peoples); JG, KH, (East Asian Peoples); BW, ES, JS, SG, SS, TS, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); EO, (South Asian Peoples); Tom Pace, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Christina Berry, Timothy Norton, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Martha Anderson, Fred Gibson, Ethel Ledbetter, Marvin Leech, Don Moore, Polly Van Lear.

NAMB: Wayne Sheppard, (AZ); Matthew Rothacher, (AR); Andy Broese van Groenou, Ernesto Uriostegui, (CA); Emilio Zapata, (KY); Paul Biswas, (MA); Van Cung, John Smith, (MI); Juana Matthews, (TX).

Retired: Shirley Smith, Kay Van Curen, (GA); Donald Brown, Ballard White, (TX); Charles Joyner, (WA).

Tuesday, October 8

IMB: Julie Clifton, (American Peoples); KC, MS, PT, (Central Asian Peoples); Paul Cho, CK, M.B., (East Asian Peoples); Ryan Ludwick, Mark Wagner, (European Peoples); DO, WY, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); DB, MD, SR, (South Asian Peoples); AN, KH, (Southeast Asian Peoples); James Herron, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Bettye Spann, Barbara Tolar.

NAMB: Matt Hoke, (AK); Jacques Estimphile, (GA); Ivy Wyble, (LA); Sandy Darnes, Bethany Williams, (OH); Daniel Smith, Ontario.

Retired: Bill Gordon, (GA); Gerald Edwards, Thelma Key, (TX); Louise Hubbard, (VA).

Wednesday, October 9

IMB: Nancy Clines, Ken Moore, (American Peoples); HD, RG, (Central Asian Peoples); CG, RD, RM, SC, TB, (East Asian Peoples); Dudley Graves, Terry Wilbanks, (European Peoples); Marsha Davidson, (Global Resource Team); JR, TC, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); Anita Jordan, DC, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Susan Taliaferro, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Larry Johnson,

Larry McCoy, Rebecca Middleton.

NAMB: Bual Uk, (CA); Stan Hayek, (IA). **Retired:** Su-Ing Yong, (FL); John Bailey, Gloria Moore, (GA); Juanita Leija, (TX).

Thursday, October 10

IMB: Mike Weaver, SK, (American Peoples); SG, SM, (Central Asian Peoples); BR, JZ, (East Asian Peoples); CH, DF, (European Peoples); JC, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); DF, (South Asian Peoples); Deborah Cobb, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Kevin Cartwright, Selvin Jeremiadoss, Jane Jones, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples).

Retired: Richard Blount, Doris Day, Sue Hinze, Frances Ray, Claudia Sherer, Maureen Wood.

NAMB: Denise Panter, (AL); Michael Carpenter, (AR); Juan, Rivera, (KY); Eliseo Salinas, (LA); Aaron Dullinger, (OH); Scott Weigner, (PA); Larry Johnson, (TX). **Retired:** Herb Stoneman, (AZ); An Thio, (CA); Neris Espinosa, (GA); Tommy Goode, (MO).

Friday, October 11

IMB: LH, (American Peoples); RR, (Central Asian Peoples); Barbara Dunbar, DS, TS, (East Asian Peoples); Kim Runner, RA, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples); Jesse Bryan. **Retired:** Bill Dyches, Walter Ford, Todd Hamilton, Chris Mauldin.

NAMB: James Beckner, (AL); Rik Danielsen, (AZ); Ethan Johnstone, Jorge Mendoza, (CA); Ken Musselwhite, (CO); Judy Roe, (KS); Andrew Tribe, (LA); Josh Johnson, (NY); Zohair Hanna, Garry Morrison, (SC); Joseph Ledford, (TN). **Retired:** Luis Quilo, (CA); Virginia Haynes, Paula Russell, (GA); John McClung, (NE); John Embery, (NM); Jess Cooke, (TX).

Saturday, October 12

IMB: LT, (American Peoples); DB, RC, (Central Asian Peoples); Stacy Parks, (Deaf Peoples); BB, C.B., GL, (East Asian Peoples); Nancy Skinner, (European Peoples); Randy Trail, (Global Resource Team); DK, GG, JP, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); JC, JH, (South Asian Peoples); JM, TW, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Guy DeMars, John Dina, Barb Myers, PN, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples).

Retired: Bob Holifield, Bob Landon, May Morris, Jerry Perrill.

NAMB: Van Kicklighter, (IL); Oslirio Roque, (IN); Charles Churchwell, (LA); Jimmy Walker, (MS); Arnold Winkler, (TX); James Carpenter, (WV). **Retired:** Don Hall, (CA); Wolf Schumacher, (GA); Bill Crowe, (NC).



Holt Rivers:*

Birthday: September 17

In a culture where the majority of people are not believers, Holt Rivers is always mindful of his witness in daily life. “I was with a volunteer team last summer in South Asia providing medical and dental services to members of the lowest caste. We hired a driver from a higher caste who was not a believer. He watched as we went out each day interacting with ‘untouchable’ people. After our team left, we received word from a local pastor that our driver had prayed to receive Christ. He told the pastor that he now understands how God’s love transcends any barriers associated with the family into which a person is born.”

Pray for Holt’s daily work in providing financial support to IMB missionaries across Asia. Though he is always mindful of those who need Christ, Holt says he finds his role in providing support to his co-laborers rewarding as well.

Pray for his wife, Tess, and their two daughters. The older daughter is in her second year of college in the United States. Pray also for the continued work in Asia. “Most of my Asian friends are not yet Christians. Please pray that I would be sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s guidance in knowing when to be a bold witness and when to patiently model a Christian life.”

*name changed

To learn more about the work of missionaries and those they are reaching in Asia, visit asiastories.com online.

Sunday, October 13

IMB: Dan Hall, RE, (American Peoples); DH, MR, (East Asian Peoples); KW, (European Peoples); MB, (South Asian Peoples); Cindy Sustar, LM, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Lester Boyd, Bob Sims, Pat Varner, Judy Williamson, Janet Meredith.

NAMB: Joyce Gerardi, (FL); Elmer Sance, (GA); Marjorie Yandell, (KY); Chris Nichols, (MT); Jess McDowell, (OK). **Retired:** Joe Gardner, (IL); Jerry St John, (SC).

Monday, October 14

IMB: Bridget McBee, Tamara Whitenton, (American Peoples); JS, TR, (East Asian Peoples); Stacy Dyck, Dwight Williams, (European Peoples); DP, RH, ST, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); CS, JP, (South Asian Peoples); KK, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Daniel Kim, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Clyde Berkley, N. Katheen Clark, Hilda Cowsert, Kenneth Evenson, Elizabeth Gwynn, Shelley McCord, Barbara Simms.

NAMB: John Howeth, (CO); Jon Davis, (IL); Rhonda Wilkinson, (IN); Justin Chapman, (PA); Ruben De Jesus, (SC); Mike Haywood, (VA).

Retired: James Shope, (MO); T Hooker, (TN).

Tuesday, October 15

IMB: Margie Carothers, David Crane, (American Peoples); BB, JB, (Central Asian Peoples); AH, DG, DG, KR, RR, SK, (East Asian Peoples); Josh Baylor, Marilyn Nyquist, James Roberts, DA, SS, (European Peoples); AS, GG, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); EC, KR, SW, (South Asian Peoples); Kenneth Vines, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Carmela Bartels, Martha Hagood, Betty Jo Hensley, Carol Henson, Bob Hunt, Kathryn Owen, Dave Page, Sue Wilkins.

NAMB: Jan Cochran, (AL); Rick Curtis, Leonardo Nestico, (CA); Paulette DeHart, (GA); Lupe Gomez, (IL); Jose Burgos Jr., (IN); Clifford Liese, (MI); Robert Stockland, (MN); Josh Baylor, (OH); Emmanuel Benjamin, (PA); Lon Vining, Quebec; Kay Leagans, (SC); Jonathan Griffin, (TX). **Retired:** Bob Nyberg, (FL); Margaret Miller, (GA); Oletha Sapp, (KY); Woong Park, (OH); Troy Smith, (WA).

Wednesday, October 16

IMB: GT, (Central Asian Peoples); Michael Wright, AF, DW, JC, (East Asian Peoples); Adam Gold, Tracy Putnam, Joel Ragains, (European Peoples); JD, JL, NP, RG, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); SM, (South Asian Peoples); AB, KS, (Southeast Asian Peoples). **Retired:** Dorothy Rose Blair, John Carpenter, Fulga Dan, H Hardy, Eva

Nell Kimler, Marty Koehn, Evelyn Spencer, Barbara Springer, Marvin Thompson, Louise Broomfield.

NAMB: Robert Turner, (PA); Billy Hutchinson, (VA). **Retired:** Betty Wilson, (GA); Sara Potter, (NC).

Thursday, October 17

IMB: Jessica Garcia, Ryan Zachos, (American Peoples); Steve Baker, CM, CS, KC, (East Asian Peoples); SG, DY, (South Asian Peoples); Michelle Miller, Scott L Payne, LS, RJ, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Terry Bell, Jenny Putman, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Bob Bernhardt, Tom Canady, Sue Carter, Ed Moses, Divina Park, Harriett Parker, Don Reece, Fred Shultz, TC, Barb Suiter.

NAMB: John Gunter, Earl Johnson, (AL); David Wilhelm, Alberta; Ray Woodard, British Columbia; Rich Johnstone, (CA); Terry James, (MT); Rose Mattox, (TX); Roger Cook, (VA); Pendleton Cook, Norm Duncan, (WA). **Retired:** Beth Keener, (SC); Lee Williams, (TX).

Friday, October 18

IMB: Margie Austin, Bill Baer, Fernando Larzabal, (American Peoples); MM, RB, (East Asian Peoples); Josie Moon, (European Peoples); DS, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); AS, RO, (South Asian Peoples); AD, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Bob Calvert, Pat Nichols, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Lorna Daniell, Charlotte Davis, Byron Harbin, Evelyn Harthcock, Jim Leeper, Jack Martin, Wayne Paul.

NAMB: Jorge Herrera, (AZ); Charles Thompson, (LA); Charles Reed, (NC); Bradley Herbst, (OH); Hang Tung, (OK); Sean Benesh, (OR); Ryan A Booth, (VA); B.J. Strange. **Retired:** Henry Smart, (AZ); Jim Morgan, Les Roberts, (GA); Roy Enterline, (OK).

Saturday, October 19

IMB: Roy Cooper, Allison Hoskins, TB, (American Peoples); JK, (Central Asian Peoples); CA, TS, (East Asian Peoples); JH, SG, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); MC, (South Asian Peoples); Marty McAnally, DJ, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Jennie Houser, Chris Nalls, Fred Naude, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Sandy Shultz, Tom Espy.

NAMB: Bill Lighty, (CO); Sonya Cowart, Keith Horne, (GA); Randy Aldridge, (VA). **Retired:** Diane Godley, (AL); Lorraine Hook, (AZ); Bertie Davis, (LA); Sig Hamilton, (MO); Nova, Thomas, (TX).

Sunday, October 20

IMB: CM, DP, EB, JE, SG, (East Asian Peoples); RR, (European Peoples); JA, KY, RH, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples);

BG, LS, PC, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Lauren Jones, Michael Rains, Matthew Spann, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** B Wayne Bell, Lois Calhoun, Roberta Farris, Dave Fields, Landra Sarles.

NAMB: Nathaniel Schroer, (IN); Linda Otterback, (KY); Wayne Kittelson, (NE); Mary Higgins, (NC); David Pearson, (PA); Rodney Barnett, Won Cho, Leonard Mattox, Chris McGregor, Shane Pruitt, (TX); Samuel Nuon, (VA). **Retired:** Marilyn Clifton, (AL); Paul Wilkerson, (CA); Lucile Gemes, (GA); Mary Campbell, (NC); Ramon Aleman, (OK).

Monday, October 21

IMB: Penny Hensley, (American Peoples); ME, MR, (Central Asian Peoples); Mi Kiu Humphries, DW, JL, RD, (East Asian Peoples); Jonathan Sharp, Bob Wagstaff, (European Peoples); TF, (South Asian Peoples); Ned Stewart, DL, DM, NO, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Sarah Fox, Jonathan Lesley, Robert Shelton, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples).

Retired: Charles Collins, Janis Malone, **June** McDaniel, Grady Nowell, Rich Piscopo, VW.

NAMB: Larry Patterson, (AL); Mitch McDonald, (AZ); Jack Simmons, (KY); John Edwards, (MO); Ben Johnston, (TX). **Retired:** Sid Smith, (FL); Rosemary Hurst, (GA); Janice Tinsley, (IN); J Bradley, (NC); Eunice Heath, (TN); Ana Sloan, (TX).

Tuesday, October 22

IMB: Janet Herve, Chris Julian, (American Peoples); Mark Hoshizaki, PP, (East Asian Peoples); Gary Miller, (European Peoples); HO, KF, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); FG, MC, (South Asian Peoples); Mary Holmes, JP, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Pamela Carlton, Hannah Mason, Mark Phillips, TF, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples).

Retired: Dora Harbin, Judy Hayes, George Wilson, Annette Frizen.

NAMB: Johnny Cochran, (AL); Gary Fulton, (AR); Greg Holmes, (CA); Jerry Day, (IL); Nathan Smith, (MO); Bobby Higginbotham, (WA).

Retired: Joe De Leon, (CO); Annette Frizen, (NC).

Wednesday, October 23

IMB: RB, (East Asian Peoples); Dennis Barton, (European Peoples); EF, JR, WO, (South Asian Peoples); KS, SZ, (Southeast Asian Peoples); T Welch, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Darlene Gopffarth, Buddy Hinze, Pam Parker, Norman Wood, Gary Cain.

NAMB: Adam Jividen, (IN); Kenneth Brassfield, (OK); Collene Myers, (TX). **Retired:** Alice Davis, (IL); Margaret Russell, (NM); Lucy Welch, (TN); Don Laing, (WA).

Thursday, October 24

IMB: Melody Julian, (American Peoples); CS, (Central Asian Peoples); Amanda Bonacci, BL, (East Asian Peoples); Debbie P, TF, (European Peoples); ML, TL, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); JE, SC, (South Asian Peoples); Harriet Bowman, Douglas Campbell, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Herbert Barrett, Joe Baskin, Glenn Boyd, Mary Catherine Brothers, Nancy Buttemere, Margie Hampton, Lynne Lance, Harold Mitchell, Charles Wiggs.

NAMB: Aaron Urlaub, (AZ); James Ross, (AR); Darren Bradley, (CA); Sylvia Hadinger, (MS); Darrell Coley, (OH); David Hamilton, (OK); John Cope, (PA). **Retired:** Amy Fuller, (GA).

Friday, October 25

IMB: DS, RS, SL, (Central Asian Peoples); JG, SK, (East Asian Peoples); Kathy Frost, Cynthia Turner, (European Peoples); CH, DC, EH, JS, (Southeast Asian Peoples); AF, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples).

Retired: Pedro Arrambide, Buddy Morris, Peggy Pemble.

NAMB: Brian Nagy, (AR); Debbie Wohler, (CA); Jennifer Story, (CO); Jimmy Bishop, (FL); Bob Carruthers, Jacob Ketchens, (IL); Fontella Jamison, (MO); Jonathan Santiago, (NY); Ken Chaney, Stan Smith, (PA). **Retired:** Bob Smith, (MN); Carlos Vidal, (NC).

Saturday, October 26

IMB: LV, (American Peoples); GS, (Central Asian Peoples); Tara Jones, AC, (East Asian Peoples); Jeannete M, (European Peoples); AW, LF, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); Teresa Flora, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** J G Goodwin, Charles Hardie, Marlene Lee, Ann Pearce, Delbert Taylor, JS.

NAMB: Tim Wallace, (AR); Pat Gutierrez, (KY); Seok Moon, (MD); Raleigh Sadler, (NY); Jose Molina, (SC). **Retired:** Jerry Scruggs, (AL); Kenneth Chadwick, (CO); Max Samples, Wayne Taylor, (FL); Lew Dawson, (GA); James Brandon, (ID); Larry Miguez, (LA); Rachel Gill, (NC).

Sunday, October 27

IMB: Scott Bennett, James Guenther, (American Peoples); EW, (Central Asian Peoples); ML, (East Asian Peoples); DD, (South Asian Peoples); Billy Sigrest, (Southeast Asian Peoples). **Retired:** Bobby Evans, William Malone.

NAMB: Bill Hughes, (AR); Jeremiah Dollar, (NE); Miguel Santos, (NH); Clint Darst, (NC); Alex Miller, Elmer Whitehead, (OK).

Retired: Eloise Waterhouse, (GA); Lazaro Garcia, (NM); Agness Black, (TN); Marcos Castro, Jim Putman, (TX).

Monday, October 28

IMB: Holly Sumrall, (American Peoples); Philip Hamline, CS, (East Asian Peoples); Joe Dowdy, Karen Ray, CM, (European Peoples); BH, LF, SP, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); CC, CS, (South Asian Peoples); GB, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Robyn Allison, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Hershel Johnson, Bonnie Robertson, ME.

NAMB: Michael Walker, (AR); Rod Earls, Mustafa Muhyee, Eric Van Patten, (CA); Joshua Dryer, (IA); Mikel Juarez, (KY); Steve Dyess, (MN); Robin Crabtree, (NC); Josif Bote, (WA). **Retired:** Marie Berthelot, (GA); Vic Carter, (LA); Gertrude Murphy, Forrest Smith, (TX); Maxine Bumgarner, (WV); Eldon Jones, (WY).

Tuesday, October 29

IMB: Cavin Cawthon, (American Peoples); DS, MB, (East Asian Peoples); Benjamin Wages, KS, (European Peoples); MB, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); CW, JL, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Boyd Hall, Travis Jones, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples).

Retired: Louise Bradshaw, Bob Compber, David Miller, Jimmy Miller.

NAMB: William Nathaniel, (CA); Mike Wall, (CO); Judi Fanning, (NY); Kevin McKay, (RI); Rob Nelson, (SC). **Retired:** Rebecca Gardner, (IL); Deb Turner, (MI); James Eaves, (TX).

Wednesday, October 30

IMB: Rick Miller, Mary Speidel, (American Peoples); CE, CJ, JT, RG, SH, SP, YK, (East Asian Peoples); Bethany McDonald, (European Peoples); JC, (Global Resource Team); AS, TW, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); KN, (South Asian Peoples); BM, JS, (Southeast Asian Peoples); TS, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Harry Byrd, Margaret Fairburn, Patsy Hilliard, Albert Hodges, Becky Lambert, Frank Lewis, Tommy Norman, James Richardson, Georgie Lee Teel, SS, Sherra Armstrong.

NAMB: Michael Clayton, (AR); Martin Bennett, (MD); Joshua Collins, (NY); Gerald Mounce, (PA); Georgia Lamont, (TX). **Retired:** Charles Dill, (IA); Wes McAfee, (NM); Jones Lo, (TX).

Thursday, October 31

IMB: LW, (American Peoples); RP, (Central Asian Peoples); KG, (East Asian Peoples); IM, RV, TS, (European Peoples); CC, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); GR, (South Asian Peoples). **Retired:** Ron Ballard, Doris Dyches, Sue Gardner, Bobbie Miller, Betty Jean Tension, Inez Webb, Sharon Johnson.

NAMB: Steve Rose, Bob Swift, (AZ); Breckery Freeman, (AR); Craig

Culbreth, (FL); Douglas Jividen, (IN); Bradley Ferrett, (MI); Mark Crouch, (NY); Mitch Trammel, (SC). **Retired:** Nell Bobo, Warren Woolf, (GA).

Friday, November 1

IMB: Grady Milstead, Danilo Miranda, Frida Robles, RH, (American Peoples); AJ, (Central Asian Peoples); Grace Park, ES, NT, RD, (East Asian Peoples); Caleb Booth, Leslie Rutland, Kaset Lewis, (European Peoples); Rick Kunz, BK, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); JC, KB, TM, (South Asian Peoples); KJ, RP, TK, (Southeast Asian Peoples); AL, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Hazel Collins, Shirley Jackson.

NAMB: Curtis Jones, (AL); Ken Belflower, Bob Campbell, (AZ); Julius Ma, (CA); Virgel Erwin, (CO); Brenda Baldwin, Purna Biswa, (GA); Bir Magar, (MA); Norma Melton, (NC); Tom Hodges, (TN); Mickey Porter, (UT); Larry Black, (VA). **Retired:** Yvonne Russell, (AZ); Doc Lindsey, Daniel Rupp, (NM).

Saturday, November 2

IMB: AO, (Central Asian Peoples); JB, (East Asian Peoples); Matthew Burks, Connie R, (European Peoples); CR, (South Asian Peoples); Diana Hoopes, JC, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Sonya Herron, David Miller, Douglas Taylor, Jim Vaughn, GT, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Rachel Sweet, J.O. Terry.

NAMB: Tony Ahaev, (CA); Jack McCormick, (GA); Sekap Esah, (HI); Drew Crabtree, (WY). **Retired:** Ruth Wood, (AZ); Don McMurry, (GA); Quentin Lockwood, (OH).

Sunday, November 3

IMB: Liesa Holean, Peggy Johnson, Brent Waldrep, (American Peoples); LL, VH, (East Asian Peoples); Amy Benson, Ryan Williams, Gena Wilson, (European Peoples); Jeri Whitfield, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Danny Hood, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Wayne Frederick, Glen Grosdidier, Rosemary Kollmar, Joyce Viertel.

NAMB: Wallace Frank, Manitoba; Jack, Helton, Jason Hickerson, Buck Wilford, (OH); Chandra, Rudrapathi, Jim Wininger, (OK); George Ratz, (PA); Russell Page, (TX); Tony Inmon, (WV). **Retired:** Anna Venosdel, (CA); Mary Cotton, (GA); Margaret Blake, (ID).

Monday, November 4

IMB: FK, (Central Asian Peoples); CL, SD, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); BM, SP, (South Asian Peoples); DO, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Lindy Rowe, Kimberly Windham, (Sub-Saharan

African Peoples). **Retired:** Doreen Branton, Sam Cannata, Warren Harris, Wayne Jenkins, Bob Sherer.

NAMB: Chunkuk Oh, (AZ); Trey Cates, (VT). **Retired:** Reid Coons, (GA); Bill Donovan, (OK); Eddie Henson, (WV).

Tuesday, November 5

IMB: Jim Spikes, (American Peoples); DE, (Central Asian Peoples); AL, (East Asian Peoples); Brittany Jones, Preston Pearce, (European Peoples); AC, KJ, LS, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); BW, (South Asian Peoples); Suzanne Miller, RR, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Ronnie Davis, Cherry Faile, KB, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples).

Retired: Elaine Crane, Maurine McTyre, Marie Roberts, Charlotte Watts, Mike Monroe.

NAMB: Abby Phipps, (AL); Greg Cole, (CO); Seongwhan Kim, Moses Valdes, (GA); Carlton Page, (KY); Pamela Mungo, (NC); Christopher Autry, (PA); Dennis Spraggins, (UT). **Retired:** Thelma Calleiro, (FL); Chan Garrett, (FL); Roberto Gama, Ronnie Wales, (GA); Mary Sok, (IL); Marilyn Hopkins, (MI); Rosser McDonald, (TX).

Wednesday, November 6

IMB: Nancy Callis, Cinthy Case, (American Peoples); CS, (Central Asian Peoples); JL, MK, SS, (East Asian Peoples); Cheryl Argabright, Robert Mooney, Karla Pulliam, PH, (European Peoples); EC, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); TS, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Robin Taylor, Julie Yngsdal, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Al Cummins, Fern Goree, Reginal Hill, John McTyre.

NAMB: Mary Martin, (AR); Lyandon Warren, (NY); Mark Gray, Jeffrey Smith, (NC); Junior Martinez, Puerto Rico; Norbert Mejia, (RI); Benjamin Hays, (TX). **Retired:** Charlie McCullin, (LA).

Thursday, November 7

IMB: Steve Bielinski, Pamela Engle, (American Peoples); RB, TG, TV, (Central Asian Peoples); Prinna Puakpong, BP, JT, TY, (East Asian Peoples); Brad Horne, DU, (European Peoples); AR, EL, KB, KS, SG, SS, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); CS, (South Asian Peoples); Mark Moses, LB, (Southeast Asian Peoples); RB, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** R T Buckley, TB, GT.

NAMB: Sal Fernandez, (CA); Erick Cummings, (FL); Lori Gates, (KY); Lentz Upshaw, (MO); Alisa Harris, (NH); Michael Kenney, (NY); Cutberto Medina, (OH); Shane Kammerer, (OK); Leighanne Wilson, (TN).

Retired: Brenda Hendrickson, Kitty Roberson, (GA).

Friday, November 8

IMB: Martha Guenther, Alan Lyons, (American Peoples); AS, JT, (Central Asian Peoples); Daniel Byrd, Linda Gray, NM, (European Peoples); CM, DL, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); BJ, JE, (South Asian Peoples); David Cobb, Diane Pace, SM, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Clint Bowman, James Edinger, Kelli Snyder, GR, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Doris Garvin, Veda Locke.

NAMB: Justin Almas, Ricky Ketchum, (CO); John Monroe, (MT); Derick Mehboob, (NY); James Cahill, Nova Scotia; Angela Bennett, (OH); Randall Disharoon, (SC); Joe Miranda, (TX). **Retired:** Sylva Rego, (FL); Linda Davis, Jay Durham, Edith Glass, (GA); Verlene Goatley, (KY); Carolyn Lilly, (LA).

Saturday, November 9

IMB: Jeremy Nelson, Sylvia Wingo, (American Peoples); JB, LW, WR, (Central Asian Peoples); HY, RJ, SF, (East Asian Peoples); Albert Heskew, Emery Laszlo, JD, (European Peoples); WS, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); BB, MF, (South Asian Peoples); Kathy Dammon, GK, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Beverly Vick, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Minnie Hicks, Charlene Oakes, Sam Turner.

NAMB: Dick German, (AL); Julio Pineiro, (FL); Jessica Dawson, (LA); Keith Williams, (NM); Marla Vermillion, (NC); Steven Staton, (OH); Jerry Redkey, (TX); Benjamin Knotts, Dan Lawrence, (VA). **Retired:** Marilyn Taylor, Floy Torbett, (GA); Jim Arrant, (LA); Donald Brent, (OK); Maurice Smith, (TX).

Sunday, November 10

IMB: Nancy Chafin, (American Peoples); JL, KM, (East Asian Peoples); Jackie Kirkpatrick, Jennifer Phillips, (European Peoples); AG, AH, NH, PG, TB, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); BR, JE, LC, MW, SB, (South Asian Peoples); Debra Mitchell, Sharon Sigrest, MM, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Beth Locke, Jason Smith, WW, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Sally Bade, Mary Edna Green, Randy Hicks, Laura Frances Lagos, Kathy Latham, Dan Rorabaugh, MP, TM.

NAMB: Ray Jones, (AL); Joel Reyes, (AZ); Christopher Willis, (MA); Larry Woods, (MI); Andrew DeHart, (WV). **Retired:** Patrick Gutierrez, (TX).

Monday, November 11

IMB: Kathleen Coy, (American Peoples); CJ, KH, (Central Asian Peoples); VS, (Deaf Peoples); Layna Austin, Kevin Darnell, (European Peoples); DY, (South Asian Peoples); JB, LC, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Jodie Waller, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Harold Cummins,

Edwin Pinkston, Larry Pumpelly, Rose Mary Register, Alma Rohm, Margaret Waldrop, Bob Williams, Ann Lopez.

NAMB: Oudone Thirakoune, (GA); Jefferson Poll, (HI); Glenn Davis, (KS); Jeanne Wedekind, (MN); Slava Kovalenko, (NY); Matt Munger, (OR); Lara Echerd, (PA); Claire Bishop, Keith Mincey, (SC).

Retired: Sarah Howard, (GA); Judith Gonzalez, (MO).

Tuesday, November 12

IMB: Steven Gillum, Kenan Plunk, JR, (American Peoples); R.C., RA, SW, (Central Asian Peoples); CS, MT, RV, SB, (East Asian Peoples); DV, SS, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); RB, (South Asian Peoples); CB, LL, RV, (Southeast Asian Peoples).

Retired: Michael Collins, Mell Plunk, Alice Stickney, Dave Vick, Fred Walker.

NAMB: Tommy Thomas, (AZ); Kallie Wolf, (CA); Janet Faccinto, (CT); Joseph Jocelyn, (GA); Matthew Castro, (KY); Andrew Lamme, Ontario; William Purdy, (TX). **Retired:** Terry Douglas, (GA); Houston Lanier, (KY).

Wednesday, November 13

IMB: Anthony Conner, Ed Royals, Lisa Sloas, JC, KP, LH, (Central Asian Peoples); Ellen Hale, Beth Judd, Matthew Sargent, SO, TW, (East Asian Peoples); Kevin Rutland, (European Peoples); JL, KD, (South Asian Peoples); KT, PS, (Southeast Asian Peoples).

Retired: Dena Brent, Mary Buckner, Sylvia Foster, Don Jones, Earl Martin, James Young.

NAMB: Bryan Taunton, (AL); Vance Wood, (AZ); Hang Cho, (CA); Ashley (Cummins) Kendall, (GA); Michael Blumhorst, (KS); Jose Dilone, (NE); Jeremiah Pearson, (NJ); Martin Jones, (OH).

Retired: Agnes Mae Davis, (AL); Kathy Wakefield, (CA); Bruce Mundell, (GA); Frances Smith, (MI); Lou Sherrill, (NC); Maxine Hartsell, (OK); Charlotte Green, (OR); Mike Day, (TN).

Thursday, November 14

IMB: BP, RE, (Central Asian Peoples); AJ, JD, (East Asian Peoples); RP, (South Asian Peoples); AP, DS, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Christy Campbell, Bill Eardensohn, Cameron Nault, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Bobby Barnes, Curtis Dixon, Leroy Hogue, Kay Norfleet, Jean Shepard.

NAMB: Joel Berona, (HI); Jorge Melendez, (IL); Lin Harris, (KY); Michael Liner, (MT); Curtis Dixon, (OK); Darren Willett, (TN); Nathan Benke, Mary Essex, (TX). **Retired:** Albert Joaquin (IL); John Hopkins, (KS).

Friday, November 15

IMB: Sharon Coleman, (American Peoples); Marylou Bost, T Elton Bost, Donnie Starkey, Cathy Zwink, TS, (East Asian Peoples); Marcus P, (European Peoples); BT, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); KM, (South Asian Peoples); CC, (Southeast Asian Peoples); AP, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Sue Ballard, Stan Friesen.

NAMB: Danny Hester, (AK); Carlos Carvajal, (AR); Hailu Wuibishet, (IL); Stephen McDonald, (MA); Bryant Moran, (NE); Arnold Wong, Ontario. **Retired:** Lyle Paul, Romulo Soy, (CA); Ozelle Head, (FL); Margaret Slusher, (GA); Anne Mulkey, (NE); Mary Garrett, (NM); Letizia Coacci, Terrell Moore, (NC).

Saturday, November 16

IMB: Pablo Pachalian, (American Peoples); Frances Courson, SW, (Deaf Peoples); SW, WH, (East Asian Peoples); Andrea Brummitt, Ron Frost, KI, (European Peoples); JS, LN, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); Quintin Ratliff, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Wes Gestring, Lee Kauffman, Erin Rodgers, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Betty Burtis, Helen Nixon, Cheryl Collins.

NAMB: Lorna Bius, Ryan Heller, (CO); David Nelson, (GA); Joel Flowers, (IN); Darren Hales, (MT); Ginger Chappell, Kelli Creswell, (NC); Michael Kostelnik, (OH); Brian Musser, (PA); Jacqueline Thornton, (TX); Gary Irby, (WA). **Retired:** Larry Braley, (GA); James McCaughan, (MO).

Sunday, November 17

IMB: RT, (East Asian Peoples); Brad Atkins, Jennifer Dove, Angela Jolley, TD, (European Peoples); JM, JS, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); SC, (South Asian Peoples); CD, (Southeast Asian Peoples); David Carlton, Stephen Haber, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples).

Retired: Julia Graham, Harriet Lennon, Alta Lee Lovegren, Paul Miller.

NAMB: Tommy Stevens, (AZ); Jose Us JR, (LA); Phyllis Lynch, (NM); Shawn Crawley, (OK); Kim Wilson, (PA). **Retired:** Mauricio Vargas, (MO).

Monday, November 18

IMB: Cam Dunson, Jason Frealy, Shawn Idell, (American Peoples); MV, RJ, (Central Asian Peoples); AA, (East Asian Peoples); Carrie Wagner, BE, (European Peoples); KR, (South Asian Peoples); AG, BM, DE, EM, JS, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Billy Blankenship, Debbie Pugh, RS, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Olan Burrow, Tom Kent, Tom Sutton, Linda Walton, Harvey Walworth, John Wither-spoon, Zona Zbinden.



Mark Hasenyager
21590 Conifer Dr
Huson, MT 59846

Birthday: November 24

Mark and Sacha Hasenyager enthusiastically embraced the call to leave their ministry to rural teens in the state of Washington to pastor a church in western Montana. But their enthusiasm faded when offered the opportunity to plant a church in Missoula, Montana. In fact, they adamantly refused the job! They refused for two reasons: 1) They had started one ministry from scratch and had no desire to start another. 2) In their minds, church planting was only for pastor “misfits” who couldn’t be otherwise hired.

But God soon changed their hearts and gave them a burden for the unchurched in Montana. He gave them the vision to plant a “uniquely Montanan” church that would suit the culture. They would reach Montanans by stepping into their world and showing them that God is relevant to their lives. They planted Outdoorsmen Church.

Outdoorsmen Church meets on Wednesday evenings and consists of free barbecue, contemporary worship, high-energy children’s programming, and solid biblical teaching. God has blessed this ministry and has allowed the church to plant another church in the area.

God has laid on Mark’s heart the desire to invest in interns and church planters in western Montana as a church-planting center. He helped establish the Multiply Northwest church-planting network.

Please pray that God would grant wisdom and direction to the leadership of the church. Pray that the church will grow in giving and that more people will be drawn to seek God.

NAMB: Howard Zach, (AK); Mark Clifton, (KS); Jose Lora, (LA); Darren Greer, (MI); Duane Floro, (OH); Joy Kieffer, (PA); Carla Brown, Dee Poe, (TX). **Retired:** Arnie Sorrells, (AZ); Ray Reed, (CA); Jerry Speights, (GA); Michael Odlyzko, (MN); Rose, Hernandez, Puerto Rico; Donoso Escobar, (SD).

Tuesday, November 19

IMB: JL, (East Asian Peoples); Dayna Parker, (European Peoples); DD, (South Asian Peoples); JH, LC, MB, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Dana Blankenship, Brandon Warner, Zach Welch, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Fred Allen, Evelyn Copeland, Dwight Reagan, Vivian Sample.

NAMB: Tom Campbell, (AL); Dennis Milne, Canada; Thomas Klingman, (FL); Anna Jesse, (MO); Sean Pierce, (NY). **Retired:** Dale Martin, (CA); Leon Boyd, (KY); Novella McClung, (NC); Barbara Davidson, (OH); Bob Inlow, (TX).

Wednesday, November 20

IMB: Vicki Grossmann, NS, (American Peoples); KW, TB, TK, (East Asian Peoples); Billy Norris, (European Peoples); HH, MG, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); DP, HB, JT, MO, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Mary Naude, John Putman, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples).

Retired: Audrey Morris, Martha Trotter, Karol Whaley, Dan Wood.

NAMB: Lee Martin, (KS); Thomas Simmons, (MO); Brandon Smith, (MO); Scott Townley, (OH); Chunhai Li, (OK); Ruby Drye, Larry Rainey, (TX); Johnnie Loar, (VT). **Retired:** Mike Pattillo, (GA); Bobby Lewis, (MO); Betty Collins, (SC); Bill Howse, (TN).

Thursday, November 21

IMB: Kaye Brooks, Rhea Chafin, Mark Hobson, Lily Stone, (American Peoples); AB, JF, RH, (Central Asian Peoples); BG, RA, SW, YC, (East Asian Peoples); Andy Arnette, (European Peoples); AR, HM, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); LC, NH, TA, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Laura Jeremiadoss, Dan Johnson, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** David Daniell, Maurice Doyle, Dean Fitzgerald, David Harms, Barry Mitchell, Sharon Pumpelly, Darlyne Sears.

NAMB: Carl Christiansen, (FL); Modie Phillips, (LA); Paul Flores, (NJ); Alberto Hernandez, Steve Sheldon, (PA); Audrey Gibbs, (TX).

Retired: Eileen Kaneubbe, (AZ); Renee Rego, (GA); Patricia Ann McClung, (NE); Jan Malone, (OK); Jesse Hawkins, (TN).

Friday, November 22

IMB: Kevin Baggett, Ken Bowie, (American Peoples); GG, KJ, MT,

SW, (Central Asian Peoples); LB, WS, YH, (East Asian Peoples); Angela Manely, SD, (European Peoples); JK, (Global Resource Team); AB, SS, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); AT, (South Asian Peoples); JL, KM, SA, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Julie Bradford, Dietrich Kauffman, Shannon Lewis, Cliff Vick, PR, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Dennis Folds, Bettye Ann McQueen, Bertie Paul. **NAMB:** Howard Burkhart, (CA); Bill Johnson, (GA); Lis Fitzwater, (KY); Brandon Lansdown, (MO); Sheila Mitchell, (OK); Jason Byers, Ontario; Michael Alexander, Emmett Russell, (TX). **Retired:** Jesus Martinez, Avery Sayer, (GA); Pat Newton, (MS).

Saturday, November 23

IMB: Cindy Jenkins, (American Peoples); JL, (Deaf Peoples); DB, JP, (East Asian Peoples); CP, DR, TS, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); KB, (South Asian Peoples); Karrie King, Marci S. Langston, Kevin Rodgers, MC, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Linda Barron, Betty Gregory, Bill Skinner, Mary Jo Starnes.

NAMB: Laurel Taylor, (AL); Paul Worcester, David Worcester, (CA); Phil Miglioratti, Jay Noh, (IL); Alan Witham, (KY); Chris Nuss, (MS); Gwang Ho Lee, (NY); Bill Loucks, (NC); Doug Flatt, (TN); Kimberly Goodrich, Guyla Laird, (TX). **Retired:** Peggy Colbert, Joan Redford, (GA).

Sunday, November 24

IMB: Brian Massey, (American Peoples); JB, (Central Asian Peoples); JR, (Deaf Peoples); CP, DS, (East Asian Peoples); Mal North, (European Peoples); LC, SS, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); AE, SW, (South Asian Peoples); Rebekah Nissing, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Wes Brizendine, Carolyn Brown, Bobby Elliott, Linda Freeman, Grundy Janes, Ken Watkins.

NAMB: Daniel Rogers, (AZ); Michael Lamke, Kevin Young, (CO); David Kite, (ID); Mark Hasenyager, (MT); Gary Odom, (OH); Franklin Kauahquo, (OK); Micael Waldrop, (TN); Ryan Levi, (TX). **Retired:** Charles Crim, (AL); Horace Kennedy, (NM); Mike McKinney, (TX).

Monday, November 25

IMB: DH, MT, SH, (Central Asian Peoples); Steve Brown, (European Peoples); VG, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); MW, (South Asian Peoples); Savannah Moore, (Southeast Asian Peoples).

Retired: John Bayer, Willie Mae Berry, Barbara Brown, Bert Dyson, Edward Farris, Twila Lee, George Lozuk, Jerry Schleiff, Bonnie Turner, IL.

NAMB: Moises Cabrera, (CA); Paul Bowman, (FL); Nathaniel Martin, (IL); Benjamin Northcutt, (KY); Debra Leafgreen, (OK); Fernando Mangieri, (VA). **Retired:** Merwyn Borders, Ethel Taylor, (GA).

Tuesday, November 26

IMB: Kenny Morris, (American Peoples); ML, (Central Asian Peoples); Karen Fletcher, Carol Hawkins, (European Peoples); JB, MF, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); JM, KH, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Sylvia Huey, Mathew Lawrence, D'Anna Shotts, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Betty Alexander, Mary Jane Allred, Ruth Grosdidier, Faye Stewart, Cara Wood.

NAMB: Pat Rush, (AL); Michael Prince, (AR); Dana Pickens, (CO); Benjamin Borrero, (SC). **Retired:** Efrain Horta Castro, (AL); Home-sinda Vazquez, (FL); Betty Kendall, Paul Montgomery, (GA); Benjamin Yelvington, (NM); Sara Wisdom, (WA).

Wednesday, November 27

IMB: Travis Burkhalter, Sarah Plyler, (American Peoples); AH, KC, (Central Asian Peoples); Mary Swanner, (Deaf Peoples); Kyra Karr, Randy Stoda, KH, (European Peoples); BB, HG, SH, SH, SS, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); Keith Richards, DA, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Donelle Kauffman, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Don Brown, Rose Corbett, Gerald Davis, Jim Dillard, William Gopffarth, Richard Lusk, Bill Sergeant, WS, Susan Brown.

NAMB: Joyce Tillery, (AR); Jesus Bocanegra, (GA); Norman Olive, (IL); Forrest Lindsey, (IN). **Retired:** Pat Hughes, (GA); Minor Davidson, (MD); Cliff Coleman, (OH); Bob Landes, (SC).

Thursday, November 28

IMB: Paula Bowling, Kathy Kemper, CS, (American Peoples); WI, (Central Asian Peoples); BT, MP, RW, (East Asian Peoples); JH, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); David Morse, Kari-rissa Walton, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Gayla Corley, Marilyn Oliver, Betty Poor.

NAMB: Jason Queen, (CA); Chuck Johnston, (LA); Tom Martin, (NE); Pat Boggs, Dan Morgan, Alta Thornton, (TX).

Friday, November 29

IMB: Stan Owens-Hughes, (American Peoples); KB, TI, (Central Asian Peoples); JK, RS, (East Asian Peoples); Andrea Nurse, LS, (European Peoples); HW, JW, (South Asian Peoples); Katherine North, (Southeast Asian Peoples); CE, KS, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples). **Retired:** Lynn Burrow, Hal Jacks, Elizabeth Johnson, Clarence Lance, Betty Walker, Blanche Wester, Louis Crawford, Morley Mason.

NAMB: Cindy Broese van Groenou, (CA); Claire Conner, Jim Louviere, (LA); Cindy Bradley, (MI); Fred MacDonald, (ND); Bruce Smith, (OH);

Thawng Cin, R.C. Falls, (OK); Al Gibbons, (TX); Don Whalen, (WY).
Retired: Glenn McEowen, (TX); Mike Watson, (WV).

Saturday, November 30

IMB: Salva Marlin, (American Peoples); CH, CR, (Central Asian Peoples); TM, (East Asian Peoples); Liz Leininger, Brady Nurse, (European Peoples); TJ, (Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples); CS, (Southeast Asian Peoples); Gregg Fort, (Sub-Saharan African Peoples).

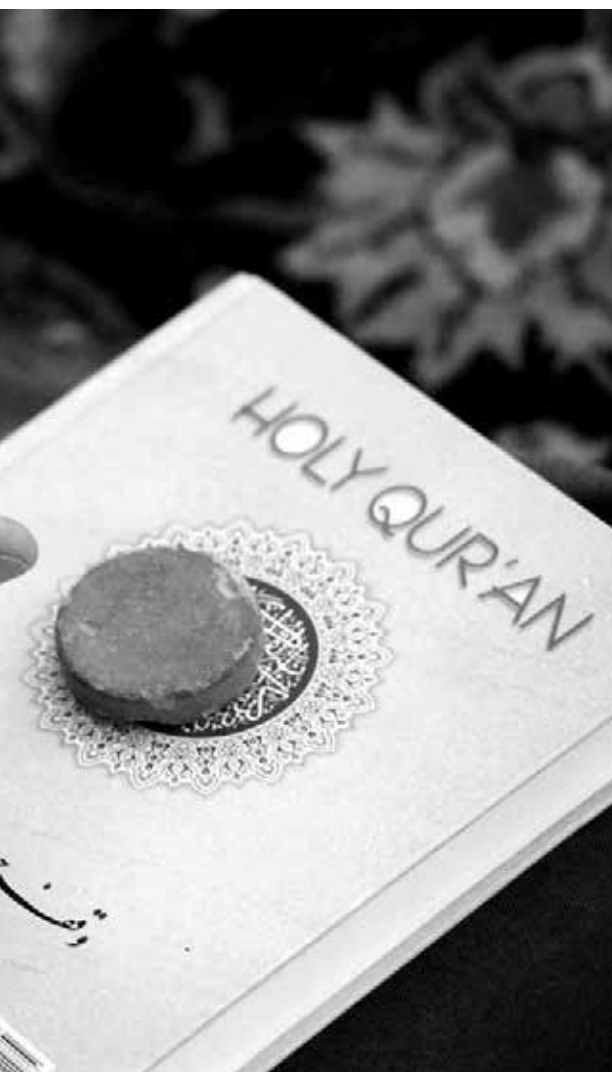
Retired: Hubert Addleton, Jean Allen, Betty Vaught.

NAMB: Charles Owusu, (GA); Boyd Lacy, (IN); Greg Penna, (OK); Bob Raus, (TX). **Retired:** James Newman, (CO); Cynthia Glidewell, (MI); Jean Sizemore, (TN).



Highland Singers of Central Asia

A Christian worker in Central Asia describes a familiar scene: “Each Thursday evening about dusk, if you are paying attention, you will see the people of the Highlands treading along the paths of their neighborhoods. They are gathering for worship in their homes. They



count each new day as beginning at dusk. Each neighborhood has been arbitrarily divided into groups containing 40 families. Those groups, including men and women and children, will gather with the men sitting on one side of the room and the women on the other. They will listen to the leader as he reads what they think of as holy words, and then they will sing hymns and close their meeting by discussing the life issues affecting them.

“Unfortunately the words that are read are from the Quran, not the Bible; the hymns are sung to the Prophet Ali; and their life issues will never truly be resolved without the Father. Rejoice and give thanks to God that the Highland Singers already meet in small groups, and that they have a habit of assembling together! Please pray that the peo-

ple of the Highlands will be open to hearing the truth of Jesus.”

Pray that whole households and villages will repent of their sin and believe in Jesus as their Savior. Pray that they will gather as a church, with Jesus as the head.

Explore the region and engage the people of Central Asia by praying and going. Learn more at <http://centralasianpeoples.imb.org>.



Tuesday, October 15

A Heart for the Lord

Devotional Passage:

Jeremiah 24:4-7

Read the Bible Through:

Jeremiah 27-28

1 Thessalonians 1

And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.

Jeremiah 24:7

Emergency weather personnel must feel frustrated when they warn people of incoming storms and no one seems to listen. Forecasters advise listeners of danger and encourage them to take necessary precautions. Many residents heed the warnings and evacuate or take shelter while others simply ignore the warnings.

As a prophet of God, Jeremiah had a difficult job. He worked for decades trying to get God's people to turn from their wicked ways by providing warnings of God's coming judgment. He grieved their deafness to God's message. However, God encouraged Jeremiah through a vision, letting the prophet know that those who heeded Jeremiah's warnings would be protected. God promised that His people would long to know Him.

Have you lost your focus on the Lord? Have you ignored warnings from fellow believers or God's Word? Have you stopped listening to the still, small voice of your Savior? Heed the message your Father has for you. Return to God with all your heart, and enjoy close fellowship with your Creator. Allow Him to protect, comfort, and sustain you.

Father, I want to know You and obey Your will. Help me return to You with all my heart.

Wednesday, October 16

Possible Impossibilities

Devotional Passage:

Mark 10:23-27

Read the Bible Through:

Jeremiah 29–30

1 Thessalonians 2

*And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.
Mark 10:27*

The disciples may have recognized the needle Jesus mentioned as a gate with a narrow opening that would require a camel to be relieved of his load and stoop low in order to get through. That would have been an inconvenient undertaking for travelers (and for the camel). Proverbially, a camel trying to squeeze through the eye of an actual needle was presented as a total impossibility. In the same manner, the rich, young ruler found that giving up all his possessions would present a personal difficulty—albeit, an impossibility.

The disciples could not believe what Jesus was saying. The religious traditions of their day suggested that people became rich because they were highly favored by God. If wealthy people could not get into heaven easily, then how were a bunch of fishermen and tax collectors going to get there? Astonished, the disciples must have felt like giving up. Once again, tradition muddled their understanding of God's work.

Jesus explained that wealth was not the ticket to God's Kingdom. Human understanding can never surpass God's miraculous grace. He is truly Lord of all, and nothing is impossible for Him.

Father, remind me that, in You, all things are possible.

Thursday, October 17

You Can Count on Him

Devotional Passage:

Isaiah 46:3-4

Read the Bible Through:

Jeremiah 31

1 Thessalonians 3

And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you. Isaiah 46:4

In society, things are often not what they seem. We have embraced ‘reality’ television programming that is far from reality. We allow ourselves to be deceived for the sake of entertainment. As a result, hidden agendas, greedy motives, and manipulative tactics make it hard to trust others in the rest of life.

I am thankful we serve a God who is completely trustworthy. He never changes. He is more than a stone or wooden idol. He is bigger than a worshiped ideal. He is personal, and we can talk to Him. He is real; we can see Him working in our lives and in the lives of others. He is relevant because the principles He established long ago still apply to our lives today.

Isaiah reminded the Israelites that God would always be with them. We need a similar reminder. When God speaks, we can trust that He means what He says. He is not motivated by worldly pursuits or devious tactics. God has no hidden agenda, greedy motive, or manipulative purpose. He will care for us because He loves us. Wrinkles and gray hair will not drag Him away from His dear children! You can count on God because, at the very core of His nature, He is faithful.

Father, I am so grateful that I can always count on You.

Friday, October 18

The Joy of Good News

Devotional Passage:
Isaiah 52:7-8

Read the Bible Through:
Jeremiah 32
1 Thessalonians 4

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

Everyone likes to receive good news. Hearing exciting things brings smiles to our faces and brightness to our dreary days. Job promotions, positive medical reports, and good report cards help create happiness.

The people of Jerusalem were going home. After decades of bondage, they were being released from their captivity. What a sight it must have been to see the messengers making their way across the mountain to deliver the news. Jerusalem's salvation had finally come!

Many commentators believe that Isaiah was also talking about the coming of the Messiah. People are in spiritual captivity in our world today. We need to put feet to our message and carry the good news of freedom to those held in bondage. We need to show them the way home. We need to traverse proverbial and literal mountains to deliver the gospel message to those who are longing to hear the good news of God's salvation through Jesus Christ. Will you allow God to use you to share His good news with captives in your neighborhood or where you work?

Father, help me to be a faithful messenger who shares the joyous good news of Your gift of salvation.

Saturday, October 19

Last, but Not Least

Devotional Passage:

Genesis 2:4-7

Read the Bible Through:

Jeremiah 33-34

1 Thessalonians 5

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. Genesis 2:7

With His voice, He lit up the darkness and created every manner of bird, fish, and animal. Out of nothing, God Almighty created everything. He spoke, and flowering plants, towering trees, and luscious vegetation burst into existence. At His Word, oceans crashed against their limiting shores, mountains rose toward the sky, and planets settled into their orbits. At His command, stars sparkled at night and the sun blazed during the day. The Creator had fashioned a breathtaking, beautiful masterpiece, but He wasn't finished.

He reached down and gathered a handful of the earth He had created. With loving hands, He carefully molded the soil until He was satisfied with the shape. Painstakingly, He fashioned eyes that would see His majestic creation, hands that would tend the bountiful earth, ears that could hear His praise proclaimed throughout the natural realm, and a heart that would beat with the Creator's love. With His own breath, God filled the new lungs of His creation with life. The God of the universe saved His best design and greatest treasure until last. He created humankind.

Father, thank You for valuing me and giving me life. Help me treasure the relationship for which You created me.

Sunday, October 20

Want to Know What God Is Like?

Devotional Passage:

John 12:44-46

Read the Bible Through:

Jeremiah 35-36

2 Thessalonians 1

And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. John 12:45

The teacher asked, “What are you drawing?”
“I am drawing a picture of God,” the little girl replied.
The teacher gently reprimanded, “But no one knows what God looks like.”

“That’s why I am drawing this picture. They will when I am finished.”

Some of us, if we are honest, would really like to see that picture of God. Sometimes, it would be easier to live out the Christian life if we could just see God.

God gave us a picture of Himself in His Son, Jesus. In Jesus’ temptation, we see God’s perfect holiness lived out in human life. As He cleansed the temple driving out the money changers, we get a glimpse of God’s wrath. When we see Jesus embracing children, we see God’s loving arms open to all mankind. When we see Jesus teaching His disciples, we see the fullness of God’s truth in living flesh. When we see Christ on the cross, we see the full extent of God’s grace poured out for fallen humanity. In the resurrection of Jesus we see God’s promise of eternal life. Just as John fell on his face before the glorified Christ, we too should tremble at His glory.

Jesus is God revealed to us. He is Emmanuel, God with us. When we look at Jesus, we see what God is like.

*Father, praise to You for revealing Yourself to us
in the face of Jesus.*

Monday, October 21

Whom Do You Trust?

Devotional Passage:

Psalms 118:5-8

Read the Bible Through:

Jeremiah 37-38

2 Thessalonians 2

It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. Psalm 118:8

When I was growing up, the largest bank in our city was the First National Bank and Trust Company. That sounds dependable and trustworthy, doesn't it? The very name indicates, "You can trust this bank." Of course, the name itself did not keep anyone or anything safe. However, the name represented a promise to the bank's customers who would want assurance that their money was secure.

Security is one of our basic emotional needs. We all have a need to feel safe. We live in a world of danger and risk. So, where do you turn for refuge in the face of trouble? Whom do you call on first when you feel your life is teetering over the brink of disaster? Whom do you trust? We all must ultimately decide where we will put our faith.

The psalmist declared, through personal experience, that God was worthy of his trust. He recognized that the Lord is our only true security in this life and beyond. In verse 6, he stated that the Lord is for us. If the Lord is on your side, what can human beings do to you? We do depend, to some extent, on others for safety and security. But as the psalmist declared, ultimately and finally, we need to recognize that the Lord is on our side over anything or anyone else.

Lord, I ask You to help me put my trust in You.

Tuesday, October 22

The Lord Exalts

Devotional Passage:

James 4:8-10

Read the Bible Through:

Jeremiah 39–41

2 Thessalonians 3

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. James 4:10

A child on the playground shrieks. “Look at me, Mom! Look at me!”

All of us have been that child. We wanted attention; we wanted to be seen. Many people spend a good part of their lives looking for ways to call attention to themselves. Some try to impress others by their external appearance. Others call attention to themselves through their athletic, academic, or material success.

Modern psychology often seeks to help people overcome low self-esteem by urging them to practice an exaggerated self-love. Unfortunately, this may only build people up for an inevitable fall. One’s love of self is to be rooted in an understanding of God’s love. In fact, God’s Word instructs us to humble ourselves and draw near to God. That is one of the great paradoxes in Scripture. Rarely in the world are the humble exalted. That is the path to being raised up for believers—we are exalted only after we humble ourselves before God.

In genuine humility we recognize our desperate need of God. We grieve over our impure hearts and lives and cry out for God’s forgiveness. Then by God’s great grace, He lifts us up to embrace us in His glory.

Father, I stand before You in need of forgiveness.

Embrace me and lift me up only for Your glory.

Wednesday, October 23

The Lord Provides

Devotional Passage:

Exodus 15:22-27

Read the Bible Through:

Jeremiah 42-43

1 Timothy 1

And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them. Exodus 15:25

We had a well at our house when I was a boy. The well provided the water we used for all of our cooking and drinking. The well had fairly hard water with a strong taste. When our friends came to our house, they thought our water was horrible. But even to this day, I simply remember that water quenching my thirst. The sweetness of our home seemed to bless the water.

After traveling three days in the desert without water, the Israelites came to Marah, which means “bitter.” As thirsty as they had to be after three days in the dessert, the water was too bitter to drink. Moses cried out to the Lord—that He would provide water for His people. The Lord directed Moses to a tree that was then cast into the waters, making them sweet to drink.

But the water was not the only thing that was bitter in that desert. The people’s hearts were bitter. They were murmuring against Moses and God. It took God to sweeten their hearts as He sweetened the water. Both were miracles of God’s provision. God demonstrated that He is indeed our Provider.

Lord, my Provider, work in my life as necessary to produce sweetness in my heart and soul.

Thursday, October 24

The Lord Guides

Devotional Passage:

Psalms 73:23-28

Read the Bible Through:

Jeremiah 44-45

1 Timothy 2

Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Psalm 73:24

My daughter and son-in-law insist that our granddaughter hold someone's hand in a parking lot or when crossing a street. They take that action to provide care, safety, and guidance for the child they love. They take the lead in guiding their child to make wise choices. God has a similar rule for His children because He loves us. Spiritually speaking, we are to hold His hand.

He leads us personally. The Lord sends no substitutes. The psalmist affirmed in this passage that God is always with us and that He hold our "right hand." We need to be held tightly by the hand of God.

Of course, another way we receive God's guidance is through Scripture—the 'counsel' identified in verse 24. Through His Word, God counsels us, reveals His holy truth, and provides instruction for daily living. We are to heed His Word, knowing that He provides it for our good.

God ultimately leads us to glory. Through Jesus, God leads us deeper and deeper into His glorious presence. His glory is a reward—not things, but His words of commendation: "Well done, good and faithful servant." His glory will be our eternal home; He will embrace us with His glory in heaven.

Lord, hold my hand lest I stray into spiritual danger. Then receive me in Your glory.

Friday, October 25

The Gospel Can't Be Contained

Devotional Passage:

Mark 2:18-22

Read the Bible Through:

Jeremiah 46–47

1 Timothy 3

And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles. Mark 2:22

For more than 20 years, I taught in a high school classroom. In order to facilitate learning, I established strict rules and strong boundaries concerning how I related to my students. Over the years, some of my former students have joined the faculty at my school. Since they are now my colleagues, I relate to them differently. I enjoy the freedom to establish a more flexible relationship with them as friends and coworkers.

Jesus came to establish the new covenant—a new way of relating to His followers. The rigidity of legalism could not hold His covenant of grace and mercy. He compared the way of legalism to old, brittle wineskins that burst when the new, fresh wine of the gospel message was poured into them. Judaism, which regulated behavior by rules, stood in stark contrast to the liberating freshness of the gospel message. God, through Jesus, provided grace and mercy to all who will come to Him in repentance and in a desire to have a personal relationship with Him. Jesus came to do something new: to establish a relationship with God not regulated by law but by love.

Father, thank You that the gospel allows me to relate to You personally through Your love and mercy.

Saturday, October 26

The Lord Reigns

Devotional Passage:

Psalms 103:19-22

Read the Bible Through:

Jeremiah 48

1 Timothy 4

The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. Psalm 103:19

In the last two summer Olympic Games, Michael Phelps broke the record for winning more medals than any other athlete in the history of the Olympics. Now, he reigns as the all-time most decorated Olympic athlete, with 22 medals to his name, 18 of them gold. Every time Phelps broke one of the swimming records, he dethroned another record-holder and ended the reign of a former champion. How long will Phelps' achievements last? No one knows, but because he is human, his records may be broken one day.

Unlike human champions, the Lord reigns supreme forever. There will never be an end to His reign. He reigns in heaven, and His kingdom extends over all: all people, all rulers, and all worldly champions. God has permanently established His throne in the heavens; no one will ever dethrone the Lord.

We can find great comfort in knowing that our God has power over everything, especially in this world where we constantly face change and instability. We can be strengthened greatly by knowing that our supreme Lord champions our cause as we walk with Him every day in obedience and faith.

Father, thank You for the comfort and strength You provide as the Lord who reigns supreme forever and ever.

Sunday, October 27

The Value of Wisdom

Devotional Passage:

Proverbs 3:13-17

Read the Bible Through:

Jeremiah 49

1 Timothy 5

Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. Proverbs 3:17

What a wonderful life we would live if all our ways were pleasant and all our paths were peace. We long for such a life, but often it seems out of reach or beyond our comprehension. Perhaps we never experience such a life because we fail to follow God's path of wisdom. When we fully follow God's way of wisdom, He brings pleasantness and peace.

God path of wisdom does not always reflect what we think is best. Thus, we may face a crisis of belief. Consider a couple of Old Testament examples. Imagine how difficult it was for Joshua when the Lord asked him to march the Israelites around Jericho before the walls would fall. Similarly, Abraham may have considered God's request to sacrifice Isaac to be incomprehensible. Yet, he acted in faith willing to do so. In both cases, God intervened to bring pleasure and peace because of their willingness to follow God's path of wisdom.

God's path of wisdom may be difficult and less frequently chosen. Even so, when we choose, we discover it to be the path of blessing and delight. Not only does God want us to walk His path of wisdom, He also provides the wisdom we need when we ask. Check out James 1:5.

*Father, may I be willing to choose Your path of wisdom,
knowing that Your way makes all the difference.*

Monday, October 28

Make Every Day Count

Devotional Passage:

Psalms 90:10-17

Read the Bible Through:

Jeremiah 50

1 Timothy 6

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Psalm 90:12

Recently, I read the story of Sara Frankl, who suffered from a debilitating form of arthritis that left her in severe and chronic pain. Sara lived homebound in her condo for three years until the disease finally took her life, but she refused to waste her days.

“Choose joy” became Sara’s motto as she created an online community through a blog. Sara made an enormous impact on her friends, all across the country, by choosing to love freely and to give of herself intentionally despite her own physical pain and limitations. After her death, one headline read, “Popular Blogger Dies While Pointing Others to God.”

Like Sara, I have been confined to my home following chemotherapy for breast cancer. Some days have been long and lonesome, and I have wondered how to make them count. But Sara’s example challenges us to live wisely. Despite our circumstances, we can demonstrate our belief that God is good and that He is working to accomplish great things through our lives. As Sara said, “This world is not about us; it’s about what He does through us.” Number your days—and make them count for God.

Father, I purpose to make every day count by wisely choosing joy and freely reaching out to others in love.

Tuesday, October 29

Whom Will You Serve?

Devotional Passage:

Joshua 24:23-25

Read the Bible Through:

Jeremiah 51

2 Timothy 1

And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey. Joshua 24:24

The Book of Joshua records the Israelites' numerous battles as they took possession of the land of Canaan. Joshua led them to destroy the heathen cities and their gods lest they become a snare. By following Joshua's leadership, the Israelites remained true to God, serving and obeying Him as He had commanded.

Why, then, did Joshua call the Israelites to choose whom they would serve in chapter 24? Perhaps Joshua discerned that once their conquest and settlement of Canaan was complete, they would be tempted to wane in their service to the Lord. Of course, as you read the rest of the Old Testament, you realize that is what happened.

How would you respond, today, to Joshua's challenge to choose whom you will serve? Like the Israelites, we may follow the Lord fervently during times of crisis, but once the crisis is over, our service and obedience may wane. Joshua called the Israelites to pledge lifetime allegiance to the Lord who had brought great deliverance to His people. They responded, "The LORD our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey." May our commitment to the Lord be no less, whether we're experiencing times of crisis or times of ease.

Father, my heart is prone to wander. Keep me committed to You no matter what my circumstances.

Wednesday, October 30

A Gift of Peace

Devotional Passage:

John 14:27

Read the Bible Through:

Jeremiah 52

2 Timothy 2

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. John 14:27

Jesus said, “I go to prepare a place for you” (John 14:2), but His disciples’ faces likely fell as Jesus announced He was leaving them. Confused countenances stared back at Him as Jesus promised not to leave them comfortless but to send the Holy Spirit to abide with them forever. The disciples’ hearts were undoubtedly fearful of living without Jesus’ physical presence. Although Jesus sought to reassure them, His disciples may have felt they were receiving the worst news possible.

How do we respond when we receive the worst news possible? Perhaps much like the disciples did. Jesus longs to speak peace to our troubled souls. When we open our hearts to receive His peace, He turns turmoil to calm. Peace does not mean we no longer have any questions, but we can have a confident assurance that God is in control and is caring for us completely. Unlike any pseudo-peace the world offers, Jesus’ gift of peace provides solace that we are in His constant care.

This passage encourages us to realize that the peace that Jesus provides is so much different than the peace the world offers. Enjoy God’s gift of peace today.

Father, thank You for Your gift of peace that offers the solace all of us desperately need.

Thursday, October 31

Flee, Then Follow

Devotional Passage:

2 Timothy 2:19-23

Read the Bible Through:

Lamentations 1

2 Timothy 3

Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 2 Timothy 2:22

Flee, then follow. This command calls for a deliberate choice. We are to flee youthful lusts, like Joseph fled when Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him (Gen. 39:7-19). "Flee" denotes a sense of urgency to run from that which is dangerous and destructive. Just as we flee physical danger to save our bodies from harm, so we are to flee spiritual danger to save our spirits from harm. In the process, our choice often keeps others from harm. Joseph's choice kept himself from moral destruction.

If we are to run away from youthful lusts, then where should we go? The challenge to flee implies that you should head somewhere else. Paul's words to young Timothy invoke us to "follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace." This should be the norm for the Christian whose heart has been purified by calling on the Lord. In society, following one's lustful preferences is encouraged and even applauded. We are to flee such a broad road of sinfulness and follow with urgency the way of righteousness laid out for the pure in heart. Flee, then follow. That is the encouragement for believers.

Father, may Your Holy Spirit fill me with a sense of urgency to flee destructive and sinful lusts and to follow Your way of righteousness.

Friday, November 1

The Cost of Discipleship

Devotional Passage:
Matthew 16:24-26

Read the Bible Through:
Lamentations 2
2 Timothy 4

Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. Matthew 16:24

The cost of higher education seems to have increased exponentially over the last two decades, yet college enrollment is at an all-time high. Young people, along with their parents, understand the value of a good education and the increased potential of getting a job in their chosen field after earning a college degree. The benefits of a college education are worth the high cost.

Jesus explained that being His disciple comes at a high cost as well. However, the reward is eternal. The cost of discipleship includes self-denial for the benefit of others, bearing sacrificial burdens, and following Jesus' model. One commentary writer, to explain this Scripture, stated, "this refers to the death march of the Christian disciple, who is figuratively sentenced to crucifixion over his decision to follow Christ. The Christian must be prepared to give his life for Jesus." Denial of self in order to follow Christ is the call.

The reward for a college education does not come close to the eternal reward Jesus has waiting for us in heaven. Jesus described a high cost for following Him in discipleship, but the reward is guaranteed.

Father, give me the courage and strength to follow Jesus as His disciple regardless of the cost.



Saturday, November 2

The Source of Truth

Devotional Passage:

John 7:14-18

Read the Bible Through:

Lamentations 3

Titus 1

Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. John 7:16

Do we know whom to trust these days? Do we know where to find truth? An Internet search on any topic yields thousands of results representing a variety of opinions and versions of “truth.” Some people think that just because something is on the Internet, it must be true. Honestly, it can be quite confusing, in the midst of all the different voices trying to convince us of truth, to discern what is really true. How can we know what is truth and what is not?

Finding the truth and knowing truth can be difficult everywhere—sometimes even among believers. If those who are teaching us share more of their personal opinions than the truth of Scripture, we may find ourselves misled from the truth. Jesus stated that His teaching came from God. What Jesus taught never veered from what God and His Word taught, for Jesus knew that God’s Word is always the ultimate source of truth. Therefore, we can trust what Jesus taught.

Many people will offer their opinion as truth, but we always can trust God’s Word to be accurate in every way. Jesus said, “Follow Me.” He did not instruct us to choose to follow someone else’s opinion over the Word of God.

Father, thank You for giving us Your Word, the source of all truth. May I be faithful to it always.

Sunday, November 3

Our Eternal Preserver

Devotional Passage:
Psalm 12:1-8

Read the Bible Through:
Lamentations 4
Titus 2

Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever. The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted. Psalm 12:7-8

The radio talk show host called it the “War on Christianity.” Today, we often face anti-Christian bias from the media, our neighbors, local and national businesses, and even the government. Kids are ridiculed at school for their faith. People complain about Bible studies in their neighborhoods. Many towns cannot publicly display the Ten Commandments or religious symbols. Even among Christians, we sometimes see corruption, dishonesty, immorality, denial of the authority of Scripture, and denial of Christ’s sufficiency. This may lead us to think that the enemy is winning and the faithful are losing the battle. That, however, is not true.

King David, in the Old Testament, felt the same way. Even his own people were out to destroy him. Psalm 12 describes David’s feeling of being overwhelmed with the wickedness around him. He saw corruption and immorality in the royal court and amongst the religious leaders. Yet, he recognized that even in the midst of all the villainess, God is still sovereign. God preserves His children for His name’s sake. Scripture reminds us that God is for us; He is on our side.

Father, thank You that I can rely on You to help me stand firm against the wickedness that surrounds me.

Monday, November 4

Facing Trouble Without Stress

Devotional Passage:
2 Corinthians 4:7-12

Read the Bible Through:
Lamentations 5
Titus 3

We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair. 2 Corinthians 4:8

Who likes pain? Who rejoices in suffering? No one. Yet in life we will generally have both pain and suffering. One of the greatest pains is the pain of rejection. The apostle Paul was beaten, tortured, scorned, and slandered almost everywhere he went. He knew, first-hand, the pain of rejection. Though many rejected his message of salvation in Christ, he was not deterred but boldly charged ahead. His words in this passage are not only a personal expression of his own experience, they are a challenge to persevere for all believers. We are frail in our own ability, but God's power is evidenced in us.

As Christians, we are called to share this same message of hope to the lost. Knowing the pain of rejection that may come, and possibly even physical pain for some believers, how can we be obedient to the charge that Christ has given us all, to "go and make disciples of all nations"? We can be confident because we have what Paul and the other apostles had—God's power, provision, presence, and love. In our message, we carry the life of Christ and His resurrection, which is hope and salvation. God presence allows us to face trouble, difficulties, pain, and persecution without despair.

*Father, thank You for the privilege of sharing the gospel,
and thank You for being with me.*

Tuesday, November 5

A Model of Moral Integrity

Devotional Passage:

Genesis 39:5-10

Read the Bible Through:

Ezekiel 1-2

Philemon

There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? Genesis 39:9

These are excuses often given by those who justify doing what is morally wrong: “Everybody does it.” “Who will ever know?” “It’s not that big of a deal.” We are surrounded by media displays of immorality that could lead us to believe immorality is not immoral.

Joseph seemed to have the perfect opportunity to enjoy a sexual liaison with Potiphar’s wife. Only he and she would ever know, right? What harm would it do? Joseph, a man of moral integrity, would not let himself be snared by sin’s web, even at the cost of disobeying his master’s wife, regardless of what the consequence might be.

Christians are called to be holy because God is holy. However, many Christians are tempted to justify their sin even when God says, “Don’t do it.” Human justification will deceive us into sinful actions. We must remember, however, that sin always has consequences.

We must constantly be on alert, for it is easy to be lured by sin’s deception. We are to stand strong against sin even when no one is around or when everyone seems to be doing it.

*Father, may I be a model of integrity even when
I believe no one is looking.*

Wednesday, November 6

Empowered to Serve

Devotional Passage:
Ephesians 3:1-7

Read the Bible Through:
Ezekiel 3-5
Hebrews 1

Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power. Ephesians 3:7

Charles Colson and Jack Eckerd co-wrote a book titled, *Why America Doesn't Work*. The book addressed prison ministry and the necessity to give skills training to prisoners in advance of their release. Without training in some job skill, prisoners almost always returned to crime and prison. However, few of those with job skills returned to prison. The book showed that people need purposeful work to keep them from idleness and crime. Doing meaningful work is a necessity of life.

God gives each believer a gift or gifts in order to do the work He appoints to us. God calls Christians to serve in the kingdom, empowers them to serve, and rewards them in the end. All believers have a purpose in God's redemptive plan for the world. Just as Paul was called to serve as a minister of God's grace, every believer has been called to serve as ministers for God's glory according to the different gifts He gives to each believer.

Have you found your calling for serving God? Are you dependent upon His power to help you? Putting your gifts and skills into service in the kingdom will enhance your life and will bring God the glory.

Father, help me to put Your resources and gifts into good use in Your kingdom work and for Your glory.

Thursday, November 7

God's Inexhaustible Supply

Devotional Passage:
Philippians 4:14-20

Read the Bible Through:
Ezekiel 6-7
Hebrews 2

But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19

Paul praised the church members at Philippi because of their heart for giving financially to the mission of sharing God's Word with others. The church held a special place in the apostle's heart because of its generous giving to help his work as he visited town after town to share the gospel of Christ and encourage the brethren.

Paul inferred that it was a privilege for the church to give as it had. He went on to assure the church that, although its generosity may cause the church some immediate financial pain, God's supply of blessing would meet the church's every need.

The Greek word used for *all* means "all, any, every, the whole"—it is all-encompassing. There is not a need that you or I have that God cannot meet according to all the riches of Christ. The old saying is true, "One can't out-give God." God has blessed us with the opportunity to help provide for missionaries who serve Him both at home and throughout the world.

In the Scripture passage for today, Paul noted that giving, a physical and material act, results in spiritual fruit, or interest, for the kingdom of God. It is a spiritual transaction in which we can trust God to provide for all we need.

Father, help me to be a faithful and cheerful giver, knowing that You will supply everything I need.

Friday, November 8

Experiencing God

Devotional Passage:

Job 42:1-6

Read the Bible Through:

Ezekiel 8-10

Hebrews 3

I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Job 42:5

Recently I heard a handsome young university graduate share an emotional testimony of his life-altering experience. During his college years, the student participated in a lifestyle of selfish indulgence involving drugs, alcohol, and wild living. His conversion resulted in a miraculous change in attitude, desires, and values. He no longer was a “smart know-it-all” but manifested an attitude of humility and a desire to listen to God and know Him intimately. Why? Because he had come to know God in a personal relationship.

Job, an upright and God-fearing man, also had a life-altering experience with God. Out of his experience with suffering, loss, and questioning God, Job repented of his distrust of God and acknowledged God’s greatness, power, and wisdom. When Job ran out of questions, he was ready to listen humbly to God. After all he went through, he had a personal revelation of who God is.

What an amazing difference it is to experience God rather than only know about Him. May each of us be grateful for the constant presence of God and be ready to experience Him in life-changing ways.

Father, help me to repent of any selfish pride and to humbly seek Your presence daily.

Saturday, November 9

Choose What's Best

Devotional Passage:
Luke 10:38-42

Read the Bible Through:
Ezekiel 11-12
Hebrews 4

But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her. Luke 10:42

Jesus traveled toward Jerusalem. His death was imminent. Perhaps He desired a temporary refuge away from the demanding crowd. He went to the home of Martha in Bethany where she and her sister Mary lived.

During His visit, Martha became irritated because Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet listening intently to Him, totally uninvolved with helping her prepare the meal for their guest. Feeling overwhelmed, Martha wanted Jesus to chastise Mary. Instead Jesus gently rebuffed Martha for choosing to be concerned about unimportant things. Mary had chosen the best thing—to enjoy His presence.

As a dynamo of activity, I identify with Martha. When visiting my mother, I frequently became so involved in helping that I neglected sitting, talking and listening to her. Mother's gentle reminder that she desired my presence instead of my activity was a painful rebuke.

It is crucial for us to remember Jesus' rebuke. Our involvement in less important, temporal things instead of resting quietly in His presence is a waste of precious time. May we discard some of the things that fill our days, instead choosing to sit quietly in the presence of Jesus—the best choice!

Father, help me to choose to use my time wisely beginning with what is most important—time in Your presence.

Sunday, November 10

The Godly Woman

Devotional Passage:
Proverbs 31:25-31

Read the Bible Through:
Ezekiel 13–14
Hebrews 5

Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised. Proverbs 31:30

In my first experience as a pastor's wife, I met "Mama Gert," who became my "cheerleader" and exemplified for me a godly woman. At 85, Mama Gert was loved by young and old; she was respected for her kind words, ready smile, humor, and devoted Christian life. A modest woman, plain in dress, she labored in the garden with her husband, "Brother John," and took care of her extended family. Everyone enjoyed her quick wit. One day I asked her, "How did you get to be 85 and sweet while some people your age seem sour and grumpy?" With a twinkle in her eye, she responded, "If you want to be sweet at 85, you have to start early."

Proverbs 31 describes a virtuous woman as wise, one who speaks kindly, makes her husband proud, fears the Lord, and is influential in the community. She is a trustworthy treasure, more valuable than jewels. Beauty fades, but the woman who fears the Lord deserves praise! Oh, to be like that woman!

The descriptions in this chapter identify a godly wife, but we all can learn from these principles. Women and men alike can strive to be people who fear the Lord and are praised by others for our faith.

*Father, thank You for godly women who influence our lives.
Help me to be a person who positively influences others.*

Monday, November 11

The Blessed Nation

Devotional Passage:
Psalm 33:10-12

Read the Bible Through:
Ezekiel 15–16
Hebrews 6

*Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.
Psalm 33:12*

This psalm is a song of joy and praise for God's righteousness and power in creation. God can foil the plans of nations and hinder the objectives of people if they disobey His plans. The people who follow Him are especially blessed when they seek to fulfill His purposes. This Scripture passage reminds us that God is active in the lives of His creation, aware of us, and near to us. That knowledge should move us to joyful worship.

Our nation was founded on Judeo-Christian principles and values. Our constitution and currency declare that our trust is in God. Many years ago, when television stations signed off each night (yes, they actually did that), many would use today's Scripture as a sign-off verse. Yet many of the actions across our nation today do not exemplify the trust in God we claim.

The military develops strategies, and politicians set into motion domestic policies to address threats to national security and promote economic prosperity. But their actions do not guarantee success. We must acknowledge that victory comes from the Lord. God is Creator and Deliverer; He moves throughout history and is involved in the lives of His people.

Father, as a nation, may we choose to seek You.



Tuesday, November 12

Choose Leaders Carefully

Devotional Passage:

1 Timothy 5:17-22

Read the Bible Through:

Ezekiel 17-18

Hebrews 7

Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure. 1 Timothy 5:22

Paul's letter of instruction regarding church order and discipline was written to Timothy, his spiritual son converted under his ministry. Paul gave instructions for a variety of matters, including choosing leaders. Paul instructed Timothy to give careful thought and scrutiny to a man before ordaining him as a minister. Additionally, he urged Timothy to keep himself pure and avoid participation in the sins of others. Paul admonished Timothy to keep a close check on himself.

Our church elected deacons recently. As I contemplated my choices and marked my ballot, this Scripture text penetrated my heart. Having previous notice of the eligible candidates, I had studied the information regarding background, family, and service, so I felt informed concerning my choices. The deacons elected by the church would have the opportunity to be role models and examples of servant leadership to all of us. What an incredible opportunity! My responsibility was to select servants who had proven themselves as Christ's disciples, but also to examine myself personally for the presence of sin in my own life. As I made my selections, I was challenged anew to keep a close check on my own life!

Father, help us to choose spiritual leaders wisely and to live as we expect them to live.

Wednesday, November 13
Daily Renewal

Devotional Passage:
2 Corinthians 4:13-18

Read the Bible Through:
Ezekiel 19–20
Hebrews 8

*For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.
2 Corinthians 4:16*

In this letter to the Corinthians, Paul spoke of his sufferings, which included beatings, imprisonments, plots, and persecutions. Although his sufferings resulted in bodily deterioration, he was renewed daily because his eyes were fixed on Jesus. No suffering in this world, for Paul, compared to the glory in the next. The secret of his endurance was his anticipation of the resurrected life. As Christians, we have hope beyond our burdens and hardships because we view life as an exciting journey of growing closer to God.

On my back patio, I have 14 hanging baskets of lovely blooming fuchsia bougainvilleas. These gorgeous flowers need watering frequently to produce bright radiant flowers. Without fresh water, the branches will droop and wither—even failing to produce new growth.

What a reminder of our daily need for the “living water” that renews our lives and enables us to grow spiritually. Though we may experience hardships and difficulties, we do not lose heart because daily we are gaining strength, inspiration, and courage to go through God’s Word because of the eternal glory that will outweigh all suffering.

*Father, enable me to live victoriously because of my
anticipation of eternity with You.*

Thursday, November 14

Don't Play the Blame Game

Devotional Passage:

Genesis 3:8-13

Read the Bible Through:

Ezekiel 21–22

Hebrews 9

And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

Genesis 3:12

As children, most of us learned to play games such as hopscotch, tag, Simon Says, hide-and-seek, and other similar fun games. Another game many of us learned while young was not so good and pure—we could call it the “blame game.”

Here’s how we played the blame game. Our parents asked, “Who did this?” or “What happened here?” We quickly answered, “He did it,” or “She did it”—thus deflecting the consequences of our disobedience, at least for the moment.

Adam and Eve started the blame game. When God confronted their disobedience, they quickly pointed fingers of blame toward each other and the serpent, hoping to deflect personal consequences.

We are God’s children, and His desire is that we rely on the Holy Spirit’s power, withstand the temptations we face, and turn away from disobedience. But when we do disobey God, He calls for us to confess our sin. He waits for us, willing to restore us to right fellowship with Him. Let’s quit the blame game with God and with each other and accept our responsibility for our own actions.

*Father, help me to step away from any blame games
once and for all.*

Friday, November 15

How to Deal with Difficult People

Devotional Passage:
Colossians 3:12-13

Read the Bible Through:
Ezekiel 23–24
Hebrews 10

Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. Colossians 3:13

When we hear the words *difficult people*, most of us probably can come up with a name or face fairly quickly. For some of us, maybe several faces come to mind. Let's reverse things for a minute. Are there people who might think of you when they hear the words "difficult people?" Ouch! That's a distressing thought.

Paul had some advice for dealing with difficult people. We are to treat them the same way that Jesus treats us—with acceptance and forgiveness.

Note that Paul was not giving believers advice on how to deal with difficult non-believers. He was writing to people within the church at Colossae. These were believers. Paul told them how to handle difficult people who are also in the body of Christ.

Quarrels and misunderstandings can arise—even among believers. Perhaps you've experienced this kind of hurt firsthand. Paul's instruction is for us to forbear (or accept) and forgive, just like Christ does. We should adopt the habits of forbearance and forgiveness so that they become a part of our character that is reflected any time difficulties arise.

Father, help me to be generous in offering acceptance and forgiveness to others.

Saturday, November 16

Do What He Says

Devotional Passage:
Deuteronomy 27:1-10

Read the Bible Through:
Ezekiel 25–26
Hebrews 11

Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the LORD thy God, and do his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day. Deuteronomy 27:10

Think about all the voices you hear every day, each clamoring for your attention. Culture and the media shouts messages about how you can be richer, thinner, more popular, and have wrinkle-free skin. All you have to do is buy, try, or wear the product that is being described. However, these products seldom offer any type of happiness or peace that truly satisfies.

There is one voice calling for your attention above all the other voices of culture—the voice of God. Moses called for the people of Israel to listen to God’s voice and to obey what they heard. God’s commands and statutes were to be their only guide for how to live life. We should seek the same guidance in God’s Word today. As the psalmist stated, our desire should be to seek after God and His Word with all of our heart (Ps. 119:10).

Obedience is not a one-time event nor an optional activity for believers. Every day we face choices and circumstances in which we must decide whether to obey God or to choose our own way. When we choose to obey God, we find the peace, strength, and comfort that come from being in right relationship with Him.

Father, help me to make obeying You my first priority every day.

Sunday, November 17

You and the Sparrows

Devotional Passage:
Luke 12:4-7

Read the Bible Through:
Ezekiel 27-28
Hebrews 12

But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows. Luke 12:7

Sparrows are ordinary birds, plentiful and familiar to most of us. Many other birds are more spectacular or interesting: cardinals, eagles, hawks, and owls to name a few. However, Jesus used the example of the insignificant sparrow to teach us that God cares about every one of us. If God is aware of the ordinary sparrows, and meets their needs, then we can be confident of His love for us.

To further assure the people of God's knowledge and care, Jesus noted that God even knows the number of hairs on your head. For most of us, it would be an impossible task to count the hairs on our own heads, much less all the hairs on everyone else's heads. Yet, God knows how many hairs there are. Amazing!

Yes, the God of the universe truly knows the details of your life. Not only does God know all the details, you are valuable to Him. Surely a God who knows you that well can be trusted with your deepest dreams, fears, joys, worries, and battles. What challenge or trial are you facing today? Do you worry that God seems silent or far away? Why or why not? Since God cares for the sparrow, how much more does He care about you?

Father, thank You for the image of the tiny sparrow as a reminder of how Your love surrounds me.

Monday, November 18

Strength That Matters

Devotional Passage:
Ephesians 3:14-21

Read the Bible Through:
Ezekiel 29–30
Hebrews 13

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man. Ephesians 3:16

The Ironman events, held in locations around the world, consist of a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike ride, and a 26.2-mile run. People who undertake the necessary training and complete the grueling event can proudly call themselves “iron men” or “iron women.” Many of us would agree that we don’t have the strength, stamina, or physical health to compete safely in an Ironman event. Our strength is too limited for such a difficult and demanding physical challenge.

In writing to the believers in Ephesus, Paul spoke of a strength that does not involve swimming, biking, or running. We can’t gain this strength by lifting weights or pushing ourselves to the limit physically. This strength, however, is available to every believer; it comes from God’s Holy Spirit dwelling inside of us.

How wonderful to know that even if we are at our weakest in physical strength, we can experience God’s strength in our life. When we feel that our mental and emotional strength is at its lowest point, we can feel God’s strength lifting us up. We are “strengthened with might” because of God’s power at work in our lives.

Father, thank You for Your strength that fills me even in my weakest moments.

Tuesday, November 19

Don't Be Deceived

Devotional Passage:
Nehemiah 6:1-4

Read the Bible Through:
Ezekiel 31-32
James 1

*And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?
Nehemiah 6:3*

Have you ever been engaged in a project or task where someone tried to distract you or draw you away from completing the job? That can be extremely aggravating—especially when you are trying to focus.

In the Old Testament we find the record of Nehemiah and the other Jewish exiles engaged in the important task of rebuilding the city walls of Jerusalem that had been destroyed. But their enemies were not pleased with the city being rebuilt, so they tried to draw Nehemiah away from the task by inviting him to leave his work and come meet with them. He realized that the invitation was a trick to pull him away from the work and also to harm him. Nehemiah was confident that he was following God's plan to rebuild the city; therefore, he refused to be deceived by his enemies. He kept doing the work that God had called him to do.

Nehemiah set the example for us as we do God's work. We should ignore the distractions and deceptions that can draw us off course. We also need to keep our eyes on God and faithfully continue His work.

Father, help me to keep my thoughts focused on You and on Your plans for my life.

Wednesday, November 20

The Golden Rule Still Rules

Devotional Passage:
Luke 6:27-31

Read the Bible Through:
Ezekiel 33-34
James 2

And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. Luke 6:31

As young children, most of us were taught some simple rules to help us know how to get along with others. We were taught things such as share your toys, play nicely, get along with others, and be kind. As simple as those rules may seem, most of us had difficulty doing them consistently. In reality, we spend a lifetime learning how to apply them in our lives. Before long, we come to understand that these rules stand in stark contrast to popular culture, where sayings such as “I’m looking out for number one,” or “Me first” are most often heard.

Jesus made it clear that His followers were to apply a different rule in their lives. We have come to call it the Golden Rule, and we find it recorded here in Luke 6:31.

Like the things we learned as kids, treating others as we would want to be treated may sound simple enough. However, in practical application we discover that being kind, showing compassion, offering forgiveness, practicing patience, and treating others with respect can be difficult to do consistently—even though that is how we would like to be treated. Only with God’s help and by His love shining through us can we live out this Golden Rule each day.

Father, guide my thoughts, words, and actions so that Your Golden Rule will be reflected in my life.

Thursday, November 21

Exercise Discernment

Devotional Passage:

2 John 7-11

Read the Bible Through:

Ezekiel 35-37

James 3

For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. 2 John 11

An impressive radio preacher offered a free Bible study, so I ordered it. The material arrived with an appeal for money, but I never sent him any. His approach to Scripture twisted its intended meaning away from clear biblical teachings.

John's second letter was to a Christian woman who may have been drifting off-course. She evidently had a record of faithful service to the Lord, especially in opening her home to traveling evangelists and teachers. Was she, however, providing hospitality for some whose doctrine was in error? Did she take fellow church members' reservations as criticism? John's letter perhaps addresses those assumptions. He warned here that to support false teachers was to take part in their evil deception. While in the letter he affirmed Jesus' command to exercise love, he also warned against providing hospitality to false teachers.

We receive requests for funds in person, by mail, and through TV from numerous ministries. Unfortunately, not every so-called Christian minister is God-called. Some are fakes who take advantage of undiscerning believers' generosity in the name of God. Let's exercise generous love, but with prayerful discernment.

Father, grant me discernment to support in prayers and offerings people who truly are doing Your work.



Friday, November 22

Righteousness Makes for a Better World

Devotional Passage:

Proverbs 11:5-14

Read the Bible Through:

Ezekiel 38–39

James 4

By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked. Proverbs 11:11

Over the past few years, have you helped make your community a more desirable or less desirable place in which to live? Occasional public surveys measure and exalt the best cities in terms of health, education, jobs, recreation, and even the best restaurants. Geography may be a minor factor, but the major factors are the influence and work of upright citizens and leaders. These people exalt or lift up their cities because they focus on ways to improve the well-being of the community as a whole. They use their vision, talents, and advantages to bless others. Thus, they help to lay solid foundations for the present and the future.

Wicked people focus on selfish advantage with little regard for others. They have hidden agendas behind their proposals, and they spew lies and slander to achieve their ends. The verb translated “overthrown” in this verse means “to pull down”—the opposite of lifting up.

Let’s determine, with God’s help, to be upright citizens who lift up our communities with our prayers, example, influence, and involvement.

Father, help me to be the kind of upright citizen who makes my corner of Your world a better place.

Saturday, November 23

What We Can Do Together

Devotional Passage:

Psalms 34:1-3

Read the Bible Through:

Ezekiel 40–41

James 5

O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together. Psalm 34:3

Psalms 34 opens with an invitation to praise God and then goes on to tell why. The writer had been in a desperate situation. He had called on the Lord for help and, as a result of God's intervention, he had been delivered. This led him to praise God and invite others to join him in celebrating all that God had done.

Notice the two words used for praise in verse 2. The first word is "magnify," which means "to make larger." We can't make the Lord any larger than He is, but we can make our own and others' awareness of Him larger by telling how He has delivered and guided us. The second word is "exalt," which means "to lift up." To lift up the Lord's name is to focus attention on Him. We do that when we tell others how He has blessed us. The popular Christian testimony site, *iamsecond.com*, shares testimonies of putting Christ first and the testimonies all end with the statement, "I am second."

In heaven, believers will all praise God together, but we don't have to wait until then. That is something we can do now as we testify and worship with one another. Let us praise God together! Let us exalt His name!

Father, I praise You for Your unending stream of blessings. Help me to seize opportunities to praise You with fellow believers.

Sunday, November 24

Pray, Don't Give Speeches

Devotional Passage:
Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

Read the Bible Through:
Ezekiel 42–43
1 Peter 1

Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.
Ecclesiastes 5:2

When my wife hears me in my Monday-morning-quarterback mode, she often smiles and says, “You always know what ought to be done, don’t you?” She knows when I need a dose of humility to treat my fever of pride. Sometimes I get far too caught up in trying to fix things when I think I have all the answers.

The first verses of Ecclesiastes 5 advise us to come before the Lord with humility; that is, with wide-open ears rather than a wide-open mouth. Solomon, in his wisdom, provided guidance in coming into God’s presence. He is the One in heaven who has all wisdom and knowledge, so He doesn’t need to hear our long-winded speeches about what’s wrong and how He should fix it. God desires to hear our praise and worship.

A minister challenged his congregation to ask the Lord in private to show them anything in their lives that displeased Him. One woman later said she figured that would take about two minutes. She spent almost an hour in prayerful repentance and rededication of her life to Him. Now that’s prayer that pleases God. Let us pray.

Father, forgive me for too often giving a speech rather than a heartfelt prayer when I come before You.

Monday, November 25

No Other Name

Devotional Passage:

Acts 4:5-12

Read the Bible Through:

Ezekiel 44–46

1 Peter 2

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Acts 4:12

Picture a bulletin board on which fliers are posted, describing all the world's religions and cults. A host of people gather around to read and discuss different religions. They make comments such as, "I like [or don't like] this one" for any number of reasons. Some take teachings from different faiths and cobble together their own. They view all religions as valid and make choices based on what appeals to their way of thinking or what best fits their lifestyle. This is a fairly accurate picture of today's popular culture. Some people reject all religion as foolishness.

When Christians declare that Jesus is the only Savior God has provided, we fly in the face of popular opinion. People may consider us narrow-minded, ignorant, unsophisticated, or worse to say there is only one way to get to God. Nevertheless, let's not be silent about our Lord.

In this Scripture passage, Peter was witnessing to a bitterly hostile audience—specifically those who conspired to execute Jesus. Peter shared that it was Jesus who provided the miracle that was seen. The good news about Jesus is still good news. Let's follow Peter's example and boldly share the gospel message with others.

Father, thank You for Jesus and for saving me. Use me to point others to the true Savior.

Tuesday, November 26

What God Requires

Devotional Passage:
Deuteronomy 10:12-13

Read the Bible Through:
Ezekiel 47-48
1 Peter 3

And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul. Deuteronomy 10:12

A young man survived a horrendous car crash. He stated, “I know God spared me for a purpose, but I don’t know what it is.” We all want to know what it is that God wants to do in and through our lives. Believers often say they want to know God’s will and want to know what God requires. Often this relates to personal decisions such as accepting a job offer, choosing where to live, or deciding who to marry.

Near the end of Moses’ life, he placed personal decisions in a broader framework by explaining some basic things God desires from every believer. He told the people that they were to “fear the Lord,” which means to daily give Him the respect and honor He deserves. They were to “walk in all His ways” by letting His Word guide them. To “love Him” means to obey Him and fellowship with Him in prayer and worship. To “serve the Lord” describes gladly using your gifts and abilities in ways that advance the gospel. As we focus on these things, our relationship with God will grow. As a result, His will for our lives will become clearer.

*Father, forgive me for being too focused
on me instead of on You.*

Wednesday, November 27

Stay Away!

Devotional Passage:
Proverbs 24:1-2

Read the Bible Through:
Daniel 1
1 Peter 4

Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them. Proverbs 24:1

Many of us grew up hearing the statement that “Cheaters never win.” As we grew older, we discovered that the statement didn’t always hold true. Sometimes cheaters seemingly do win. We saw cheaters proudly lifting up trophies or gaining promotions. We saw bad characters driving luxury cars and living in extravagant homes. The biggest rats in the rat race seemed to be winning! Seeds of cynicism may have tried to take root in our hearts. We were trying to do right, but we were losing out. Were we missing the boat? These types of thoughts can lead us, if we are not careful, to become envious of those people.

We can easily be tempted to take moral shortcuts. We live in a sin-cursed world, so we need this biblical warning to stay away from evil and all its influence. This Scripture passage warns us that cultivating friendship with evil people is a slippery slope. Some of these folks may seem to be winners, but life’s finish line is on the other side of death where we all face the Lord.

The Lord who made us knows what will bring us the best life now and hereafter. Remember, the fastest rat in the rat race is still a rat. Stay away from rats.

Father, help me to hold firm to the values taught in Your Word and to be content with what I have.

Thursday, November 28

Why Be Thankful?

Devotional Passage:
2 Corinthians 9:6-11

Read the Bible Through:
Daniel 2
1 Peter 5

Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. 2 Corinthians 9:11

Many people have heard the Scripture that states “God loveth a cheerful giver” and conclude we should just have a smile on our face when the offering plate is passed at church. But this verse encompasses so much more than that. Being a cheerful giver begins by understanding that God is the Provider of everything.

Paul was taking an offering for distressed believers in Jerusalem, and he encouraged believers in Corinth to participate generously. He assured them that the Lord would give back far more than they gave, but he wasn’t promising a lavish lifestyle. They would be enriched so that they could use their increased resources to help more people. Even so, that wasn’t the endgame. Their generosity would cause the recipients to give thanks to God, thus bringing glory to Him.

The season of Thanksgiving reminds us to give thanks for God’s goodness to us. When we consider all the “bountifulness” the Lord provides, it should lead us to offer thanks to God. Let’s add another dimension to the season by being gracious to those in need. Let’s give them a reason to thank God for what He’s doing for them through us. Thanksgiving should lead to thanks living.

Father, thank You for all the people You have used to bless my life both materially and spiritually.

Friday, November 29

Be Direct, but with Grace

Devotional Passage:

2 Thessalonians 3:6-16

Read the Bible Through:

Daniel 3

2 Peter 1

Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. 2 Thessalonians 3:15

What should we do about church folk whose lifestyles are contrary to God's Word? Should we graciously overlook their behavior or rebuke them? First Thessalonians gives some answers to this very difficult situation that arises among believers.

Paul provided ideas to help protect believers in their personal walks, such as staying away from irresponsible people, so we don't find ourselves caught up in the same type of behavior. Rather than joining in behavior that does not reflect Christ, Paul encouraged the believers to find good role models to follow.

In regard to how to relate to people who are living apart from God's Word, Paul encouraged believers to continue to demonstrate God's love and grace. At the same time, however, we are to admonish them to come back to fellowship with the Lord. To admonish someone means to warn or instruct them in the right way.

One believer approached a former partner in ministry who was drifting into worldliness. He lovingly reminded his brother of the joy they had shared in Christian service and encouraged him to turn back to the Lord. I think that's the kind of approach Paul had in mind.

Lord, grant me the courage to help my straying brothers and sisters come back to relationship with You.

Saturday, November 30

The Wonder of Today

Devotional Passage:

Psalms 118:21-29

Read the Bible Through:

Daniel 4

2 Peter 2

This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Psalm 118:24

One fall day, two guys were looking at trees all decked out in bright and glorious colors. The sun accented their beauty, and the blue sky provided a perfect backdrop. One guy said, "I'll take a double dip of this!" How easy to rejoice and be glad on such days!

Not all days are like that. Judith Viorst wrote *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*. All of us have had, are having, or will have similar days. When slogging through a dimly awful day, why should we "rejoice and be glad"? Well, consider that the Lord made that day, too. Good or bad, based on your perception of the events of the day, each day is a day the Lord has made.

The Lord knows what each day will hold, but in His love and wisdom He allows us to live in them anyway. We can trust that even a bad day is worthwhile. He promises never to forsake us, and that includes every day. Even on the worst possible day, you can be confident that the future yet holds wonderful, inspiring, good, and glorious days. Take some time today to rejoice and be glad in the wonder of this day!

Lord, thank You for today. I do rejoice and I am glad You are with me in this day.



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